

about children, fitted by its truth and beauty to keep their hearts green and sweet. As it is, neither of these collections exists, although not a few are to be obtained which hold material enough to form the nucleus of each. For the sake of convenience when referring to them later, let us call these two necessary collections the *Grown-up's Anthology* and the *Child's Anthology*.

The best-known collections of children's poetry (so called) are Mr. F. T. Palgrave's "Children's Treasury of English Song," Mr. Coventry Patmore's "Child's Garland of Verse," and Mr. Andrew Lang's "Blue Poetry Book," the respective editors of which seem to have compiled in the main for themselves, and then, by way of averting a charge of selfishness, to have addressed the book to a younger generation. Before looking into these anthologies, it should be understood that one finds fault only with their avowed destination. As a collection of poems about childhood each in its own way is delightful, although even then not satisfactory. It is as vehicles for the entertainment of young readers that they are so sadly to seek.

Among the total number of pieces in the three collections I find not more than thirty which should be included if the pleasure of the child were the sole concern of the editor. These are, almost without exception, narratives, and as such should be chosen for their interest as stories, and not for intrinsic poetical merit at all; although, on the other hand, a good tale presented in conspicuously bad verse would of course be omitted from such a volume as is here foreshadowed. Each of the three editors draws largely upon Wordsworth. I should take not a line. Each of the three editors quotes Gray's "Elegy." I should as soon think of printing Pope's "Essay on Man." Mr. Lang

borrow freely from Burns; and how the future is discounted! On the other hand he gives Peacock's "War Song of Dynas Vawr," which is a discriminating choice, and Macaulay's "Armada" and "Ivry," and, as might be expected, several of the finest of the old ballads. These selections are, I think, good; but I would omit the "Ancient Mariner," as being too good. Each of the three editors offers much of Blake. There, again, I think them wrong. Blake sang of childhood in the abstract, and to men and women whose hearts are right he is a fount of pure joy; but children care nothing for childhood in the abstract—and well for them that it is so. A bad fairy seeking at the cradle-side for a luckless gift could not bestow upon a child aughtless enviable than the habit of self-consciousness.

In place of the abstract pieces, and any insistence on the condition of childhood, I should like to see more fun and irresponsibility. The *Child's Anthology* should amuse and delight from first page to last; it should, although not in itself poetry, *stand for* poetry in the minds of its young readers, and convince them that poetry is a good thing and a pleasant, and thus, instead of being indifferent to it, or worse, prejudiced against it, they would be prepared for the time when, like Aurora Leigh, they "chanced" (as all of us should) upon the poets in reality. To a mind that is not ready for it poetry presents few attractions, and these are diminished rather than augmented by the encomiastic statements of relatives and instructors. The governess's approval of Gray's "Elegy" does not make its portentous solemnity any less depressing to her pupils, unable yet to perceive its beauty; and to confront the childish reader with Wordsworth's great "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" (as Mr. Palgrave does) may lead him to believe that it is not