

**THE VOICE OF CHILDHOOD, OR,  
THE INFLUENCE AND THE  
POETRY, THE WRONGS AND  
THE WANTS OF THE LITTLE ONES**

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The Voice of Childhood, Or, The Influence and the Poetry, the Wrongs and the wants of the little ones by John De Fraine

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BY

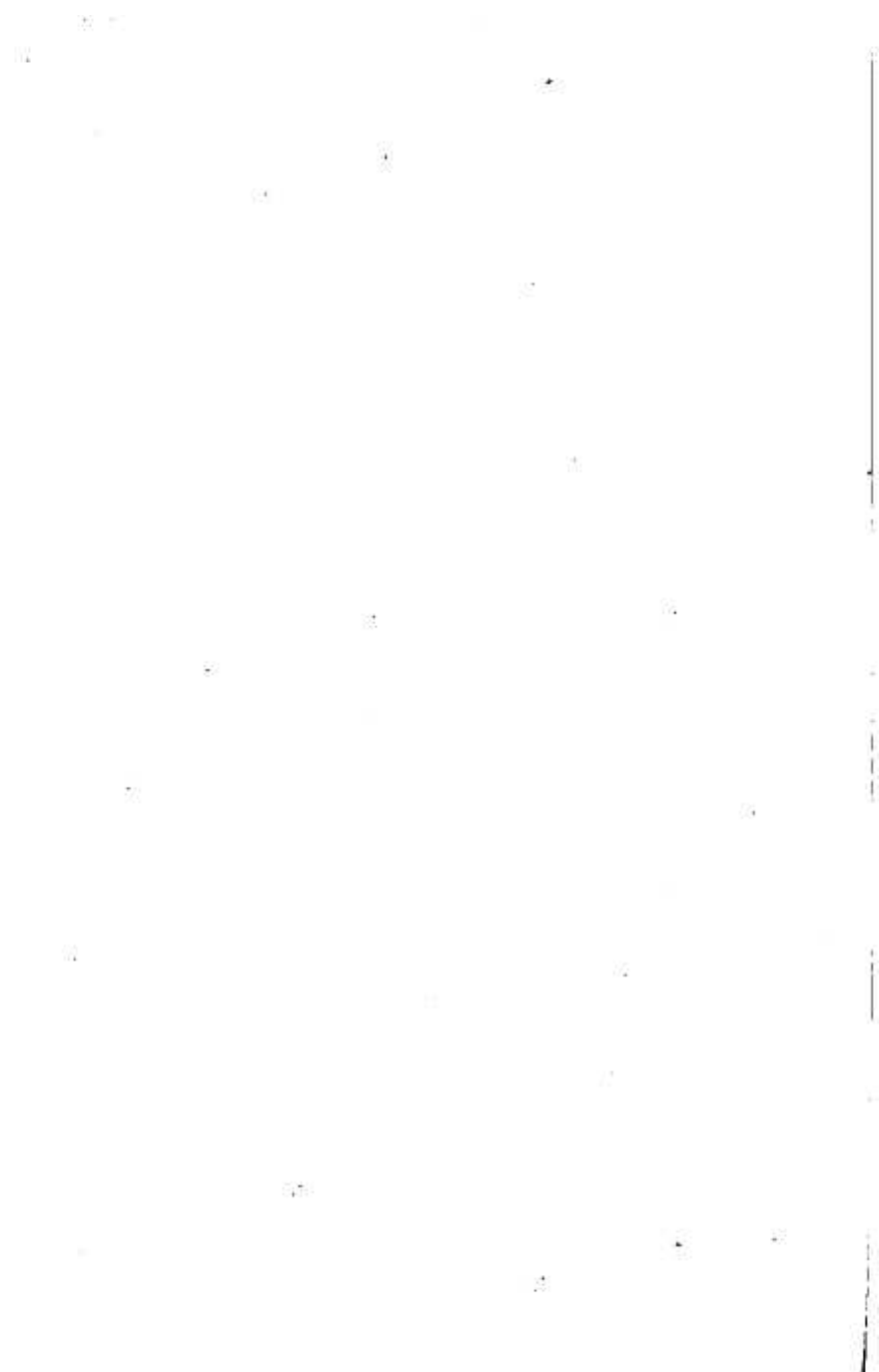
JOHN DE FRAINE.

