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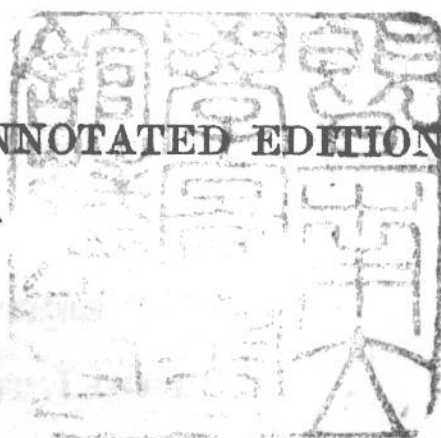
GOLDEN TREASURY

OF THE BEST SONGS AND LYRICAL
POEMS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Selected and arranged by
FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

*With Additional Poems to
the Present Day*

ANNOTATED EDITION



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FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

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Died, South Kensington, October 24, 1897

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Εἰς τὸν λειμῶνα καθίσας,
ἔδρεπεν ἕτερον ἐφ' ἑτέρῳ
αἰρόμενος ἄγρευμ' ἀνθέων
ἀδομένα ψυχᾷ.

[Eurip. frag. 754.]

[' He sat in the meadow and plucked
with glad heart the spoil of the
flowers, gathering them one by one.']

TO ALFRED TENNYSON

POET LAUREATE

THIS book in its progress has recalled often to my memory a man with whose friendship we were once honoured, to whom no region of English Literature was unfamiliar, and who, whilst rich in all the noble gifts of Nature, was most eminently distinguished by the noblest and the rarest,—just judgement and high-hearted patriotism. It would have been hence a peculiar pleasure and pride to dedicate what I have endeavoured to make a true national Anthology of three centuries to Henry Hallam. But he is beyond the reach of any human tokens of love and reverence; and I desire therefore to place before it a name united with his by associations which, whilst Poetry retains her hold on the minds of Englishmen, are not likely to be forgotten.

Your encouragement, given while traversing the wild scenery of Treryn Dinas, led me to begin the work; and it has been completed under your advice and assistance. For the favour now asked

I have thus a second reason : and to this I may add, the homage which is your right as Poet, and the gratitude due to a Friend, whose regard I rate at no common value.

Permit me then to inscribe to yourself a book which, I hope, may be found by many a lifelong fountain of innocent and exalted pleasure ; a source of animation to friends when they meet ; and able to sweeten solitude itself with best society, —with the companionship of the wise and the good with the beauty which the eye cannot see, and the music only heard in silence. If this Collection proves a storehouse of delight to Labour and to Poverty,—if it teaches those indifferent to the Poets to love them, and those who love them to love them more, the aim and the desire entertained in framing it will be fully accomplished.

F. T. P.

May, 1861.

PREFACE

THIS little Collection differs, it is believed, from others in the attempt made to include in it all the best original Lyrical pieces and Songs in our language, by writers not living,—and none beside the best. Many familiar verses will hence be met with ; many also which should be familiar :—the Editor will regard as his fittest readers those who love Poetry so well, that he can offer them nothing not already known and valued.

The Editor is acquainted with no strict and exhaustive definition of Lyrical Poetry ; but he has found the task of practical decision increase in clearness and in facility as he advanced with the work, whilst keeping in view a few simple principles. Lyrical has been here held essentially to imply that each Poem shall turn on some single thought, feeling, or situation. In accordance with this, narrative, descriptive, and didactic poems,—unless accompanied by rapidity of movement, brevity, and the colouring of human passion,—have been excluded. Humorous poetry, except in the very unfrequent instances where a truly poetical tone pervades the whole, with what is strictly personal, occasional, and religious, has been considered foreign to the idea of the book. Blank verse and the ten-syllable couplet, with all pieces markedly dramatic, have been rejected as alien from what is commonly understood by Song, and rarely conforming to Lyrical conditions in treatment. But it is not anticipated, nor is it possible, that all readers shall think the line accurately drawn. Some poems, as Gray's 'Elegy,' the 'Allegro' and 'Penseroso,' Wordsworth's 'Ruth' or Campbell's 'Lord Ullin,' might be

claimed with perhaps equal justice for a narrative or descriptive selection : whilst with reference especially to Ballads and Sonnets, the Editor can only state that he has taken his utmost pains to decide without caprice or partiality.

