English poetry, its principles and progress, with representative masterpieces from 1390 to 1917 and with notes

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THE PRINCIPLES AND PROGRESS OF ENGLISH POETRY
ENGLISH POETRY
ITS PRINCIPLES AND PROGRESS
WITH REPRESENTATIVE MASTERPIECES
FROM 1390 TO 1917 AND
WITH NOTES

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NEW EDITION
REVISED AND ENLARGED

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PREFACE

The purpose of this book is first and foremost to inspire young people with a love of poetry. In preparing this revised and enlarged edition we have aimed to set before pupils in our high schools not merely poems that will yield enjoyment after they have been studied, but poems that one cannot help enjoying on first acquaintance.

In order that the book may be of value for the entire high school course we have been at particular pains to include a large number of poems suitable for pupils of the first and second years. With these years especially in mind, more than one half of the material has been selected. With the more advanced pupils in mind, we have added to the poems usually prescribed as requirements for entrance to college a large number worthy on their own account, and all the more likely to promote a love of poetry because they are not staled by custom.

In the choice of materials we have had the kind assistance of over a hundred experienced and successful high school teachers of English. Carefully weighing their recommendations, we have omitted from our former list three or four poems easily procurable elsewhere, and have included some fifty poets not represented before and more than a hundred and fifty additional poems. Of the newly inserted poets and poems, about half supplement the material illustrative of the periods covered in the former editions of the book, which closed with Matthew Arnold. The poets of more recent periods, some twenty-seven, and poems, some eighty in all, no less cordially approved by our consulting committee, have been added in order that pupils may not rest in the conviction that English poetry ceased with Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold. The tale thus resumed with Meredith, Rossetti, Morris, and
Swinburne, and carried down to the present day, will, we are confident, be of rare and inspiring interest and value to teachers and pupils alike. In this latter effort our labors have been lightened by the generous coöperation of several of the most representative contemporary poets.

We have, in general, adhered to the plan of the former book. The design is to provide within the covers of one volume what is usually set forth in three volumes: (1) an introduction to the Principles of Poetry; (2) a survey of the Progress of English Poetry by its periods, together with critical sketches of the lives and works of the poets chosen as representative; (3) as much as possible of the poetry commonly read in preparation for entrance to American universities, and such other poems as are illustrative of successive literary periods and adapted to the requirements of an introductory course in English masterpieces; (4) such notes as will aid the pupil in his study of the poems and increase his ability to appreciate and understand poetry not thus annotated.

For our former prefatory essay on the principles of poetry, intended not primarily for use in class but for “teachers, to be retailed to younger pupils as occasion offers and discretion dictates,” we have substituted here a distinctively elementary Introduction to the Study of Poetry. This Introduction covers only such topics as are essential to the information of high school pupils. It aims to present the material as briefly and simply as possible, but still with something of the detail befitting a subject of wide scope, something of the explanation required by pupils unfamiliar with the study, and something of the literary sympathy and delight that cannot be conveyed in a categorical and dry-as-dust statement. If the student is encouraged to make constant reference to the illustrative poems mentioned in the Introduction, he will learn to apply the principles and will derive keener enjoyment from poetry better understood. At the request of teachers the more comprehensive Principles of Poetry mentioned above will presently be republished in enlarged and independent form. It may, meanwhile, be consulted in the earlier editions of this book.
The chapters on the Progress of English Poetry aim to focus in one study the theory and history of the subject. They introduce each literary period and the biographies of the respective authors with a more general account of the characteristics and tendencies of the age. In the special criticism of the poems by which each author is represented (whether in the text or the notes) consideration has been given not only to his personal and historical conditions but to the relation of his work to poetic principles and the development of national literature. It will naturally be found advisable when dealing with younger pupils to read the poems in order of simplicity, as outlined below. But even so, the reading of the poet's biography should precede the reading of his poems, and in brief and appropriate fashion the characteristics of the period should be indicated by the teacher. Toward the end of the course—say, during the last term of the senior year—the historical and biographical sections should be read in review and supplemented by the study of some general school history of English literature.

Dramas, epics, and metrical romances (such as those of Scott) have not been included in this volume simply because their length is prohibitive. The same considerations have compelled us to content ourselves with only two of the Idylls of the King. The Vision of Sir Launfal, although the work of an American, has been carried over from the former edition at the request of teachers and for the convenience of students: the theme and treatment of the poem are such that it readily finds a place beside other narratives of chivalry here presented; it furnishes, moreover, an excellent opportunity for comparison of a noble American production with poems of similar nature by English writers. One other American poem is included and one poem by a Canadian,—Seeger's I Have a Rendezvous with Death and McCrae's In Flanders Fields. They could not be omitted from any collection of poems of the World War. From The Faerie Queene, Paradise Lost, Childe Harold, In Memoriam, Dauber, and two or three other poems too long for inclusion as wholes, we have presented excerpts. The rest of our poetic specimens are printed in their integrity.
In order to preserve their historical flavor we should have preferred to retain the archaic spelling of the older poets, but at the instance of many excellent teachers, who are of the opinion that such practice detracts from the pupil’s appreciation of the poetry, we have refrained. The spelling has been uniformly modernized, except in the case of Chaucer. He wrote nearly two centuries before any of the other poets represented, and his orthography is part of the historical characteristic of a distant age and is essential to the charm of his poems. With Burns the Ayrshire dialect has, of course, been preserved, and for much the same reason; he would not be Burns without it.

