

ENGLISH POETRY

ITS PRINCIPLES AND PROGRESS

WITH REPRESENTATIVE MASTERPIECES
FROM 1390 TO 1917 AND
WITH NOTES

BY

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PREFACE

THE purpose of this book is first and foremost to inspire young people with a love of poetry. In preparing this revised and enlarged edition we have aimed to set before pupils in our high schools not merely poems that will yield enjoyment after they have been studied, but poems that one cannot help enjoying on first acquaintance.

In order that the book may be of value for the entire high school course we have been at particular pains to include a large number of poems suitable for pupils of the first and second years. With these years especially in mind, more than one half of the material has been selected. With the more advanced pupils in mind, we have added to the poems usually prescribed as requirements for entrance to college a large number worthy on their own account, and all the more likely to promote a love of poetry because they are not staled by custom.

In the choice of materials we have had the kind assistance of over a hundred experienced and successful high school teachers of English. Carefully weighing their recommendations, we have omitted from our former list three or four poems easily procurable elsewhere, and have included some fifty poets not represented before and more than a hundred and fifty additional poems. Of the newly inserted poets and poems, about half supplement the material illustrative of the periods covered in the former editions of the book, which closed with Matthew Arnold. The poets of more recent periods, some twenty-seven, and poems, some eighty in all, no less cordially approved by our consulting committee, have been added in order that pupils may not rest in the conviction that English poetry ceased with Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold. The tale thus resumed with Meredith, Rossetti, Morris, and

Swinburne, and carried down to the present day, will, we are confident, be of rare and inspiring interest and value to teachers and pupils alike. In this latter effort our labors have been lightened by the generous coöperation of several of the most representative contemporary poets.

We have, in general, adhered to the plan of the former book. The design is to provide within the covers of one volume what is usually set forth in three volumes: (1) an introduction to the Principles of Poetry; (2) a survey of the Progress of English Poetry by its periods, together with critical sketches of the lives and works of the poets chosen as representative; (3) as much as possible of the poetry commonly read in preparation for entrance to American universities, and such other poems as are illustrative of successive literary periods and adapted to the requirements of an introductory course in English masterpieces; (4) such notes as will aid the pupil in his study of the poems and increase his ability to appreciate and understand poetry not thus annotated.

For our former prefatory essay on the principles of poetry, intended not primarily for use in class but for "teachers, to to be retailed to younger pupils as occasion offers and discretion dictates," we have substituted here a distinctively elementary Introduction to the Study of Poetry. This Introduction covers only such topics as are essential to the information of high school pupils. It aims to present the material as briefly and simply as possible, but still with something of the detail befitting a subject of wide scope, something of the explanation required by pupils unfamiliar with the study, and something of the literary sympathy and delight that cannot be conveyed in a categorical and dry-as-dust statement. If the student is encouraged to make constant reference to the illustrative poems mentioned in the Introduction, he will learn to apply the principles and will derive keener enjoyment from poetry better understood. At the request of teachers the more comprehensive Principles of Poetry mentioned above will presently be republished in enlarged and independent form. It may, meanwhile, be consulted in the earlier editions of this book.

The chapters on the Progress of English Poetry aim to focus in one study the theory and history of the subject. They introduce each literary period and the biographies of the respective authors with a more general account of the characteristics and tendencies of the age. In the special criticism of the poems by which each author is represented (whether in the text or the notes) consideration has been given not only to his personal and historical conditions but to the relation of his work to poetic principles and the development of national literature. It will naturally be found advisable when dealing with younger pupils to read the poems in order of simplicity, as outlined below. But even so, the reading of the poet's biography should precede the reading of his poems, and in brief and appropriate fashion the characteristics of the period should be indicated by the teacher. Toward the end of the course — say, during the last term of the senior year — the historical and biographical sections should be read in review and supplemented by the study of some general school history of English literature.

Dramas, epics, and metrical romances (such as those of Scott) have not been included in this volume simply because their length is prohibitive. The same considerations have compelled us to content ourselves with only two of the *Idylls of the King*. *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, although the work of an American, has been carried over from the former edition at the request of teachers and for the convenience of students: the theme and treatment of the poem are such that it readily finds a place beside other narratives of chivalry here presented; it furnishes, moreover, an excellent opportunity for comparison of a noble American production with poems of similar nature by English writers. One other American poem is included and one poem by a Canadian, — Seeger's *I Have a Rendezvous with Death* and McCrae's *In Flanders Fields*. They could not be omitted from any collection of poems of the World War. From *The Faerie Queene*, *Paradise Lost*, *Childe Harold*, *In Memoriam*, *Dauber*, and two or three other poems too long for inclusion as wholes, we have presented excerpts. The rest of our poetic specimens are printed in their integrity.

