

**GATHERED RICHES
FROM THE OLDER
POETS, A.D. 1340-1699**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649591466

Gathered Riches from the Older Poets, A.D. 1340-1699 by W. K.

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

W. K.

**GATHERED RICHES
FROM THE OLDER
POETS, A.D. 1340-1699**

GATHERED RICHES

FROM THE

OLDER POETS.

A.D. 1340—1699.

LONDON:
HOULSTON AND WRIGHT.

MDCCLXV.



PREFATORY NOTE.



EVERY book ought to explain itself, without preface ; but in a volume of selections from the past, a brief prefatory note will have its value. It is unnecessary to vindicate the re-issue of any Literature of the Old Times, which has in reality enriched the world : for in the noisy Present we need the Teaching of writings on which the silence of the Past has settled down. But when a volume is compiled from the works of men long silent, some explanation of its aim and plan may be expected.

The present volume is mainly, but not exclusively, a religious book. It is so exclusively, if the word Religion is understood as co-extensive with all the Deep and True in man, that has an upward tendency. It is not exclusively devotional. It is not a hymnology. But all its poems have an undertone of the devotional in them, even when the theme is not explicitly religious. Poetry which looks into the deep things of Man, or which speaks of the moral analogies of Nature, or reveals the hidden significance of Life, in a lofty and unworldly way, is really, in a broadly

significant sense, *religious* poetry. It does not exhaust it, but it comes within its sphere. It is kindred with the purely religious song, as the indirect is kindred with the direct. If Poetry is thus broadened in its basis, a Temple Psalm is brought side by side with Wordsworth's "Ode on Immortality," or Herrick's "Address to Daffodils." If asked where in the several divisions of the realm of Poetry such fragments as Ben Jonson's "Life's Measure," or Hume's "Day's Estival," should be placed, the answer would unhesitatingly be, in the religious sphere. The highest poetry always has been, and always must be religious. Poetry is indeed but the musical utterance of man's effort after that harmony of things which has been marred by the Fall. It is one expression of that ceaseless strife, (the result of an inborn longing,) to be free from the restrictions which narrow us here, which cramp and fetter man upon the earth. In the utterance of this man must *rise*. He must tend to the unseen, and to God. All true poetry must land in Religion, in the region of the great spiritual realities.

Thus this collection is not always directly, but always indirectly religious. Its aim is to present in a compend of fragments the gathered riches of our old religious poetry. It ranges from the dawn of British Literature to the year 1699. In the eighteenth century, religious poetry of the loftiest type almost died away from the literature of England. It has revived in the nineteenth, in some cases with more than its old splendour. But a completeness is given to this

volume, by the fact that its range is limited to the older times.

Nothing has been admitted that has not stood the test and strain of time. Four names however have been purposely omitted—Shakespeare, Milton, Herbert, and Vaughan. A word in explanation of this. There are some names in literature (the list is very small) so singularly great, that to extract from their writings is to mutilate them. Those great teachers who have been sent as the ministers of Truth and Insight, not to their own age merely, but to all Time, seem marred and lowered when their works are broken into fragments and extracts. This is specially true of the very greatest *poets*, and even more peculiarly true of a certain class, viz., the more intense and individual among them. Extracted passages from Dante, Milton, Herbert, and Wordsworth, are always unsatisfactory. We wish to see *all that has ever been written* by these masters. Not so with lesser men. There are many poets who have written one or two singularly noble poems, the rest of whose writing is comparatively valueless. It is from these that selections should be made. Extracts from Shakespeare and Milton, in this volume, would either require to be very long and very numerous, or they would be wholly inadequate. George Herbert (the deepest of all religious poets) would need to be inserted *as a whole*; and nearly the same thing is true of H. Vaughan. These four names are therefore excluded.

The arrangement of the poems is chronological, and the volume is divided into four sections. Without

following the recognised literary periods, indicated by the great epoch-forming names, as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, &c., (a principle of division not essential to a collection such as this, and which would of necessity reduce some periods to the compass of a very few years, and enlarge others to a disproportionate extent,) the poems are arranged as follows:— Period *first* extends from the time of Richard Rolle (*cir.* 1340), an early English divine of whom little is known, but who was either an immediate predecessor or a contemporary of Chaucer, to that of James Wedderburn of Dundee (1500-1564). Period *second* begins with Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, (1515-20-1546-7,) and ends with Dr. John Donne (1573-1631). Period *third* ranges from the times of Ben Jonson (1574-1637) to those of James Shirley (1594-1666); and Period *fourth* from Sir Thomas Browne, author of the “Religio Medici,” &c., (1605-1682,) to John Norris, metaphysician and poet, (1657-1711.)

To readers who receive gladly these gifts from the old times, we promise a future volume, which will be gathered mainly from our own century; for these times also have their own peculiar music.

W. K.

Period First.



RICHARD ROLLE

TO

JAMES WEDDERBURN.

