

**THE SMALL PEOPLE. A
LITTLE BOOK OF
VERSE ABOUT CHILDREN
FOR THEIR ELDERS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649185917

The small people. A little book of verse about children for their elders by Thomas Burke

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THOMAS BURKE

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A LITTLE BOOK OF VERSE ABOUT
CHILDREN FOR THEIR ELDERS

CHOSEN, EDITED & ARRANGED

BY

THOMAS BURKE

" And He took a little child and set him
in the midst of them "

LONDON
CHAPMAN AND HALL, LIMITED

First published, 1910.

Printed by BALLANTYNE & Co. LIMITED
Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London

TO
MY MOTHER

*These pleasant songs the poets bring
To Childhood and its sweet brief span,
In older ears do sweetly ring.
These pleasant songs the poets bring!
But lullabies you used to sing
To us are ever dearer than
These pleasant songs the poets bring
To Childhood and its sweet brief span!*

INTRODUCTION

THE scope of this little volume is sufficiently indicated by its title as to render unnecessary more than a brief word of introduction. It is a little collection of the poetry inspired by our dearest treasures, our small people. While anthologies of poetry for these small people are to be found in scores, few attempts have been made to collect those poems whose theme is the child from the parents' view—the child in sleep, in play, in mischief, and in the thousand sweet and self-revealing phases of the eternal mystery of Childhood.

Here are gathered such poems, from the patronising note of the early writers to the note of adoration most noticeable in the child-poems of "E. Nesbit," Mr. H. H. Bashford, and Mr. Alfred Noyes; with, in conclusion, a little scrip of consolation for those in whose ears the patter of small feet is now only the music of a dream.

Much of the most pleasant verse of children and child-life belongs to the last fifty years, and from the poetry of this period I have made as wide a selection as was, in the circumstances, practicable. Certain fine and familiar poems necessarily have had to be omitted, owing to

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copyright difficulties, but much of the best work of our modern poets I have been enabled to include, and I offer my thanks and appreciation to the following authors and publishers for generous permission accorded for the use of their copyright work :

To Miss Laurence Alma-Tadema for "A Lullaby," "A Blessing for the Blessed," and "Little Girls."

To Mr. H. H. Bashford for "At the Gate," "Cradle Song," "Little April," and "Parliament Hill"; and to the editors of *Country Life* and the *Spectator* for conforming this permission.

To Messrs. George Bell and Sons for "Fay," by Thomas Ashe, and "Toys," by Coventry Patmore.

To Mrs. Hubert Bland (E. Nesbit), for "Mother Song," "To a Child," and "Birthday Talk for a Child."

To the Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, for "Little Orphant Annie," by James Whitcomb Riley.

To Messrs. David Bryce and Sons, Glasgow, for "Baby Bell," by Thomas Bailey Aldrich.

To Mr. Austin Dobson for "Little Blue Ribbons."

To Mr. Norman Gale for "Bartholomew."

To Mr. Edmund Gosse for "To My Daughter."

To Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer for "To Christina at Nightfall."

To Mr. E. V. Lucas for "Ad Dorotheam."

To Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd., for the Dedication to "Alice in Wonderland," the Dedication to "Through the Looking-Glass," and the pendant verses to the latter story.

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To Miss Christabel Massey for "Within a Mile" and "Our Wee White Rose," by the late Gerald Massey. These poems are taken from her father's book, "My Lyrical Life," a few remaining copies of which are still obtainable from Miss Massey at "Redcot," South Norwood Hill, Surrey.

To Mr. William Meredith for "The Orchard and the Heath," by the late George Meredith.

To Mr. Alfred Noyes for "Little Boy Blue," the Prelude, and "The Splendid Secret" from "The Forest of Wild Thyme."

To Miss Hester Isobel Radford for "The Child."

To Messrs. George Routledge and Sons, for "Little Breeches," by John Hay.

To Mr. Owen Seaman for the two poems, "To Christine."

To Mr. Joseph Thorp for "The Pilot Bark."

I have taken the liberty of including three copyright poems the authors of which I have been unable to trace. I trust that they will pardon my having used their work without permission, and accept my apologies, as well as thanks.

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