

heaven, but the other place, that lies about us in our infancy.

How many of us there are who have kept from the right attitude towards certain poems for no other reason than that in our young days we were incessantly called upon to learn or to admire them! If, however, we had been given a volume of verse of the kind we were ready to enjoy, which, as I have said, had *stood* for poetry in our minds, we should have known no such barrier. Such a volume should entertain throughout—it should offer legend, narrative, and fun. It should be as gay as it could be made, compatible with technical excellency.

The Child's Anthology would not be easy to compile. On the other hand the editor setting about to prepare a book likely, by the emphasis which it laid upon the blessedness of the state of childhood, to turn mature thoughts very pleasantly, if somewhat regretfully, down the backward way, would find an abundance of fields in which to glean. And he would find, too, that several sources from which, at the first blush, one would think to borrow largely for the Child's Anthology are suitable only for the Grown-up's. There is, pre-eminently, Robert Louis Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verses." Only the other day no less a critic than Mr. Traill was remarking upon the gain to the British nursery afforded by this book, and yet our ideal editor for young readers would take not more than a mere sip from its pages. He would hold that it is not a child's book at all; he would hold that it is essentially matter for men and women, and is not to be opened until we are on the other and less delightful side of that phase of life of which it tells. To hand the book to children, he would say, and bid them learn it, is to manufacture so many second-hand Stevensons. Every child, more or less intelligently,

does this kind of thing for itself, and in heaven's name keep it original! "A Child's Garden of Verses," however, may as well keep its reputation as a nursery classic, for it thus remains one of those books which parents buy for their children in order that they may read them themselves. Every Christmas there is a wave of such reflex generosity.

"A Child's Garden of Verses" is the ideal field for the Grown-up's harvester. It stands alone. There is nothing like it, so intimate, so simply truthful, in our language, in any language. Herein the poet (at last one may use the words "poet" and "poetry" with no reservations) has accomplished that most difficult of feats; he has recaptured in maturity the thoughts, ambitions, purposes, hopes, fears, philosophy of the child. We have speech from

the immortal Child tarrying all his lifetime in his heart. It is our joy, as we listen, to recapture them too. To say "Such an one was I," "Just so did I behave," "I also hunted behind the sofa back." The map of genius who can draw from his charmed reader a genuine "I also," is assured of a niche in the heart. The "Child's Garden of Verses" is one of those books which inspire the feeling—almost the passion—of gratitude. As we read our eyes are a little moist—with satisfaction; and now, when the words have the sympathetic alliance of Mr. Charles Robinson's pencil, more so than ever. (Never were author and artist in closer accord. It adds matter to our grief for Mr. Stevenson's early death that he could not see these winsome pictures, especially perhaps the last.) As we read, years fall away, wrinkles are smoothed out, the envious crow removes his foot, world-knowledge so bitterly acquired evanesces, and once again the man is a child at play, and a bird is singing in his heart as of old.