In order to preserve their historical flavor we should have preferred to retain the archaic spelling of the older poets, but at the instance of many excellent teachers, who are of the opinion that such practice detracts from the pupil's appreciation of the poetry, we have refrained. The spelling has been uniformly modernized, except in the case of Chaucer. He wrote nearly two centuries before any of the other poets represented, and his orthography is part of the historical characteristic of a distant age and is essential to the charm of his poems. With Burns the Ayrshire dialect has, of course, been preserved, and for much the same reason; he would not be Burns without it.

In the notes at the end of the volume the attempt has been made to keep in mind a few definite considerations. First, *Notes are for the student and should be strictly practical*. Since they will, for the most part, be used by young people, they have been made on the basis of actual experience in the classroom. They aim to give nothing but what the student can use; to leave out all that will not directly aid him in understanding and appreciating the poem. Second, *Notes should clear up difficulties*. Though inspiration and enjoyment are the chief ends of poetry, they can be attained only if the reader understand the thought of the poet and his art, and, therefore, the words by which these are conveyed. Third, *Notes should not tell the student what he may reasonably be expected to find out for himself*. Explanations are given only when they cannot with readiness and economy be obtained from the ordinary books of reference. There should be within the reach of every pupil at least the following manuals: an English dictionary, such as Webster's *International*, *The New Standard*, or *The Century*, or a good abridgment for his own desk, such as Webster's *Academic*; a dictionary of classical names and myths, or some complete manual of mythology, such as Gayley's *Classic Myths in English Literature*; a Bible, if possible with a concordance; and a good History of English Literature with which to supplement the outline given in this book. The information easily to be found in these the editors have tried not to duplicate here. Fourth, *Notes should be adapted to the requirements of pupil and poem*. Chaucer and Burns, with

their textual peculiarities, need notes entirely different from Milton and Pope with their allusive character, or Wordsworth and Browning with their subtlety of thought. The pupil of lower grade requires a kind of help different from that demanded by his seniors. Some of the simpler poems here have accordingly been annotated, not with few notes because they are simple, but with ample notes because presumably the pupil who will study them is young. Fifth, *Notes should be suggestive*. The inability to realize what he ought to see in a poem, or to recognize what it really contains, is probably the chief drawback with the immature reader. The editors, therefore, offer no apology for the directive questions and suggestions of the notes. It is hoped that they may prove of real advantage to pupil and teacher. Sixth, *Notes are valuable only as a means to an end*, — that the reader may gain the greatest possible pleasure and inspiration from the poems themselves. In most cases he should endeavor to get all he can from the text before resorting to the notes at all.

The order in which these poems are studied will vary with the maturity of the student and the judgment of the teacher. Pupils of the third and fourth years and general readers will not infrequently take histories and texts in their chronological order. But for pupils of the first and second years of the high school course poems will naturally be selected with an eye to their simplicity and suitability of appeal. The following list of authors, arranged not in order of preference but chronologically, will direct the teacher to over a hundred poems exceptionally adapted to the course of the first two years; and these poems by no means exhaust the possibilities:

Elizabethan lyrists, Cavalier lyrists, Gray, Goldsmith,* Blake,* Burns,* Coleridge, Southey,* Lamb, Hunt,* Byron,* Shelley (*The Cloud*),* Macaulay,* Tennyson (nearly all), Arnold (*The Forsaken Merman*),* Lowell, Morris, Stevenson,* Henley, Kipling (nearly all),* Yeats,* De la Mare,* Masefield, Noyes (nearly all), Stephens (nearly all),* O'Sullivan,* and most of the poets of the World War. From the authors marked with an asterisk, some fifty poems may be drawn that will be both delightful and instructive for pupils of the first year. If

they have read a few of the poems already in the grammar school, they will derive nothing but profit from reviewing them at a maturer age.