This also is all he can plead in regard to a point even more liable to question ;—what degree of merit should give rank among the Best. That a Poem shall be worthy of the writer's genius,—that it shall reach a perfection commensurate with its aim,—that we should require finish in proportion to brevity,—that passion, colour, and originality cannot atone for serious imperfections in clearness, unity, or truth,—that a few good lines do not make a good poem,—that popular estimate is serviceable as a guidepost more than as a compass,—above all, that Excellence should be looked for rather in the Whole than in the Parts,—such and other such canons have been always steadily regarded. He may however add that the pieces chosen, and a far larger number rejected, have been carefully and repeatedly considered ; and that he has been aided throughout by two friends of independent and exercised judgement, besides the distinguished person addressed in the Dedication. It is hoped that by this procedure the volume has been freed from that onesidedness which must beset individual decisions :—but for the final choice the Editor is alone responsible.

It would obviously have been invidious to apply the standard aimed at in this Collection to the Living. Nor, even in the cases where this might be done without offence, does it appear wise to attempt to anticipate the verdict of the Future on our contemporaries. Should the book last, poems by Tennyson, Bryant, Clare, Lowell, and others, will no doubt claim and obtain their place among the best. But the Editor trusts that this will be effected by other hands, and in days far distant.

Chalmers' vast collection, with the whole works of all accessible poets not contained in it, and the best Anthologies of different periods, have been twice systematically read through : and it is hence improbable that any omissions which may be regretted are due to oversight. The poems are printed entire, except in a very few instances (specified in the notes) where a stanza has been omitted. The omissions have been risked only when the piece could be thus brought to a closer lyrical unity : and, as essentially opposed to this unity, extracts, obviously such, are excluded. In regard to the text, the purpose of the book has appeared to justify the choice of the most poetical version, wherever more than one exists : and much labour has been given to present each poem, in disposition, spelling, and punctuation, to the greatest advantage.

For the permission under which the copyright pieces are inserted, thanks are due to the respective Proprietors, without whose liberal concurrence the scheme of the collection would have been defeated.

In the arrangement, the most poetically-effective order has been attempted. The English mind has passed through phases of thought and cultivation so various and so opposed during these three centuries of Poetry, that a rapid passage between Old and New, like rapid alteration of the eye's focus in looking at the landscape, will always be wearisome and hurtful to the sense of Beauty. The poems have been therefore distributed into Books corresponding, I to the ninety years closing about 1616, II thence to 1700, III to 1800, IV to the half century just ended. Or, looking at the Poets who more or less give each portion its distinctive character, they might be called the Books of Shakespeare, Milton, Gray, and Wordsworth. The volume, in this respect, so far as the limitations of its range allow, accurately reflects the natural growth and evolution of our Poetry.

A rigidly chronological sequence, however, rather fits a collection aiming at instruction than at pleasure, and the Wisdom which comes through Pleasure :—within each book the pieces have therefore been arranged in gradations of feeling or subject. The development of the symphonies of Mozart and Beethoven has been here thought of as a model, and nothing placed without careful consideration. And it is hoped that the contents of this Anthology will thus be found to present a certain unity, ‘as episodes,’ in the noble language of Shelley, ‘to that great Poem which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world.’

As he closes his long survey, the Editor trusts he may add without egotism, that he has found the vague general verdict of popular Fame more just than those have thought, who, with too severe a criticism, would confine judgements on Poetry to ‘the selected few of many generations.’ Not many appear to have gained reputation without some gift or performance that, in due degree, deserved it: and if no verses by certain writers who show less strength than sweetness, or more thought than mastery in expression, are printed in this volume, it should not be imagined that they have been excluded without much hesitation and regret,—far less that they have been slighted. Throughout this vast and pathetic array of Singers now silent, few have been honoured with the name Poet, and have not possessed a skill in words, a sympathy with beauty, a tenderness of feeling, or seriousness in reflection, which render their works, although never perhaps attaining that loftier and finer excellence here required,—better worth reading than much of what fills the scanty hours that most men spare for self-improvement, or for pleasure in any of its more elevated and permanent forms.—And if this be true of even mediocre poetry, for

how much more are we indebted to the best ! Like the fabled fountain of the Azores, but with a more various power, the magic of this Art can confer on each period of life its appropriate blessing: on early years Experience, on maturity Calm, on age Youthfulness. Poetry gives treasures 'more golden than gold,' leading us in higher and healthier ways than those of the world, and interpreting to us the lessons of Nature. But she speaks best for herself. Her true accents, if the plan has been executed with success, may be heard throughout the following pages :—wherever the Poets of England are honoured, wherever the dominant language of the world is spoken, it is hoped that they will find fit audience.

