

**A COLLECTION OF POETRY
FOR THE USE OF JUVENILE
CLASSES IN PUBLIC AND
PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

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A collection of poetry for the use of juvenile classes in Public and Private Schools by W. H. Cordeaux

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W. H. CORDEAUX

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A COLLECTION

OF

POETRY

FOR THE USE OF

JUVENILE CLASSES

In Public and Private Schools,

ARRANGED IN A PROGRESSIVE FORM

With explanatory Notes to each Poem;

BY

W. H. CORDEAUX.

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1853.

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P R E F A C E .

The compiler of this small collection of Poems, considers it his duty to explain why he ushers into being this same little volume, when there are already so many works of a similar kind.

It is perfectly true that there are, in point of number, quite sufficient of these compilations, but it is likewise right to state, that there are very few, if any, small collections of choice and first-rate Poems,—poems which are fitted and pleasant to the capacity and taste of the young. With this idea, and having in vain sought for a cheap and really genuine collection of poetry, arranged in a progressive form, I have for the use of my own Pupils, and at the desire of several engaged in instructing the young, selected those which are generally esteemed the best juvenile pieces of our great Poets. I have been careful not to infuse any of those "Original Poems," which so abound in every work of this kind that I have chanced to meet with, and which from their decided mediocrity, and oftentimes actual absurdity, are most ill-fitted to the Pupil, and far from pleasant to the Teacher. I could enumerate upwards of a dozen School poetry books, filled with original poems written by unknown poets and poetesses, with not one piece of decided merit in them, but full of the veriest trash that a child could be made to learn by rote. And why is this? We have Wordsworth, Cowper, Campbell, Pope, Mrs. Hemans, the Hon. Mrs. Norton, and many others, of the highest note and celebrity, all of whom have written some pieces admirably calculated for young children.

I do think therefore that with this rich harvest on our shelves, we might let our children drink from the purest fountains, and not force them to be satiated with that, which in the end, will rather disgust than delight. And here I am led to remark that it is erroneous to suppose that youth has no taste for fine poetry, nor sufficient judgment to distinguish between a well written poem, and a badly written one; your true schoolboy possesses an instinctive relish for what is noble, elevated, pure and truthful in Poetry. And this will apply to the young beginner, as well as to the more advanced pupil; all can and do appreciate good poetry, when it is suited to their capacity and age.

I am not an advocate for children spending too much time in learning poetry, as some are intellectually disqualified from readily retaining it in their memories, and are apt in consequence to take a dislike to Poetry altogether, if made to learn it very often, as is too frequently the case. The teacher should endeavour to make this particular branch of study as agreeable and pleasant as possible, and this cannot be the case if it is a lesson of frequent occurrence, which would soon lead to satiety and dislike in the best disciplined and cleverest child. Once or twice a week, and two or three verses each time is, I consider quite enough for a youthful pupil, as his other lessons must equally conduce to improve his memory, and strengthen his mind.

In learning Poetry, I think the pupil should not only be made to retain the verses in his memory, but he ought to have the subject of them well explained to him, so that he may thoroughly understand its import, and fully comprehend the meaning of every portion of it. This was my chief motive for appending a few notes at the end of almost every piece, as I thought that by this

means the Teacher would be led to follow up my suggestions and deductions, which would render the lesson attractive and morally useful, instead of being a lesson to be learnt by rote, without any signification or end, and then thrown aside. In this, as in every other branch of education, I do think that a little well said, and fully comprehended by the child, is more judicious and useful, than a lengthened lesson repeated without explanation or remark.

I have attempted, and I trust with some little success, to arrange these pieces in a graduated form,—beginning with some of the simpler poems and winding up with the more difficult ones, so as to prepare the pupil by progressive lessons to be able in the end to read, and recite the deeper and more magnificent productions of our great Bards.

W. H. CORDEAUX.

CANTERBURY.

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