Remembering that the purpose of this study is to promote a love of poetry, teachers will encourage their pupils to read widely, as well as carefully. That all may know what good things not included in this book await the reader we have constantly, in the biographies of the poets and in the notes, suggested poems and volumes of poems with which the materials presented here may be supplemented. The more generously school and town libraries are equipped with such books the more generally will good poetry be read, and the more richly will teachers be repaid for their classroom efforts to stimulate an appreciation of what is best in our literature.

The methods of teaching outlined in previous editions of this book are included with similar materials in a bulletin entitled *Suggestions for Teachers of English in the Secondary Schools*, by C. M. Gayley and C. B. Bradley. The pamphlet may be had on application to the University of California Press, Berkeley.

It remains to acknowledge the courtesy of publishers and authors. The selections from the poetry of Robert Bridges are used by permission of and by arrangement with the Oxford University Press. We are similarly indebted to Doubleday, Page and Company for the selections from the poetry of Rudyard Kipling; to John Lane Company for *Wordsworth's Grave* by Sir William Watson, and for the selections from John Davidson, Stephen Phillips, and Rupert Brooke; to the Houghton Mifflin Company for *We Willed It Not* by John Drinkwater, and *Edith Cavell* by Laurence Binyon; to Dodd, Mead and Company, his American publishers, for the selections from Austin Dobson; to Longmans, Green and Company for the selections from Andrew Lang; to William Heinemann for *Lying in the Grass* by Edmund Gosse; to Charles Scribner's Sons for the selections from Robert Louis Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verses," and *I Have a Rendezvous with Death* from Poems by Alan Seeger; to Henry Holt and Company for the selections from "Peacock Pie" and "The

Listeners" by Walter de la Mare; to Frederick Stokes Company for the selections from Alfred Noyes; to G. P. Putnam's Sons for *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae; to the *London Times* for *Into Battle* by the Hon. Julian Grenfell; and to The Macmillan Company for the selections from John Masefield and William Butler Yeats, and the selections from "The Hill of Vision" and "The Rocky Road to Dublin" by James Stephens, and for selections from "Battle and Other Poems" by W. W. Gibson. We also take great pleasure in expressing our gratitude to Robert Bridges, Edmund Gosse, Rudyard Kipling, Walter de la Mare, and Alfred Noyes for personal permission to use their poems.

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May 10, 1920.



SHAKESPEARE'S MONUMENT

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF POETRY¹

I. LITERATURE IN GENERAL

1. Literature may be defined as the product of thought in language committed to permanent form by writing. It is of three kinds: the practical, the artistic, and the creative.

2. Practical Literature aims to give information about the actual affairs of life. It communicates facts to our thinking faculty, the understanding. It consists of records, reports, official papers, business correspondence, the news of the day, textbooks, and other publications, historical or scientific, that are intended to disseminate information. Practical literature aims to set the "hard facts" before us as they are, without any coloring of emotion or appeal to the imagination. When the purpose of literature is merely to instruct or to convince by argument, it is a handicraft. The appropriate language of practical literature is prose.

3. Artistic Literature. — Literature begins to enter the realm of art just as soon as it stimulates the imagination and stirs feelings of pain and pleasure — especially feelings that are not about our own practical concerns. The literature of history as it is written by Macaulay, with charm of manner and style, with imagination and feeling, is artistic even though its purpose be to instruct and convince. So also are the orations of Burke and Webster and the essays of Matthew Arnold and Lowell and Emerson. They are artistic literature but they are not *creative*. The cause for this is not that they are written in prose, but that they are addressed to the reason, rather than to the imagination and the emotions. Their first aim is to instruct and convince.

4. Creative Literature. — When the author aims not at all

¹ The *Principles of Poetry* printed in previous editions of this book will presently be issued in revised and enlarged form.

