

**THE POEMS OF  
THOMAS  
GORDON HAKE**

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The Poems of Thomas Gordon Hake by Thomas Gordon Hake & Alice Meynell & D. G. Rossetti

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**THOMAS GORDON HAKE & ALICE MEYNELL & D. G. ROSSETTI**

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THE POEMS OF 45-5-72  
THOMAS GORDON HAKE

SELECTED

WITH A PREFATORY NOTE BY

ALICE MEYNELL

AND A PORTRAIT BY

DANTE GABRIEL

ROSSETTI

LONDON: ELKIN MATHEWS AND  
JOHN LANE  
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1894

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE Poems in this collection are chosen from volumes published at intervals over more than fifty years—among them *The Piromides*, issued in 1839, *Madeline*, reviewed by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in the *Academy* in 1871; *Parables and Tales*, to which Rossetti gave a *Fortnightly Review* article in 1873; down to *The New Day*, dated 1890; together with verses which will be new even to the readers of the hitherto published works.

Dr. Hake has a solemn and distinct note, little confusable with the other notes of the concerted song of poets. Only nine years younger than the century, he inherited, by right of his time and place, a tradition of deep composure—poetry aloof from the peril of excitement which knows neither how to contain nor how to express itself. Dr. Hake's expression always implies long intention,



deliberate decision. The verse is a consequence long foreseen.

The emotion of moments lacks indeed no swiftness of passage, but we are made aware that it had a past of experience and has a future of power. It was not a gust born of the moment and then no more. Poetic passion must be like a wind; thou canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; but surely it appeared with an approach and disappeared with a departure; it was a thing of transitory phase, but not of transitory life. Essentially durable and spiritual is the passion of those infrequent poems in which this poet, raising himself from the attitude of meditation, gathers his word into intenser action.

He has emotion which is thus proved true. For the proof of the authenticity of his thought, also, the reader will look into his own experience as he reads.

*Il poeta mi disse: Che pense?*

The question which Virgil asked of Dante is a poet's question. The world takes it as generally the reader's question; but it is emphatically the poet's. Now,

the thought to which Dr. Hake appeals in his reader's mind is unquestionably not an easy nor an obvious one. In saying this we assign to the reader of poetry some part of the writer's responsibility, some part of his honour. Or, if this is too much to say, the reader is at any rate responsible for choosing his poet. And if a poet is worth reading at all, he is to be trusted both with the importance and with the distinctness of his own thought.

The exceeding solemnity of what we have called Dr. Hake's note—and it is as indescribable and as peculiar as the note of a voice—suggests a further meaning, even an allegory, where in fact he had no intention of proposing anything beyond the text. The more does this illusion occur, perhaps, because Dr. Hake tells a story—a story of events—in most meditative stanzas. He writes movingly of dreams and sleep; and his study of these has added to all or almost all his verse something of the ecstasy of dreams.

ALICE MEYNELL.

*February 1894.*

