

I said just now that in reading these verses, we can exclaim "I also." But that was a slight exaggeration. Only a very few readers could honestly say that, for the Stevenson child is a child of genius, removed from the ordinary child by a wide gulf. It is true that a philosopher has recorded his belief that every child has genius; but, even if that be so, there are degrees. It is given to few to possess the wisdom and imaginings of this little gardener. The difference between the child of genius and the ordinary child may be illustrated by quotation. The ordinary child, impelled to verse in the presence of a cow, remarks:—

Thank you, pretty cow, that made
Pleasant milk to soak my bread,
Every day and every night,
Warm and sweet and fresh and white;

and so on. The child of genius says:

The friendly cow, all red and white,
I love with all my heart;
She gives me cream with all her might,
To eat with apple tart.

And take these lines, called "System" (noting what an advantage it is when child and man collaborate in a book about children—the child gives the essence and the man the titles):—

Every night my prayers I say,
And get my dinner every day,
And every day that I've been good,
I get an orange after food.

The child that is not clean and neat,
With lots of toys and things to eat,
He is a naughty child, I'm sure!
Or else his dear papa is poor.

The first seven lines might conceivably have been written by any average young rhymers. In the last—such a sweet reservation!—we have the child of genius again. And there is vision in this description of a fairy land, as a place:—

Where all the children dine at five,
And all the playthings come alive;

and in the thought as he launches his boats:—

Away down the river,
A hundred miles or more,
Other little children
Shall bring my boats ashore—

vision that would be impossible to the ordinary child. Similarly in this pronouncement on "The Whole Duty of Children," the genius is in the last line:—

A child should always say what's true,
And speak when he is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table;
At least as far as he is able.

But with all deference to Mr. Traill, this is not food for young readers. The fact that Mr. Stevenson is always on the side of the nurses does not make him a writer for the nursery. To press poetry into the service of the disciplinarian is to mistake its function. What could be more delightful to read than this optimistic "Thought," with its humorous vagueness:—

The world is so full of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be as happy as
kings.

—and yet how disenchanting would it be to hear the sentiment uttered by one's own little son! These things should remain implicit in childhood; and when expressed, expressed by deeds, not words.

One reflection that occurs and recurs in childhood, and should be illustrated in the Grown-up's Anthology, finds no prominent place in Mr. Stevenson's pages: the unreason of grown-up people. The spectacle of their elders wasting their opportunities for enjoyment troubles most children. A poem in a modest, thoughtful volume entitled "Studies in Verse," by Charles Grant, which appeared in 1875, expresses a little girl's views on this question very