to instruct or convince but to appeal directly to the imagination of his readers and to the emotions that delight in the ideal — the wonderful, noble, beautiful — he produces Creative Literature: a song, like Burns's *Auld Lang Syne*; a story, like Mr. Kipling's *Wee Willie Winkie*; an epic, like Milton's *Paradise Lost*; a novel, like Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*; a drama, like *The Tempest*. (1) The subject is no longer some bare fact, but the fact colored by a noble emotion and transfigured by the author's imagination. He has created something new and beautiful. (2) His song or story or drama does not affect our immediate and particular and practical concerns and our selfish emotions; it is his vision of what life means for the hearts of all people always. (3) He tries to awaken in us the imaginings that he had, and by means of those imaginings to arouse in us the emotions that inspired him to create. (4) The style as well as the thought gives exalted pleasure. (5) Creative literature is poetic. The word "poetic" means *creative*. (6) Poetic literature may be written in either prose or verse. Prose and verse are merely ways of arranging words. Of the difference between them and the reason for it we shall speak later. Short stories and novels and dramas in prose are often poetic. But verse is the form best adapted to imaginative and emotional utterance. The highest kind of creative literature, Poetry Proper — lyric, narrative, or dramatic — is written in verse.

II. POETRY PROPER

5. **Poetry**, or Poetry Proper, is a transfiguration of life, an imaginative presentation of it, addressed to our nobler emotions and expressed in language of appropriate rhythmic form, preferably verse.

We read poetry because it gives us delight. It carries us along with the rhythmic swing of its lines, and its words fitly chosen present to the imagination pictures of what is most real and most lasting in human experience. The music of the words and the beauty of the images move our feelings and awaken within us a "passion for the good and fair."

The word "Poetry" means a *creation*. The word "Poet" means a *maker*, a *creator*.

The Subjects of poetry are drawn from nature and human life: whatever man perceives, feels, thinks, wills, or does. Poetry sets before us man's emotions and his moral character, his conceptions and intentions, his aspirations, his ideals, and his deeds; in short, his career and the world in which he moves.

The Activity of the Mind by which poetry transfigures life is the Imagination.

The Means by which poetry conveys to us its transfiguration of life are the Images, or Pictures, created by the imagination, and the Words by which they are expressed.

The Purpose of poetry is to stir our Emotions and assist them to appreciate the meaning of life as it is presented to us in the light of goodness and beauty.

The Form of poetry and its Kinds we shall consider in later sections. Here let us discuss the terms mentioned above.

6. Imagination. — Imagination is (1) the faculty by which the mind embodies an *idea* in a picture or image that we can grasp. It is (2) the faculty that forms images or pictures of *objects* not present to the senses. It is (3) the faculty that constructs the whole song or story to which these pictures of characters and emotions, of scenes and events, contribute.

The poet draws for the construction of his poem from nature and human life, but he does not confine himself to copying the particulars exactly as they are and in their exact order or to reproducing the actual objects as they remain in his memory. (1) He selects the objects or events that he shall use. (2) Some he may imitate in detail. (3) Some he may outline from memory. (4) In general, by his imagination he reshapes his actual experience or invents what might have been experienced, and (5) by his imagination he arranges all to suit the purpose of his lyric or story or drama.

The poet wishes to make us feel. He does not reason with us. He puts thoughts and things into as real and vivid a form as possible so as to appeal to our senses. If he wishes us to appreciate what patriotism is, he does not make a general statement about it or give us a definition of it; he shows us what it is in a series of pictures — perhaps in a picture of a single instance. He sets before us Horatius and his two noble friends keeping

the bridge which the enemy must not cross — or Rome will fall. The Etruscan foe sweeps down upon the Three, jeering as it comes. The Three look the oncoming thousands in the face, give battle, and hold them back just for a brief season manfully. But the Romans have had time to hew the bridge down. As it totters the two friends escape. Rome is saved. Horatius plunges into the yellow Tiber and reaches the home shore, and —

Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

Imagination leaves out everything that does not count. It retains or adds whatever may help us to grasp the *meaning* of an idea or an object and to feel it. It furnishes something more significant and impressive than an actual experience. Imagination is the faculty of spiritual insight as well as of creation. By this insight the poet discovers the essential and lasting passions, hopes, and deeds that are behind all history. He presents or suggests only those that underlie all experience and make it worth while and beautiful. Whether his vision is of an amusing aspect of life or of a serious aspect, it is wisely and sincerely imagined. He sets before us the poetic truth. *Poetic Truth* is not necessarily what has happened but what may have happened, — what is probable and nearer to the meaning of life than most of the things that happen around us in everyday life.