In the notes at the end of the volume the attempt has been made to keep in mind a few definite considerations. First, Notes are for the student and should be strictly practical. Since they will, for the most part, be used by young people, they have been made on the basis of actual experience in the classroom. They aim to give nothing but what the student can use; to leave out all that will not directly aid him in understanding and appreciating the poem. Second, Notes should clear up difficulties. Though inspiration and enjoyment are the chief ends of poetry, they can be attained only if the reader understand the thought of the poet and his art, and, therefore, the words by which these are conveyed. Third, Notes should not tell the student what he may reasonably be expected to find out for himself. Explanations are given only when they cannot with readiness and economy be obtained from the ordinary books of reference. There should be within the reach of every pupil at least the following manuals: an English dictionary, such as Webster’s International, The New Standard, or The Century, or a good abridgment for his own desk, such as Webster’s Academic; a dictionary of classical names and myths, or some complete manual of mythology, such as Gayley’s Classic Myths in English Literature; a Bible, if possible with a concordance; and a good History of English Literature with which to supplement the outline given in this book. The information easily to be found in these the editors have tried not to duplicate here. Fourth, Notes should be adapted to the requirements of pupil and poem. Chaucer and Burns, with
their textual peculiarities, need notes entirely different from Milton and Pope with their allusive character, or Wordsworth and Browning with their subtlety of thought. The pupil of lower grade requires a kind of help different from that demanded by his seniors. Some of the simpler poems here have accordingly been annotated, not with few notes because they are simple, but with ample notes because presumably the pupil who will study them is young. Fifth, Notes should be suggestive. The inability to realize what he ought to see in a poem, or to recognize what it really contains, is probably the chief drawback with the immature reader. The editors, therefore, offer no apology for the directive questions and suggestions of the notes. It is hoped that they may prove of real advantage to pupil and teacher. Sixth, Notes are valuable only as a means to an end,—that the reader may gain the greatest possible pleasure and inspiration from the poems themselves. In most cases he should endeavor to get all he can from the text before resorting to the notes at all.

The order in which these poems are studied will vary with the maturity of the student and the judgment of the teacher. Pupils of the third and fourth years and general readers will not infrequently take histories and texts in their chronological order. But for pupils of the first and second years of the high school course poems will naturally be selected with an eye to their simplicity and suitability of appeal. The following list of authors, arranged not in order of preference but chronologically, will direct the teacher to over a hundred poems exceptionally adapted to the course of the first two years; and these poems by no means exhaust the possibilities:

Elizabethan lyricists, Cavalier lyricists, Gray, Goldsmith,* Blake,* Burns,* Coleridge, Southey,* Lamb, Hunt,* Byron,* Shelley (The Cloud),* Macaulay,* Tennyson (nearly all),* Arnold (The Forsaken Merman),* Lowell, Morris, Stevenson,* Henley, Kipling (nearly all),* Yeats,* De la Mare,* Masefield, Noyes (nearly all), Stephens (nearly all),* O’Sullivan,* and most of the poets of the World War. From the authors marked with an asterisk, some fifty poems may be drawn that will be both delightful and instructive for pupils of the first year. If
they have read a few of the poems already in the grammar school, they will derive nothing but profit from reviewing them at a maturer age.

Remembering that the purpose of this study is to promote a love of poetry, teachers will encourage their pupils to read widely, as well as carefully. That all may know what good things are included in this book, the reader we have constantly, in the biographies of the poets and in the notes, suggested poems and volumes of poems with which the materials presented here may be supplemented. The more generously school and town libraries are equipped with such books, the more generally will good poetry be read, and the more richly will teachers be repaid for their classroom efforts to stimulate an appreciation of what is best in our literature.

The methods of teaching outlined in previous editions of this book are included with similar materials in a bulletin entitled Suggestions for Teachers of English in the Secondary Schools, by C. M. Gayley and C. B. Bradley. The pamphlet may be had on application to the University of California Press, Berkeley.

It remains to acknowledge the courtesy of publishers and authors. The selections from the poetry of Robert Bridges are used by permission of and by arrangement with the Oxford University Press. We are similarly indebted to Doubleday, Page and Company for the selections from the poetry of Rudyard Kipling; to John Lane Company for Wordsworth's Grave by Sir William Watson, and for the selections from John Davidson, Stephen Phillips, and Rupert Brooke; to the Houghton Mifflin Company for We Willed It Not by John Drinkwater and Edith Cavell by Laurence Binyon; to Dodd, Mead and Company, his American publishers, for the selections from Austin Dobson; to Longmans, Green and Company for the selections from Andrew Lang; to William Heinemann for Lying in the Grass by Edmund Gosse; to Charles Scribner's Sons for the selections from Robert Louis Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verses," and I Have a Rendezvous with Death from Poems by Alan Seeger; to Henry Holt and Company for the selections from "Peacock Pie" and "The