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A Book of Women's Verse by J. C. Squire

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with a Prefatory Essay

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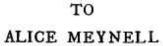
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PREFACE

AM not prepared with any philosophic justification for the compilation of this book. Poetry is poetry, whoever writes it. But it is a fact, at least so far as my observation goes, that people do feel curiosity about women's contributions to the arts, and that this curiosity is common to all kinds of persons, from those who exaggerate the differences between the sexes, to those who seem to think that they can eradicate them. I myself felt this curiosity when I conceived this anthology: and it would be stupid not to admit it.

It is not the first collection of the sort that has been made, but so far as I am aware it has only one predecessor which can be taken seriously and that is over a hundred years old. The principal collections which have come to my notice may be briefly recorded in chronological order.

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(1) Poems by Eminent Ladies, published in two volumes in 1755 and said to have been edited by Colman and Bonnel Thornton. The preface opens 'These volumes are perhaps the most solid compliment that can possibly be paid the Fair Sex. They are a standing proof that great abilities are not confined to the men, and that genius often glows with equal warmth, and perhaps with more delicacy, in the breast of a female'. The intention was generous, but the 'standing proof' does not stand on these volumes. No research had been done for them, and the eighteen ladies

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