

**POETRY FOR CHILDREN,
SECOND BOOK. SELECTED
AND ARRANGED WITH
NOTES AND VOCABULARY**

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Poetry for Children, Second Book. Selected and Arranged with Notes and Vocabulary by
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EDMUND ARTHUR HELPS

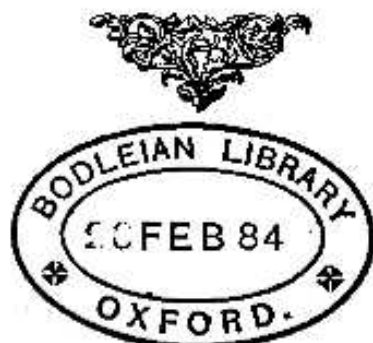
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POETRY FOR CHILDREN

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SELECTED AND ARRANGED, WITH NOTES
AND VOCABULARY,

BY EDMUND ARTHUR HELPS.



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PREFACE.

THIS compilation, forming the second of a series of three books of poetry specially designed for use as class-books in the elementary schools, is intended for children of from ten to twelve years of age.

The book will, I think, be also found suitable as a class-book for schools of a higher grade. In these schools the poetry would probably not be found to be too difficult for children of from nine to eleven years of age.

The aims of this book are identical with those of the lower book of the series, namely, first to induce a love of reading for its own sake, by interesting and amusing the reader, and developing the imaginative and sympathetic faculties; and, secondly, to cultivate a taste for beauty of thought and expression, by setting before the children poetry of merit. At the same time I have had in mind the need for using this book as an instrument for adding to the child's range of ideas and vocabulary; for the reading of such children as those for whom this book is intended is generally confined to the two or three reading-books read in class in each year of the school-course.

With regard to the matter, my field of choice has been somewhat limited, for, from obvious reasons, I have been obliged to avoid what may be termed the poetry of the passions (save that relating to the domestic affections). Again, I have been compelled to reject all poetry containing classical allusions, as

being unsuitable to my purpose. My selection therefore, consists of simple lyrical and descriptive poetry, together with fables, ballads, a few pieces of a religious or moral character, and one or two didactic pieces. I have made much use of fables, as, according to my experience, children delight in them, when the lessons conveyed are presented in an unobtrusive and inoffensive manner.

I have in some few cases been obliged to lower my standard of merit, and to sacrifice style to matter, and I have been unable to include some few poems of much excellence, which are found in many selections for children, because I consider they contain images and metaphors too subtle for the comprehension of such children as those I have in view.

I have taken the liberty of omitting portions of some few poems, which otherwise would have been too long for this book, or unsuitable, and, in the case of a few fables and ballads, I have made slight verbal alterations.

The poems are arranged with regard to variety, and in order of relative difficulty.

All difficult passages and expressions are fully explained in notes, which are placed at the end of the book.

A vocabulary, at the end of the book, gives the meaning of every word occurring in the selection which is likely to be unintelligible to the child. I have only attempted to give the meaning of a word according to its use in the poem. Directions as to the use of the Vocabulary will be found at its head.

It may be thought that much of the explanatory matter given in the notes is superfluous, but, from my knowledge of the mental capacities and vocabulary of the children under consideration, I am convinced that the full meaning of much of the poetry in this selection can only be obtained by studying each poem with the aid of notes and vocabulary, just as a public school-boy studies a Latin Classic by means of Lexicon and notes. Knowledge gained in this way is retained, the

trouble involved in obtaining it impressing it on the memory.

In providing children of the elementary school class with books, it is too often forgotten that such children, not having the advantages of the mental culture which children of the educated classes gain from their associations, training, and surroundings, are naturally very far behind them in their word-knowledge and in comprehension of the language used by educated people.

Touching this subject, I cannot do better than quote from Mr. Matthew Arnold's last report in the Blue Book for 1881, in which, in speaking of the importance of the poetry exercise, he says :—

“The scanty vocabulary of our school children, and their correspondent narrow range of ideas, must be known and allowed for if one is to guide their instruction usefully. I have found in London schools children of twelve years old, able to pass well in reading, writing, and arithmetic, who yet did not know what ‘a steed’ was. I found in a good school the other day a head class of some thirty, only one of whom knew what ‘a ford’ was. ‘Steed’ is a literary word, ‘ford’ is a word of country life, not of town life; still they are words, one is apt to think, universally understood by everyone above five years old. But even common words of this kind are not universally understood by the children with whom we deal.”

I have not attempted to explain difficulties which a little thought will enable the reader to overcome; and, notwithstanding the amount of explanatory matter afforded by the notes and vocabulary, it will be found that there is ample scope for the exercise of children's imaginative powers.

I trust that this book will meet the requirements of the Revised Code for 1882, in which it is proposed that one of the two class-subjects for which grants are made shall be “English,” and further, that if one class-subject only be taken in a school in receipt of annual grants, that subject shall be “English.”—

under which head it is required that a certain number of lines of poetry shall be learned in each class.

This book contains poetry suitable for children in the classes corresponding with Standards III. and IV.

I would tender my thanks to those who have given me permission to include certain of their poems in this selection (the authorship of each one of these poems is acknowledged herein), and I would also thank Messrs. Warne & Co., Messrs. Macmillan & Co., Messrs. Strahan, Messrs. Weston & Co., Messrs. Nelson & Sons, and Messrs. J. Routledge & Sons, for their courtesy in granting me permission to include poems of which they have the copyright.

FOR TEACHERS.

It is intended that each poem should be studied by the child with the aid of the Notes and Vocabulary, which, however, are not intended to absolve the teacher from all explanation. Even with the above-mentioned aids the child may fail to thoroughly grasp the meaning of an involved expression, or somewhat abstruse thought, from not being able to assimilate the information supplied. Judicious questioning will, however, enable the teacher to ascertain how far it is necessary to supplement the information given. I have assumed that the poetry to be learned will generally be *studied as a home lesson*, a certain number of lines being studied, and committed to memory each week.

Model reading in order to enable the children to gain the metre will of course be required.

The teacher will have to guard against the child assuming that a word given in the vocabulary has no other meaning than, or only a similar meaning to that I have supplied.

E. A. HELPS.

LONDON, *December, 1881.*

THE RAPID STREAM.

OH streamlet swiftly flowing,
Down through the corn-fields going,
Stay thy course with me ;
For us the skylarks sing,
For us awakes the Spring ;
There's time to spare, the earth is fair ;
Why hurry to the sea ? 7

The sky is bright above thee,
Silvery branches love thee,
Bending to the reeds ;
No mill with busy wheel,
Or ship with ploughing keel,
With sad unrest disturbs thy breast,
Amid thy flowery meads. 14

C. MACKAY.¹

THE BOYS AND THE FROGS.

SOME boys at play
One summer's day,
Beside a streamlet straying,
Happen'd to see,
In harmless glee,
A shoal of frogs there playing. 6

¹ By permission of F. Warne and Co., Publishers.