

**BOOK
LOVERS' VERSE**

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Book lovers' verse by Howard S. Ruddy

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HOWARD S. RUDDY

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BOOK LOVERS' VERSE

*Being Songs of Books and Bookmen Compiled
from English and American Authors*

By HOWARD S. RUDDY



*Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me
With volumes that I prize above my Dukedom
The Tempest*

INDIANAPOLIS

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TO
MR. SAMUEL D. LEE

Introduction

WHILE the love of books has been expressed with some degree of generality by the bookmen of mediæval and of modern times, in learned treatise and in pleasing meter, when one undertakes an inquiry into the subject, the poverty of available material seems out of proportion to the inspiration which the subject might have been expected to possess. Perhaps it should not be assumed that the poets are not book-lovers themselves, or that, being book-lovers, they are unable to gratify a taste for the possession of books because they are poets; but rather that their muse the more readily responds to the seductions of a pair of blue eyes, or a tress of golden hair, or even the fleeting glimpse of an arched instep, inspirations that are illusive and transitory when measured against the steadfastness of good books,

" . . . the best of friends,
That can not be estranged or take offense
Howe'er neglected, but return at will
With the old friendship."

Be that as it may, careful research discloses only the apparent indifference in

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which some of the bards of first estate have held their libraries; for it is a safe conclusion that the true bibliophile would not withhold his meed of praise from these representatives of the great intellects of all ages.

It is not possible, perhaps, to ascertain just when the poets began to sing the praises of books, but the verses of Alcuin in the latter part of the eighth century are evidence of that blossoming of love for the wisdom of the sages, then so difficult of gratification; a love which grew upon what it fed, until in this day it finds expression in the yearnings, so plaintively expressed, of the lamented bibliomaniac of Buena Park—

“Oh for a booke and a shady nooke
Eyther in doore or out,
With the greene leaves whispering overhead,
Or the streete cryes all about;
Where I maie reade all at my ease
Both of the nowe and old,
For a jollie goods booke whereon to looke
Is better to me than golde!”

The editor takes the sweet unction to his soul that his collection of the songs of book-land is more extensive than any that has yet been presented, but if it is in any way lacking it may not be laid to his indifference; but rather to that frugality which

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sometimes seizes humanity for no apparent reason. Yet he has to acknowledge, and does so with a proper feeling of gratitude, the kindness of many publishers and authors who have so readily given permission for the use of their verses, and if by chance any have been overlooked it will not have been due to a disregard of the rights of property, but to the impossibility of identifying verses which have been caught in their rounds of the press. To these apologies are hereby tendered.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.

H. S. R.