



普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材



英国文学选读

AN ANNOTATED ANTHOLOGY OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE

刘炳善 罗益民 编



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Preface

This book is designed for beginners of English literature as a companion to *A Short History of English Literature* which, as a textbook used by Chinese students of the English language and literature, has been published and printed for many times by Shanghai Foreign Education Press and Henan People's Publishing House. But the present editors as well as the readers have long felt it necessary to have a companion volume of selected readings to that widely-welcomed *Short History*. Hence the compilation of the present *Anthology of English Literature*.

We are endeavouring to choose our texts from the best, great anthologies of English literature published in recent years as well as from the renowned *Golden Treasury*, *The Oxford Book of English Prose*, *The Oxford Book of English Verse* and so on to guarantee the quality of texts of this *Anthology of English Literature* in one volume. Though primarily intended for English majors, this book can also be read by other learners who enjoy reading English literature yet do not know how and what to begin with, and also for both English majors and non-majors to prepare for literary exams. To be terse, without doubt, is our main purpose. However, we also regrettedly have missed some great works which we have to give up for the limitation of space. For these lost pearls readers may find other anthologies to quench their thirst for great literature.

For practical purpose, we chose among the great sea of English literature some representative works of those authors who are universally accepted as major writers who have shaped the history of English literature and aroused all students of English to read and to memorize. As the writers and their writings here selected are for beginners, we have tried our great effort to lessen the rate of difficulty of some pieces we choose, for instance, by modernizing the spellings. With Chaucer, for instance, we do not introduce readers to the original piece but the translated modern version of his *Canterbury Tales*. With Shakespeare, our

selections are made from modern-spelling editions of his *Complete Works*. We have also achieved this purpose by giving sensible, helpful and easy-to-understand English annotations. When temporarily English explanations are beyond comprehension, we have, in rare cases, taken a middle way to use Chinese notes. But basically, we have chosen to compile this book in English to nourish the language sense of the users. By so doing, we intend to make this *Anthology* a proper sisterly companion to the *Short History of English Literature*, an English textbook, as well as to present English writers with their masterpieces in their original taste. For the literary genres, we have chosen the four most important and most popular sorts of texts: poetry, drama, novels and essays and prose writings. The proportions of these four sorts are arranged by their position and importance in British literature to reflect its panorama and chief outline in order that our readers may get a general impression upon the main stream of English literature.

Therefore, the regulations for editing this textbook which we aim to follow include (1) best texts, (2) master language, (3) thus able to inspire the readers' interests and arrest their attention thereby. As this book is set as a popular textbook for general reading instead of academic purposes, we on purpose avert those texts which are too profound, too difficult and too long and those hard to take out from their original version. To make the texts short and concise, our consideration is that the learners had better learn some of these texts by heart as their ability and time permits. However, those which are unavoidably long and at the same time important, we have spared no regret to retain them.

For the structure of this book, before each author an introduction is put to tell his/her life, works, style and contribution to literature. And especially significant works are supplied with brief introductions to the plot summary and very terse remarks on related matters. For excerpts from immense works, an introduction to the contents of the whole work is given for better understanding of the selection.

We are greatly indebted to those authors and anthologies we are able to use to quote and select in this edition for which at the end of this book we have a list of references to extend our gratitude; to Professor Yang Qingyuan (杨庆媛) for whose help with the computer matter at the beginning of editing this book; for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign libraries which boasts the third largest collection of books among American university libraries from which we

have greatly profited numerous books during the editing of this book; to Mr. Guo Fangyun(郭方云) and Mrs. Wang Chiwei(汪赤卫) who took great trouble in finding related materials; last but not least, to Professor Joe Peacock, graduate of Yale, for language matters when dictionaries were found not necessarily the final helpful hand. And, of course, all the existent and possible mistakes and faults are ours. We warmly welcome suggestions so that we can rectify and improve them in future editions.

Liu Bingshan(刘炳善)

Luo Yimin(罗益民)

8 March 2005

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