World literature and its place in general culture

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WORLD LITERATURE
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AND

ITS PLACE IN GENERAL CULTURE

BY

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New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1911

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PREFACE

This book presents a conception of World Literature, not in the sense of the sum total of particular literatures, but as a unity, the literary field seen in perspective from the point of view of the English-speaking peoples. Theoretical treatment is throughout supplemented by exposition of masterpieces.

To the general reader the book suggests a rational scheme of connection such as should be at the back of every attempt to make choice of "the best books." For the student it illustrates a treatment of the subject unhindered by divisions between particular literatures in different languages, divisions which make the weakness of literary study in our academic systems. Its plea is that such World Literature belongs to every stage of general culture, from the most elementary to the most advanced.

My life has been entirely occupied with the study and the teaching of literature. I have sought in the present work to embody the main results of my experience, so far as these bear upon the field of literature and the general interest of the subject. I purpose, at no distant date, to follow up this work with another, which will be a more formal introduction to literary theory and interpretation.

FEBRUARY, 1911.

RICHARD G. MOULTON.
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