

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

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

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CAROLINE GILMAN

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POETS: A
FANCIFUL DIVERSION FOR
THE DRAWING-ROOM**



WHERE AND WHAT WILL BE YOUR RESIDENCE ?

A summer Lodge amid the wild.

BRYANT.

ORACLES FROM THE POETS:

A FANCIFUL DIVERSION

FOR

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

BY

CAROLINE GILMAN.

The enthusiast Sybil there divinely taught,
Writes on loose foliage inspiration's thought,
She sings the fates, and in her frantic fits
The notes and names inscribed to leaves commits.

Dryden's and Symonds's Virgil.

Macbeth. I conjure you, by that which you profess,
(Howe'er you come to know it,) answer me,
First Witch. Speak.
Second Witch. Demand.
Third Witch. We'll answer.

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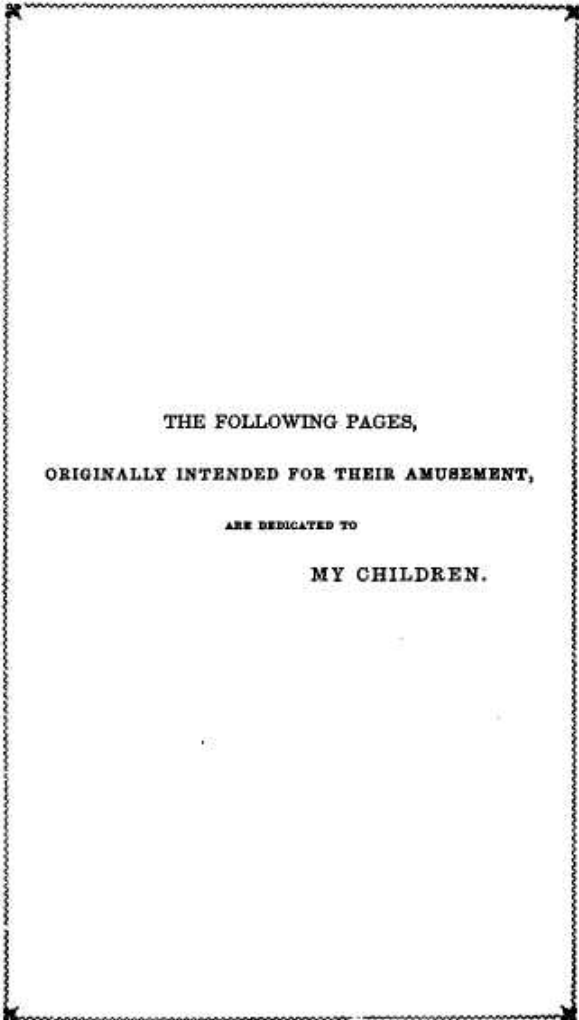
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THE FOLLOWING PAGES,
ORIGINALLY INTENDED FOR THEIR AMUSEMENT,
ARE DEDICATED TO
MY CHILDREN.

PREFACE.



WAS led to arrange "THE ORACLES FROM THE PETERS," 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*.