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OBTAINABLE FROM THE AUTHOR AT HIS RESIDENCE,  
WHITE HALL, WEST WICKHAM,  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

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MDCCLXXVII.



"Come to me, O ye children !  
And whisper in my ear  
What the birds and the winds are singing  
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,  
And the wisdom of our books,  
When compared with your caresses,  
And the gladness of your looks ?

Ye are better than all the ballads  
That ever were sung or said ;  
For ye are living poems,  
And all the rest are dead."

10. 11. 1940

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## The Voice of Childhood.

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**E**IGHTEEN hundred years ago the Saviour set a little child in the midst of his hearers, and told them to be like it if they wished to reach the Kingdom of Heaven.

Little children ! innocent, pretty, loveable, artless, "prattling, up a'top of a proud mother's knee," the light of home, adorned with sweet charities, with simple wonder, with clinging love, with honest sympathies, with natural graces. Dear enchanters ! knitting still closer the soul of father and mother, and binding them with the golden cords of affection ; bright, living sunbeams, that cheer the lone widow's heart when the bread-winner has gone away for ever.

" God bless the little children,  
We meet them everywhere ;  
We hear their voices round our hearth,  
Their footsteps on our stair ;  
Their kindly hearts are swelling o'er  
With mirthfulness and glee ;  
God bless the little children,  
Wherever they may be.

"We meet them in the lordly hall,  
Their stately father's pride ;  
We meet them in the poor man's cot—  
He hath no wealth beside ;  
Along the city's crowded street  
They hurl the hoop or ball ;  
We find them 'neath the pauper's roof—  
The saddest sight of all.

"For there they win no father's love,  
No mother's tender care,  
Their only friend the God above,  
Who hears the orphan's prayer.  
But, dressed in silk or draped in rags,  
In childish grief or glee,  
God bless the little children,  
Wherever they may be."

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### THINK OF THEIR INFLUENCE !

Have you never known a little child reach up to the heart of the tallest man? Tennyson, in "Locksley Hall," makes "Baby fingers, waxen touches," stronger than a strong man's love. So a modern author tells us that, in the days of prophet and patriarch, heavenly messengers came down, and sometimes led men from the cities of destruction to the plains of safety. There are no angels to be seen now ; but very often men are led from brooding thoughts of despair, and from the haunts of Death and destruction, to a land of light, and life, and liberty ; and the hand that leads them is the hand of a little child.

I don't wonder that the drunken man turned from the tavern door, and went home to live a better life because a little girl, with a sweet, childish voice, said, "Oh, sir, please don't go in; if I were you, sir, I wouldn't go in."

I read the other day that there was a boy who drew the likeness of a baby in a cradle years ago, and when he showed it to his mother, she kissed him, and called it passing fair; "and that" said the artist, in the day of his fame, when all England called him great, "that made me a painter."

Oh, ladies and gentlemen, it may seem a simple thing in these days of innumerable "isms" and "ologies," but, perhaps, it is good and noble work to guide and encourage a little child.

Smiles often make, a frown may mar. "Tell that child some simple story, or sing it some gentle song, or teach it some little prayer, and you go away and forget it on the morrow, but that little one has many thoughts, and you do not know what you have done, or what your prayer or story may grow to." Many years ago, before I had any dear little children of my own, a very young nephew was staying with me. We called him "Freddy." He was a very little boy, and he had heard me read a great many times, and knew that I was a lecturer, so at last, nothing would suit him but to learn an address, and getting on a chair, and putting out his childish hand, this was the speech he made:—"Ladies and gentlemen, I am a very little boy, but it says in the Bible, 'Let no man despise thy youth.' I haven't got much to say, but I think it's very wrong to hurt dumb animals, or tell stories. I hope I shall be a good boy—be very kind to my grand'pa—love my dear mother—never cheat at play—always say my prayers—and, because the land