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Second Year
Little Rhymes for Great Books.

Ecclesiastes;

Because the end of life is death,
And justice goes awry,
Ecclesiastes bids us ask;
Is life worthwhile and why ?

Homer; The Odyssey;

Odysseus so mighty was
In arts of war and peace,
His story but presages
'The glory that was Greece.'

Sophocles; Oedipus Rex
and Oedipus at
Colonus.

Self-torture thought King Oedipus,
Though forced to sin by fate,
Would show he loathed such evil deeds;
His name would elevate.

Plato; Meno

"What is virtue", Plato asked.
His hearers were in doubt,
And though they tried to answer him,
They never did find out.

Aristotle; Books I and
2; Book 10
Chapters 6-9.

But Aristotle sought to show
That virtue was a course
Between extremes of goodness
That wisdom would endorse.

Lucretius; Of the Nature
of things: Books 1-3

With rare insight, Lucretius wrote
Not gods, but natural law
Explained the world's phenomena
That men around them saw.

St. Augustine;
Confessions, Books I-8

St. Augustine bewailed his sins,
And made a fervent vow
To lead, henceforth, a better life,
With God to show him how.

Shakespeare;
Hamlet;

Not mad, though feigning so to be,
While sad and sick at heart,
To learn the way his father died,
Prince Hamlet played a part.

Descartes;
Discourse on Method;

"I think, therefore I am",
Descartes would have us note:
Science may explore the world,
But not man's soul, he wrote.

Hobbes's Leviathan; Intro;
Part I Chs. II-16
Part 2 Chs. 17, 18, 29.

A superman Hobbes thought the state;
The Sovereign as the head
Should rule all men and none should dare
Defy his word, he said.

Pascal; Pensees, selections;

To fortify his faith in God,
And thus refute all doubt
The case for the affirmative,
We find Pascal wrote out.

Swift;
Gulliver's Travels.

Now Gulliver adventures had,
Exposing sham and fraud,
And found what men should most condemn,
They very often laud.

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Rousseau:
On the Origin of
Inequality:

All men in nature, wrote Rousseau,
Their human rights enjoy,
But governments, with social growth,
These rights may soon destroy.

Kant; Perpetual Peace:

Through triumph of the moral law
Immanuel Kant believed,
If only through self-interest,
World peace would be achieved.

Mill; On Liberty;

Not only civic liberty,
But of opinion too,
Mill held were both essential,
For thus all knowledge grew.

Mark Twain;

Adventures of
Huckleberry Finn;

Adventures of Huck Finn and Tom,
That range from sad to gay,
Reveal it's often very true
Men act the selfsame way.

Epilogue.

Thus many men of many minds
Essay to give more light
On problems that we have to meet,
To help us see the right.

Mabel L. Rees