7. Images, Reproduced and Created. — The poet makes use of two kinds of images: (1) those that reproduce actual experience by copying it or by reviving it through memory; (2) those that are created by the poet's imagination. — Memory is a kind of imagination, but it merely *reproduces* what we have experienced. Memory images adorn poetry, but they are not purely creative. Excellent examples of them will be found in the old ballads and in Macaulay's *Horatius* (stanzas VI-VIII). Such images are common to all literature. *Created images* are the distinctive property of poetry. They represent facts or fancies, selected, modified, and transformed by the imagination into something new both in idea and expression. Memory recalls the simple picture of a "day-break." Creative imagination

transforms the "day-break" into "incense-breathing Morn," or "the opening eyelids of the Dawn" — presents it under an aspect of new meaning and beauty. When other literature uses created images it is more or less poetic.

8. Figures of Poetry. — Created images, as we have seen, give body and form to thoughts and make what is not present to the senses more real, vivid, and suggestive than the plain fact. They express one condition, object, or action by aid of, or in terms of, another. The devices by means of which the writer places these images or pictures before us are Figures of Poetry. Some of the ways by means of which they convey images to us are:

(1) By expressing one object by aid of its likeness to another, — introducing the resemblance with such a word as "like" or "as." When Burns thought of a certain lovely woman, the image of a rose came to his mind, and he *likened* her to the rose: "My luve is *like* a red, red rose." He was using the figure called *Simile*. (2) By expressing one object in terms of another, or by giving it the attributes of another. If Burns had said, "My luve *is* a red, red rose," he would have been using a figure called *Metaphor*. Shakespeare uses a metaphor when he calls the stars "blessed candles of the night"; so does Keats when he speaks of "Music's golden tongue." (3) By speaking of abstractions or inanimate things as if they had life and form, as "Virtue could see to do what Virtue would By her own radiant light." This is *Personification*. (4) By addressing an absent person or a personified thing or abstraction, for instance, frailty — "Frailty, thy name is woman." This is *Apostrophe*. (5) By speaking of that which is distant, or of the past or future, as if it were before one in presence, as when Byron referring to a work of sculpture says, "I see before me the Gladiator lie." This is *Vision*. (6) By substituting one object for another because the two seem to be closely connected or related physically, as the material is to the thing made out of it, — for instance, "the tinkling *brass*" for *cymbals*; or as the whole is related to its part, or the part to the whole, as "How beautiful are the *feet* of them that preach the gospel of peace"; or as the container is related to the thing contained, and *vice versa*, as

“Costly thy habit as thy *purse* can buy.” All of these figures are called *Synecdoche*. (7) By substituting one thought or object for another because they accompany each other in time, as “all autumn” for the fruits of that season; or are related as sign and thing signified, — for instance “gray hairs” for old age; or as cause and effect: “the bright *death*” for the cause of death — the sword. Figures of this kind are called *Metonymy*.

9. **Figures of Speech.** — Figures of poetry must not be confused with figures of speech that are simply devices for forceful expression. In common with other literature and with the language of conversation, poetry makes use of figures of speech, but they are concerned with the sense alone; they do not make use of images. The student will find discussion of them in textbooks of rhetoric. Two classes may be mentioned. (1) Devices of Reasoning. These, such as *hyperbole*, *innuendo*, and *irony*, suggest indirectly the conclusion to which the author desires to lead his reader. *Hyperbole* overstates the fact that the reader is intended to accept. *Innuendo* understates it. *Irony* states or implies the opposite of the fact. (2) Devices of Rhetoric. These are either methods of emotional expression, such as *Iteration* and *Broken Utterance*, or effective arrangements of words within the sentence or paragraph, such as *Antithesis*, *Balance*, *Climax*. — The *Hyperbole*, which is merely an exaggerated statement of a fact or fancy, sometimes becomes poetic by taking on the form of a metaphor. Milton, for instance, uses hyperbole in the form of metaphor when, to describe a thrilling song, he says that its strains “might create a soul under the ribs of death.”

10. **Poetic Diction.** — The means by which the poet expresses himself are images and words. (1) His diction may be that of ordinary speech, or it may be polished, or grand. It may be either formal or colloquial. Note the difference between the language and style of Gray’s *Elegy* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, on the one hand, and, on the other, of Kipling’s *Mandalay* and of the Sailors in Mr. Masfield’s *Dauber*. The diction is determined by the purpose of the author, his manner, his subject, his characters — their custom and their time, — and by the kind of audience to which he appeals. (2) But the language should