

**THE LANIER BOOK;  
SELECTIONS IN PROSE AND  
VERSE FROM THE WRITINGS  
OF SIDNEY LANIER**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649624942

The Lanier Book; Selections in Prose and Verse from the Writings of Sidney Lanier by Sidney Lanier & Mary E. Burt

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Cover @ 2017

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**SIDNEY LANIER & MARY E. BURT**

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# THE LANIER BOOK

SELECTIONS IN PROSE AND VERSE  
FROM THE WRITINGS OF  
SIDNEY LANIER.

EDITED BY  
MARY E. BURT

*ILLUSTRATED*



NEW YORK  
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1909

L.C.

+

**To**  
**MY BOYS OF 1908**



## PREFACE

SIDNEY LANIER is best known by his "Marshes of Glynn," "The Symphony," "Corn," "Clover," "The Song of the Chattahoochee," and "Ballad of Trees and the Master," poems appealing to the mature mind. Anyone not intimately acquainted with his works might ask: "What is there in the writings of Lanier for younger minds? Surely he speaks to the philosopher, the scientist, the statesman, but not to the student in common schools." Lanier has two audiences. He has his following of university professors and profound scholars, and he has his young people's brigade, as well. No one who has heard boys of nine and ten years recite with glowing interest "The Tournament," "Tampa Robins," "Barnacles," and "The Song of the Chattahoochee," as I have repeatedly, can doubt that even a child's life



will be broadened and his mind made keener through contact with the lines of this dear poet.

Sidney Lanier had four boys of his own. He was in touch with children and childhood. He loved the intimate companionship of his boys. He loved to play with them, to read to them, to reason with them, to write to them and for them and about them. Some of the most precious hours of his life were devoted to editing children's books, and his own children gave him the clew to what was best in these volumes, "The Boy's King Arthur," "The Boy's Froissart," "Knightly Legends of Wales," and "The Boy's Percy." It was out of the young father's heart and for the love of his own children that these things were done. Right well did he know the joyous pride of the young father in his first-born when he wrote "Baby Charlie." Well did he know the strenuous and chivalric heart of the boy when he edited the various volumes of knightly tales.

Lanier's devotion to his brother Clifford was passionate affection to the last, and in their poem (written conjointly), "The First Steamboat up the Alabama," there is a delicious ap-

preciation of child-life in the character of little Dinah, which only child-loving poets realize:

“Shuh dat gal jes’ like dis little hick’ry tree,  
De sap’s jes’ risin’ in her; she do grow owdaciouslee.” \*

This poem always calls forth a storm of applause when read or recited before children or older students, as does also “The Hard Times in Elfland,” a princely gift from the poet to his children when Santa Claus was too poor and sick to fill their stockings with toys. Oh, what a Christmas gift was that!

“The Story of a Proverb,” written for young folks, and first printed in *St. Nicholas* magazine, is much liked by children, and “The Story of King Arthur,” also from *St. Nicholas*, is a running review of King Arthur’s life condensed, and valuable in school work to the teacher who is too pressed for time to place the large volume in her pupil’s hands. Any pupil of twelve years who can read with an average degree of accuracy will like the story.

The Lanier Book need not be considered a volume for one grade. I remember a “Lanier Day” in my own school-room a few years ago

\* See “Poems of Sidney Lanier,” p. 179.

when a youth of fourteen paid a brilliant tribute to the poet, and pupils from eight to fifteen applauded heartily; and yet another "Lanier Day" when boys of eight or nine or ten recited with zest "Tampa Robins," "The Tournament," "Life and Song," "Barnacles," and other poems, to a most appreciative audience of parents. There is no "grade line" and no "age line" in the writings of great men. The work of Lanier, like that of Hawthorne, Longfellow, Lowell, and Cable, is crowned "permanent" by the best critics, and there is no longer any possibility of excluding him from educational lines or of reserving him for future schools to discover.

The thanks of the editor are due to Mrs. Mary Day Lanier, who has revised the work, and to William Malone Baskervill, from whose "Biographical and Critical Studies of Southern Writers" I have often quoted.

MARY E. BURT.

The John A. Browning School.  
April, 1904.