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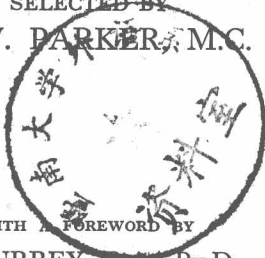
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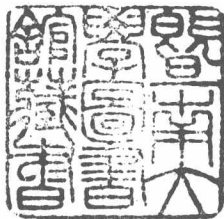
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WITH A FOREWORD BY

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FOREWORD

ANTHOLOGIES fulfil a purpose in life. In Greece, in Rome and in Elizabethan England, anthologies were compiled, and they are still being made. The numerous volumes of "collected poems" or "the complete works" of our poets are beyond the reach of most people; and therefore there is a demand for collections of poems taken from the representative poets.

But there is another, and a more important reason for the appearance of anthologies. We want the best poetry, the high peaks of inspiration and poetic expression; that is to say, we need the most memorable and enduring poems of our poets *at their best*—and these poems to be readily available. To satisfy this need, the anthology comes into being. Without the anthology we should require a library of poetry books; and we should spend much time and trouble, perhaps fruitlessly, in looking for the poems which alone could satisfy our needs of the moment. The anthology makes an initial selection; it will help us to discover fresh veins, rich in sovereign gold, for us to work.

Poetry can be an ingredient in the everyday life of each one of us. But if the poems we delight in are to contribute vitality, richness and strength to us in our working world, they must be to hand. We must know exactly where the poems are; and we need a volume which we can handle, and perhaps carry about with us. An anthology, alone, can supply us with that wealth, variety and quintessence of greatness which we desire for the permanent enrichment of our lives.

But changing conditions of life bring new problems for us and new dissatisfactions; and many of the poems

FOREWORD

which provided us with insight and strength of purpose in the past, can no longer supply these new demands. So that, although we are always finding new depths of wisdom and hitherto unperceived excellencies of expression in the greater poems included in the older collections, our age needs its own anthology. It needs to find expression of its outlook in the work of the poets of its own time, in those poems of the past which are nearest in spirit and attitude to us, as well as in those greater poets whose poetry comes not within Time's bending sickle. We need our own selected *company of poets*.

The human spirit grows by what it feeds on. Let it feed on the intensities and the delicacies of thought and imagination that are enshrined in the poetry of our country. Fed on such elixir the mind must itself grow, and become attuned to these finer conceptions and delicate apprehensions. Accustom ourselves to words which are used with the vitality and the swift purpose of the poets, and we shall achieve these new levels of potentiality. Allow our minds and imaginations to become familiar and free with these experiences of the poets, and we shall ourselves be able to achieve greater insight, width and depth of apprehension and expression.

Life is a poor thin thing if we starve it of expression. We cannot neglect, with impunity, the fact that in music, painting, poetry, drama, are to be found the work of many of the finest imaginations of the human race. The arts, and poetry not least, keep alive in human nature an awareness of perfection, a belief in fineness of experience, and a conviction that true happiness is to be found in what is beautiful—whether it be in life or in art.

P. GURREY

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