

**THE PARNASSIAN GARLAND; OR,
BEAUTIES OF MODERN POETRY:
CONSISTING OF UPWARDS OF TWO
HUNDRED PIECES, SELECTED FROM THE
WORKS OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED
POETS OF THE PRESENT AGE**

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The Parnassian Garland; Or, Beauties of Modern Poetry: Consisting of Upwards of Two Hundred Pieces, Selected from the Works of the Most Distinguished Poets of the Present Age by John Evans

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JOHN EVANS

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to
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TO

ARTHUR WILTON, ESQ.

OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME,

IS

Respectfully inscribed,

By his sincere Friend,

J. EVANS.

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PREFACE.

IN an age which abounds with Poetry of every description, from the stately Epic down to the tender strains of the Sonneteer, a Selection of its prominent Beauties cannot be unacceptable to a large class of Readers. But in such a Selection, by whomsoever made, Pieces must be expected to appear which possess various degrees of merit; thus different tastes are suited, but no Extracts should be admitted, which war against Sense, against Virtue, or against Religion. The prostitution of the Muse is the worst of all prostitutions. Her strains should be rendered invariably sacred to the best interests of mankind.

The Editor of the Parnassian Garland has to observe, that, having been in the habit of perusing modern poetry, he has had his attention arrested by certain passages, and they are here brought together for the purpose of amusement and instruction. Though he makes no pretensions to superior taste or judgment, yet he flatters himself that the subsequent Selection may not be without its use to the Rising Generation. The subjects have the recommendation of variety, and in the perusal of upwards of two hundred pieces of poetry, by different authors, it would be strange should no good sentiment be confirmed, no generous feeling be cherished, no virtuous purposes ripened into active and useful exertion. The well known proverb

of the agriculturist, that of scattering abroad the seed, is a most apt comparison, when it refers to the dispensing of instruction, whether by prose or poetry; for though some seeds be inevitably lost, yet other germs will shoot up into a rich and superabundant fertility! The Editor, therefore, however much he may be aware that his present attempt will be variously appreciated, does not despair of its utility. Instruction is oftentimes not sufficiently elementary, though more has been done this way in the present age, than in any age that has preceded it. It is recorded to the praise of the ingenious and pious Dr. Isaac Watts, that whilst he was writing defences of the abstruse and profound speculations of Locke, he was also composing Catechisms for Children. Productions, therefore, though humble in their structure, or diminutive in their appearance, where Knowledge is simplified and brought down to the meanest capacity, may be found to render an essential service to society.

The Editor, in justice to himself, must now explain the plan after which this little Volume has been formed and executed. His first object was to find out Passages in the writings of Poets who have made their appearance within these last twenty or thirty years, especially those particular parts which, though beautiful, had not been hackneyed by their appearance in other selections. An exception, however, must be made in favour of a most interesting piece of some length, entitled the Solar System, from that charming poetess, Mrs. Barbauld, whom he has the pleasure of personally knowing,

and to whom he returns his best thanks, as well as to Mr. Bowles, Mr. Samuel Rogers, Mr. Robert Southey, and Mr. Smyth, for the aid they have afforded him, and the rich entertainment with which they will furnish the reader. Indeed, the excellence of these pieces is such, that their omission in the present Selection would have been pronounced an unpardonable deficiency. Other extracts have never before been transplanted from their native bed, that is, from the pages where they originally appeared; but the Editor presumes that they will not disgrace their elder brethren, in the present form after which they are here presented to the world. Some pieces are without names, for they were in the first instance given anonymously to the public, whilst a few extracts are original, having never made their appearance in any other miscellany. When the Editor also adds, that these extracts have, by far the greatest part, been transcribed with his own hand, he must be permitted to say, that he has taken considerable pains, in the formation of the Selection, and in its adaptation to the juvenile capacity and early taste of the Rising Generation.

The manner of introducing these Selections to the notice of the reader, was the next object of the Editor; and here he has adopted a method which he has found useful on other occasions. Having, in the course of his Professional labours, young persons reading to him daily, both Prose and Poetry, he uniformly apprises them of the subject of what they are about to read, by a few prelimi-

nary observations. *A mere general Title has not sufficient interest to attract the attention especially of Youth, whose ideas, on most topics, are loose and indefinite. A very few remarks, therefore, have a considerable effect in preparing the understanding for what is about to be brought in contact with it. They rouse up a certain train of thought, which, combining with the passage read, conduces more easily to improvement. Repeated trial of this method confirms its utility, and those who are not in the habit of adopting this plan, will not be sensible of its advantages. But let a parent or tutor make the experiment, he will soon perceive the happy effects with which it is accompanied. Indeed, the introductory lines to each Extract, are not altogether unlike the inscription of a directing-post, which, however plain and unostentatious in itself, assists the traveller most materially in getting forward with comfort and pleasure to the end of his journey.*

To conclude—though it will be seen that the Editor has taken a wide range in his Selection, yet he is aware, that a few volumes of Modern Poetry remain still untouched. Of these some may have escaped his notice at the time of their publication, and others were not to be procured without considerable expense and difficulty. Besides the farther progress he made in the work, passages so multiplied upon him from every quarter, that he filled up his pages before he was aware, and of course was obliged to exclude many pieces of merit for want of room. This circumstance must apolo-

gise to those readers who may feel disappointed in not finding all their favourite authors noticed. But in perusing the following Selection the candid reader, it is hoped, will be disposed to consider rather what has been done, than what has been left undone; for, perhaps no other work of its size and kind, can boast of an equal number of Poetical Passages, with so marked and distinguished a variety. As the contents of this little volume are not the Editor's own productions, he may be thus allowed to speak of them freely, and to state their merits without incurring the imputation of Pride or Vanity. The youthful mind is enamoured of variety. Hence the multifarious beauties of the Heavens and the Earth constitute an inexhaustible theme of its contemplation and delight. And hence Poetry, which, mirror-like, holds up the images of these objects, reflects them back again on the mind with redoubled pleasure and satisfaction. On this account the real effusions of Parnassus, of which the Editor trusts the Garland is composed, ever have and ever will continue to have a firm hold of the young mind, and may, agreeably to the purport of the present attempt, be assuredly converted either by tutors or parents,