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The Literature of England

THIRD EDITION

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VOLUME TWO

**From the Romantic Period
to the Present**

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Printed in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Anderson, George Kumler, 1901- ed.
The literature of England.

CONTENTS: v. 1. From the Middle Ages through the
eighteenth century.—v. 2. From the romantic period to the
present.

1. English literature. I. Buckler, William Earl,
1924- II. Veeder, Mary, 1943- III. Title.
PR1109.A56 1979 820'.8 78-31118
ISBN 0-673-15157-3 (v. II)

5678910-RRW-908988

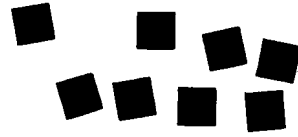
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Preface

When we decided to revise *The Literature of England*, we had a number of aims: we felt the need for a compact, attractive, easy-to-read anthology, for a book that had sufficient coverage for the survey course but one that was not overly inclusive, a book that was tailored to the specific needs of teachers and students in the 1980s. Rather than publish a large, cumbersome, unnecessarily comprehensive text, we wanted to offer the most important English writers and their works—the selections that are most often actually taught in the classroom. Furthermore, we wanted to offer our selections in the most accessible and attractive format possible. We wanted to provide straightforward yet authoritative editorial material that would make the selections as meaningful as possible to students without usurping the role of the teacher. We did not want the editorial material to be as difficult as some of the texts it was designed to elucidate. In some ways, then, this is a new anthology. But it is also an anthology with a most interesting history.

The single-volume edition of *The Literature of England* first appeared in 1953. It was based upon the outlines of and followed the same plan as a two-volume edition of the book that had been published by Scott, Foresman and Company since 1936. The 1953 edition stood on its own as a special contribution to a shorter, more intensive course in English literature from the beginnings to recent times. The book was partially revised and updated in 1967. This 1979 edition has been completely revised and updated.

The revised introductions are designed to help the students place the literature of a specific period in its historical, social, and economic contexts. Each introduction is in two parts: the first discusses the period's sociohistorical background, the second examines the literary environment. The illustration program—pictures of authors, art, architecture, artifacts—also helps lend a realistic sense of the period. The author and selection headnotes have been examined and revised in the light of the most current scholarship; the footnotes have been revised along the lines of economy and contemporary critical thinking; and the texts are the most authoritative available. New to this edition are the small bubbles calling out glossed words and terms in the running texts and a section called Definitions of Literary Terms at the end of the book. Footnotes now appear immediately below the column of the text to which they refer. This new edition is also available for the first time in two paperbacks: Volume One contains the literature from *Beowulf* through the

eighteenth century; Volume Two contains the literature from the Romantic Period to the present. Another significant departure from the previous philosophy of the single-volume edition is the inclusion of drama in this anthology. We now include drama in all those periods in which it is an important genre. We have a morality play from the Middle Ages, two Renaissance dramas, a Restoration comedy, and a modern play.

The most important feature of every anthology is, of course, its table of contents; the table of contents for the 1979 edition has been most extensively revised. Among the more important changes in this edition are the following: the inclusion of two more of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, several Middle English lyrics, *The Second Shepherd's Play*, Marlowe's *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*, Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, many new Donne selections, Book Nine of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and his "Of Education," Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, Part IV of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, many new Blake selections, selections from the poetry of Emily Brontë, many new Hardy poems, Shaw's *Arms and the Man*, Conrad's "The Secret Sharer," selections from the poetry of Wilfred Owen, many new Yeats poems, Woolf's "The Mark on the Wall," Joyce's "Clay," T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, many new Auden poems, Greene's "The Destroyers," Beckett's "Dante and the Lobster," and Lessing's "A Man and Two Women." In order to make room for the new material, of course, we dropped many of the lesser-known authors and the infrequently taught selections. The table of contents has been revised on the basis of suggestions submitted by the editorial consultants and hundreds of teachers of the survey course throughout the country.

This new edition of *The Literature of England* has benefited greatly from the editorial advice, suggestions, and critiques of the six period consultants. Their informed scholarship, period expertise, general interest, and unfailing counsel have proven indispensable. Any errors of fact or interpretation, however, are the responsibility of the general editors. Finally, we would like to thank Amanda Clark, Charles Schaff, and Marilyn Martin of the editorial staff of Scott, Foresman and Company for their assistance in realizing this book. A special note of recognition goes to John Nolan, who guided this project from beginning to end with patience, skill, and wisdom.

G. K. A.
W. E. B.
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