

**THE LIFE AND
POETRY OF JAMES
THOMSON (B.V.)**

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The Life and Poetry of James Thomson (B.V.) by J. Edward Meeker

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(B. U.)

BY J. EDWARD MEEKER, M.A.

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*"Sunt lacrymae rerum,
et mentem mortalia tangunt"*



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TO
GEN. HENRY A. BISHOP
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR

FOREWORD

Thomson's curious pen name "B. V." is derived from the initials of Bysshe (the middle name of his beloved Shelley), and of Vanolis (an anagram upon the German "Novalis"). It was as "B. V." rather than as James Thomson that the poet was known to his own generation of readers. The present generation, however, has exhibited more curiosity if not more sympathy toward the personality of Thomson. So close a connection exists between the poet's life and his poems, that the reader can scarcely comprehend the latter while in ignorance concerning the former. This has been especially true since Mr. Salt's lengthy biography became almost unobtainable. The present volume is novel chiefly in the fact that more than the few previous sketches of Thomson's life it attempts a close correlation of "B. V.'s" life and his poems.

The author must confess to having made free with Mr. Salt's book, as well as Mr. Dobell's valuable Memoir, and much contemporary periodical criticism. The over-curious reader may even detect passages where the present author has despaired of improving upon the phrases of his predecessors, but has forgotten always to desig-

FOREWORD

nate them by scrupulous quotation marks. The author at any rate cheerfully admits this clerical fallibility, and would not churlishly grudge any higher student of English his lonely glee in discovering such cases.

The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness in the preparation of the present volume to Mr. E. Byrne Hackett, formerly director of Yale University Press, for invaluable suggestions and encouragement; and to Professors C. M. Lewis and C. B. Tinker of Yale, as well as to Messrs. E. T. Webb and W. H. Lowenhaupt and the printers, for numerous criticisms and corrections upon the MS.

J. E. M.

New Haven, Conn.
February 1, 1917.