Verse
of
Our Day

An Anthology

VERSE OF OUR DAY

AN ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN AMERICAN AND BRITISH POETRY

WITH

STUDIES IN POETRY

BY

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FOREWORD

There is no better way to open the door of the child's mind to the beauty of the world around him than through the study of poetry. In reading poetry understandingly the child's senses are sharpened, his imagination stimulated, his sympathies broadened. He must see and feel and think with the poet. Contrary to popular opinion, most children have an instinctive love of poetry which can be developed. The little child loves jingles and rhymes, loves the colorful, the imaginative. After he emerges from childhood, these tastes lie dormant, but are ready to flower again in adolescence, if they are cultivated. All too often the taste that is flowering is killed by the unskillful selec-

tion and presentation of the poetry given to him.

In 1918, while we were teaching Gray's "Elegy" and Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," we found it difficult, as we had frequently found it before, to link these poems with the student's experience. As we were in the midst of a poetry revival, we felt that we might stimulate in the students a more vital, and, we hoped, a more permanent interest in poetry by bringing them into contact first with the poets of their own day. Accordingly we asked them to select from current magazines poems by living authors. Their surprise that there were any "living authors" was illuminating. It had not occurred to them that literature is in the making; that once the Goldsmith and the Gray of their text-books were contemporary writers; that our contemporaries, Noyes, Masefield, and others, would appear in text-books of the future.

To acquaint them, then, with the contemporary poets, and to open their eyes to the very excellent verse of their own day, we assigned as a term problem to our students the compilation of an anthology of modern poetry. This poetry was selected from current magazines and volumes

suggested by us.

Verse of Our Day had its inspiration in this student anthology. Its contents reflect the expressed tastes and interests of the adolescent as tested in the classroom. Its grouping follows the grouping of the original anthology

made by the students.

We have in this volume 347 poems representing the work of 134 modern poets, both American and British. We are providing a large body of material as we are convinced from experience in teaching that the crying need in any textbook is a wealth of material from which the teacher may cull selections suited to the age and interests of the pupil and to the phases of the work to be emphasized in any one term. We have tried to give as much variety of material as possible to meet the variety of interests of students of all types.

Our aim is to introduce the pupil to poetry rather than to poets. Hence we have frequently taken the work of occasional poets as well as that of poets more widely known. We feel that we must first of all make our girls and boys know and love *poetry*. By cultivating in them a taste for good poetry wherever they may find it, whether it is by known or unknown authors, we are building a foundation for critical judgment and discrimination in their

later reading.

We have in some cases chosen a large number of poems from individual poets, because the poems of these authors are lyric and for that reason will appeal to youth, which is itself essentially lyric. On the other hand, we have included fewer poems of a reflective nature, as poetry of this type is less within the range of the adolescent's experience.

The title "Verse of Our Day" is, of course, not to be interpreted too literally. We have chosen poems of many poets not strictly of "our day," as their work is expressive of the modern spirit; the so-called new poetry is, after all,

not a sporadic growth but an evolution.

Nor should it be assumed that all modern poets whose work we recognize as significant and suitable for our purpose are represented in the anthology. With deep regret we have been obliged to omit several poets because of the restrictions placed by the owners of copyrights upon such

reproduction of their work.

We are grateful to our students in the Julia Richman High School and in the High School of Commerce, New York City, for the inspiration which they gave us for this work: to Mr. Edwin A. Kane, of the High School of Commerce, for his suggestions and his criticism of our manuscript; to our former pupil, Miss Mary Aiello, for her skill and efficiency in typing our manuscript for the publisher.

MARGERY GORDON MARIE B. KING

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