

**ORACLES FROM THE  
POETS: A  
FANCIFUL DIVERSION FOR  
THE DRAWING-ROOM.**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649663576

Oracles from the Poets: A Fanciful Diversion for the Drawing-Room. by Caroline Gilman

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](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**CAROLINE GILMAN**

**ORACLES FROM THE  
POETS: A  
FANCIFUL DIVERSION FOR  
THE DRAWING-ROOM.**



THE FOLLOWING PAGES,  
ORIGINALLY INTENDED FOR THEIR AMUSEMENT,  
ARE DEDICATED TO  
MY CHILDREN.

ORACLES FROM THE POETS.

I am Sir Oracle,  
And when I open my lips let no dog bark.  
*Merchant of Venice.*

ORACLES FROM THE POETS:

A FANCIFUL DIVERSION

FOR

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

BY

CAROLINE GILMAN.

The entrance by the door is kindly traced,  
Written on loose foliage is a fortune's message.  
She stops the fate, and in her frantic fits  
The notes and names prescribed to leaves conceals.

*Dryden's and Spenser's Virgils.*

*Macbeth.* I judge you, by that which you profess,  
(How'er you cease to show it,) answer me,  
*First Witch.* Speak.  
*Second Witch.* Demand.  
*Third Witch.* We'll answer.

NEW YORK:  
JOHN WILEY  
(OLD STAND OF "WILEY AND PUTNAM"),  
161 BROADWAY: AND PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

1848.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1844,  
By WILEY & PUTNAM,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Southern  
District of New York.

Reprinted by  
RICHARD C. VALSTINE,  
46 Gold-street, New York.



## PREFACE.



**I** WAS led to arrange "THE ORACLES FROM THE POETS," by observing the vivid interest taken by persons of all ages in a very common-place Fortune-Teller in the hands of a young girl. It occurred to me that I might avail myself of this love of the mysterious, for the intellectual enjoyment of my family circle.

Instead, however, of the pastime of a few days, it has been the work of every leisure moment for six months. The first movement was the pebble thrown into the stream; circle after circle formed, until I found, with old Thomas Heywood,

" My pen was dipt  
As well in opening each hid manuscript,  
As tracts more vulgar, whether read or sung  
In our domestic or more foreign tongue."

How rich these six months have been in the purest and highest enjoyment, I will not stop to say; but to be allowed to float in such an atmosphere, buoyed up with the sweetest sympathies of friends, may be conceived to be no common happiness. And now, with the hope of communicating a portion of this pleasure more exten-

sively, I yield this volume up as a public offering, for the advancement of those rational social enjoyments which seem to belong to the moral movement of the age.

I do not know how far early associations may have influenced me, but I distinctly recollect the first Oracle of my childhood. At the age of eight years I attended a female seminary in a village. The classes were allowed a half hour for recreation, and they usually played on the green within view of the academy building. One day I observed a group of girls of the senior class pass beyond the bounds and enter the church, which was opened for some approaching occasional service. I followed quietly. They walked through the aisle with agitated whispers, and ascended to the pulpit. Then each, in turn, opening the large Bible, laid a finger, with closed eyes, on a verse, and read it aloud, as indicating her fate or character.

I well remember the eagerness with which I listened on the stairs, for I was afraid to crowd into the pulpit with the *big girls*. As they retired, I entered. I can recall the timid feeling with which I glanced round the shadowy building, the awe with which I closed my eyes and placed my small finger on the broad page, and the faith with which I read my *Oracle*.

I must make an early apology for venturing to alter the tenses of authors so as to conform to answers. I tried the method of literal extracts, but they were deficient in spirit and directness. I can now only warn my readers not to quote the Oracles habitually, as exact transcripts, but resort to the originals. I have trembled as if it were sacrilege to turn thus the streams of Helicon into this little channel, but I hope the evil may be balanced by the increased acquaintance of many with slighted authors.

I have not allowed myself to select from periodicals, though American journals contain perhaps more favorable specimens of our literature than the published volumes to which I have felt bound to confine myself.

My selections have extended so far beyond the limits of my plan, that I propose furnishing another volume, in the course of the year, with additional questions, including translations from popular authors. One question in the present volume, *To what have you a distaste or aversion?* is, I think, nearly exhausted, while its opposite, *What gratifies your taste or affections?* presents still an ample field for gleaning. Will this furnish any argument against those ascetics, who think misery preponderates over happiness? One fanciful question in the succeeding volume will