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THE AMERICAN MIND

SELECTIONS FROM THE LITERATURE OF THE UNITED STATES

EDITED BY

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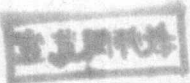
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PREFACE



THIS BOOK exhibits, for the first time in American literature, the writings of Americans for the purpose of defining and illustrating American literary progress in relation to American intellectual progress. Other books have selected, according to the anthologists' tastes, such selections as are typical of literary currents, or such as are deemed representative of a restricted group of authors, or such as are deemed excellent, or such as describe American life. Here are presented, in addition to an adequate collection of acknowledged masterpieces, such further materials as will clarify changing American concepts of religion, political independence, democracy, economics, humanitarian striving, education, and literary theory. Many of the moods of Americans, which found no belletristic record, are represented through selections from so-called sub-literary books, magazines, and newspapers. Our purpose is to make present-day trends of thought and action understandable through a historical approach. Thus, it has been customary to include in conventional anthologies much material relating to New England Puritanism and Transcendentalism, but to neglect other equally important strands of religious thinking. To remedy this defect we have presented items from the Quakers, Deists, Unitarians, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Baptists, and, among others, Humanists. We have given attention to the foreign- and home-missionary movements, and to the humanitarian activities of the Church in ameliorating human suffering. These selections, we think, help in interpreting the religious lyrics of Freneau, Bryant, Whittier, Lowell, Holmes, Whitman, Robinson, Sandburg, and other poets, for, indeed, what American poet has not been deeply stirred to write on religious themes? Religion has been central in American life; to neglect to represent this thought in American literature is to misrepresent our literature. Similarly, the changing ideas on the relation between government and the people have been exemplified here for the first time. In addition to the usual selections from William Bradford, from the writers demanding American independence, from Calhoun, from Daniel Webster, and from Lincoln, we have inserted relevant materials from speeches in Congress, from Supreme Court decisions, and from the writings of such men as Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson, William E. Borah, Herbert Hoover, and Robert M. La Follette. Economic problems and suggested solutions clarify American concepts of business, of governmental regulation of industry, and of the relation between employer and employee. The attempts at the amelioration of the conditions of the underprivileged through many social reforms, likewise, are exhibited as a continuous manifestation of the American spirit from Cotton Mather's time to the present. America's interest in education also is here recorded, in such a book, for the first time. Those writings by Americans are most significant which discuss current intellectual and social problems, and with this thought in mind we have chosen our selections.

In accepting or rejecting any item we have asked three questions: First, is the selection

interesting and clear as an independent unit? Second, is the selection representative of American thought? and, Third, is this the best available statement? That is, in seeking to represent American written expression of American intellectual and emotional life, we have not sacrificed literary quality. A glance at the Contents will reveal that the fundamental body of American literature, with which each student should be acquainted, has been included. Generous portions from the writings of each major author exemplify his style and subject matter.

The arrangement of the selections is, in general, chronological, but it has been found wise, chiefly for purposes of instruction, to group related items into units. By this device we have avoided the haphazard sequence which defeats the practicability of many similar books.

Although we have printed entire selections wherever possible, we have not hesitated to excide irrelevant or uninteresting passages. The gain thereby is immense. Students' time is saved; interest is maintained; and useful space is made available for other items.

We have attempted to secure the best text for each item, but we have not used manuscript versions when it is manifest that the printed form is best. In some cases, as in the writings of Cotton Mather, Joel Barlow, Noah Webster, and some few others, we have normalized the punctuation, for the original pointing hinders comprehension. In some essays and in the diary excerpts, sub-headings have been added to clarify transitions. All ascribed titles and sub-headings have been placed within square brackets. The spellings have been maintained as found, except an occasional seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *then* which has been printed in its modern form, *than*, and except obvious printer's errors. Orthographical peculiarities, such as the use of capitals and italics, have been retained. Our intention has been to aid the reader to understand the text rather than to indulge in an antiquarian delight in exhibiting texts.

Our introductions to the work of each writer have been designed to supply, briefly, the background of thought or action out of which he grew, his leading ideas or accomplishment, the significance of the selections, a short biographical summary, and a selected bibliography of his writings and of writings about him. Readily available are the *Dictionary of American Biography*, *Who's Who in America*, the encyclopedias, and Harry Hartwick's bibliographies in Walter Fuller Taylor's *A History of American Letters* (1936), and from these books, as well as from others listed in our bibliographies, further direction in study may be found.

The present edition (1947) has been enlarged by the addition of a new section, "America and the World Crisis"; the bibliographies have been revised, and the chronology has been brought up to date.

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