F. T. P.

NOTE

Samuel Rogers, who died in 1855, was the last poet included in *The Golden Treasury*. In this reprint additional poems are given representing the latter half of the nineteenth century. None but Mr. Palgrave could have grouped the newer poems in 'the most poetically-effective order,' as he conceived it, so they have been added in the chronological order of their authors. A few dates in the original selection have been corrected. With regard to copyright poems, Messrs. William Blackwood & Sons have kindly permitted the inclusion of George Eliot's 'O may I join the choir invisible'; Messrs. George Bell & Sons, Mr. Coventry Patmore's 'The Toys'; Messrs. Chatto & Windus, Mr. Arthur O'Shaughnessy's ode; and Mrs. Henley and Mr. Nutt, Mr. W. E. Henley's 'Out of the night that covers me.'

Advantage has been taken of a new impression to include four of Mr. Swinburne's poems, by the kind permission of Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton.

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THE GOLDEN TREASURY

BOOK FIRST

1

SPRING

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant
king ;

Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo !

The palm and may make country houses gay, 5
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,
And we hear ay birds tune this merry lay,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo !

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a-sunning sit, 10
In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo !
Spring ! the sweet Spring !

T. NASH.

2

SUMMONS TO LOVE

Phoebus, arise !
And paint the sable skies
With azure, white, and red :
Rouse Memnon's mother from her Tithon's bed
That she thy càrèer may with roses spread : 5
The nightingales thy coming each-where sing :

2 DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN

Make an eternal spring,
 Give life to this dark world which lieth dead ;
 Spread forth thy golden hair
 In larger locks than thou wast wont before, 10
 And emperor-like decore
 With diadem of pearl thy temples fair :
 Chase hence the ugly night
 Which serves but to make dear thy glorious light.

—This is that happy morn, 15
 That day, long-wishéd day
 Of all my life so dark,
 (If cruel stars have not my ruin sworn
 And fates my hopes betray),
 Which, purely white, deserves 20
 An everlasting diamond should it mark.
 This is the morn should bring unto this grove
 My Love, to hear and recompense my love.

Fair King, who all preserves,
 But show thy blushing beams, 25
 And thou two sweeter eyes
 Shalt see than those which by Peneüs' streams
 Did once thy heart surprise.

Now, Flora, deck thyself in fairest guise :
 If that ye, winds, would hear 30
 A voice surpassing far Amphion's lyre,
 Your furious chiding stay ;
 Let Zephyr only breathe,
 And with her tresses play.

—The winds all silent are, 35
 And Phoebus in his chair
 Ensaffroning sea and air
 Makes vanish every star :
 Night like a drunkard reels
 Beyond the hills, to shun his flaming wheels : 40
 The fields with flowers are deck'd in every hue,
 The clouds with orient gold spangle their blue ;
 Here is the pleasant place—

And nothing wanting is, save She, alas !

W. DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN.

3

TIME AND LOVE

I

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of out-worn buried age ;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed,
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage ;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain 5
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss, and loss with store ;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay, 10
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminat—
That Time will come and take my Love away :
—This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

4

II

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'ersways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower ?
O how shall summer's honey breath hold out 5
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout
Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays ?
O fearful meditation ! where, alack ! 9
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid ?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back,
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid ?
O ! none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

W. SHAKESPEARE.

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE

Come live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dale and field,
And all the craggy mountains yield.

There will we sit upon the rocks 5
And see the shepherds feed their flocks,
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

There will I make thee beds of roses 10
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroider'd all with leaves of myrtle.

A gown made of the finest wool,
Which from our pretty lambs we pull, 15
Fair lined slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold.

A belt of straw and ivy buds
With coral clasps and amber studs :
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my Love. 20

Thy silver dishes for thy meat
As precious as the gods do eat,
Shall on an ivory table be
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing 25
For thy delight each May-morning :
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love.

C. MARLOWE.

6

A MADRIGAL

Crabbed Age and Youth
Cannot live together :

Youth is full of pleasance,
Age is full of care ;

Youth like summer morn,
Age like winter weather,

Youth like summer brave,
Age like winter bare :

Youth is full of sport,

Age's breath is short,

Youth is nimble, Age is lame :

Youth is hot and bold,

Age is weak and cold,

Youth is wild, and Age is tame :—

Age, I do abhor thee,

Youth, I do adore thee ;

O ! my Love, my Love is young !

Age, I do defy thee—

O sweet shepherd, hie thee,

For methinks thou stay'st too long. 20

W. SHAKESPEARE.

7

Under the greenwood tree

Who loves to lie with me,

And turn his merry note

Unto the sweet bird's throat—

Come hither, come hither, come hither ! 5

Here shall he see

No enemy

But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun

And loves to live i' the sun,

10