

PREFACE.

"night fears," when once they have moved "harmonious numbers." And to enjoy poetry at all, is always an exercise, however unconscious, of the intellect; so that by giving the imagination this its best and noblest outlet, we are making it help to strengthen, instead of, as it otherwise might, enfeeble the mind. Last of all, it is through poetry that religious truth most readily finds its way to the heart of "children and child-like souls;" this divine influence it is which enables us to sympathize with holy men of old. Sacred poetry is, after, of course, her creed, sacraments, liturgy, and ministry, the brightest possession of the Church—the richest pasturage of her children; eminently fitted, therefore, for her little ones, who, as yet, require none of her stern discipline; whose minds are all open to its gentle and holy inspiration; ready for truth when so presented to them as that they can livingly apprehend it, but incapable of giving it any cordial reception in the forms of logic, or the loveless antagonism of controversy.

For all these reasons, we say, cultivate in children a taste for poetry. It is hardly a labour to do so; and in as far as it is one, it is nearly sure to be richly rewarded.

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