

**SELECTIONS FROM  
THE  
POETICAL WORKS**

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Selections from the poetical works by Mortimer Collins & F. Percy Cotton

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**MORTIMER COLLINS & F. PERCY COTTON**

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TO MY COUSIN  
FRANCES  
WIDOW OF MORTIMER COLLINS  
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

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## PREFACE.

FOR the last ten years I have occupied much of my leisure time in putting music to Mortimer Collins' lyrics, and I have thus become familiar with the poet's works.

I discovered that many of the best poems were scattered about in magazines and newspapers, and therefore likely to be lost; so I have made it a labour of love, from time to time, to collect all these.

In putting together this volume my only difficulty has been to know what choice to make from such a wealth of material. I had intended at first to include only those pieces

which had not hitherto been collected; but, finding that Mortimer Collins' previous volumes of verse — namely, *Idylls and Rhymes*, 1855; *Summer Songs*, 1860; *The Inn of Strange Meetings*, 1870,—were all out of print, I thought well to reproduce a few of the best poems from those volumes.

Having access to the poet's papers, I have been fortunate in finding some pieces that have not yet been published, from which I have chosen a few.

It has often been asked who wrote the *Comedy of Dreams*, and where the book could be found. The work lived only in Mortimer Collins' brain, intended, no doubt, to be produced at some time when the pressing necessities of life were less upon him; but fragments of it were occasionally written down, merely to serve as mottoes



for the chapters of his novels. I have arranged these fragments in the best way I could to show some thread of story running through. I am sure many persons will agree with me that, disjointed as they are, they were worth collecting.

The *Letter to Disraeli* was published anonymously, in pamphlet form, in 1869, but attracted no notice ; and the surplus copies were, I believe, sold as waste-paper.

It is generally considered that a poet does his best work while he is young, but I think any one acquainted with Mortimer Collins' works must acknowledge that he improved with age. The greater part of the pieces in this volume were written after he was forty. He died when he had just completed his forty-ninth year, and, to judge from his later work, he was but just reaching his full mental power.

Those who know the lady to whom this volume is dedicated [the F. C. to whom several of the poems are addressed] will understand why Mortimer Collins' poetical faculties developed during the last decade of his life.

F. PERCY COTTON.

PINE TREE HILL,  
CAMBEKLEY, SURREY,  
*February 1886.*

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