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D. APPLETON & Co., New York. — The Poetical Works of William Cullen

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY, Boston. — The Poetical Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, John Greenleaf Whittier.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, New York. — Poems of Sidney Lanier.

SMALL, MAYNARD & Co., Boston. — Leaves of Grass, by Walt Whitman.

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PREFACE

This volume is in no sense an anthology. Mr. Stedman has collected, with complete knowledge of the field, and with all but unerring taste and judgment, the choicest 'flowers' of our American verse from more than six hundred poets. His American Anthology

must remain for many years without a rival.

'Yet still the man is greater than his song.' Many true lovers of literature care more for a few poets than for many poems, and would prefer to have always by them the best work of our few chief poets, rather than the few best poems of our many minor singers. The present volume, like my British Poets of the Nineteenth Century, attempts to give, for each one of the authors included, all the material needed to show his development and his achievement, and to give a first knowledge of him as man and poet.

The selection has been made full and comprehensive. No poem has been omitted merely on account of its length, and every poem, even the longest, is given in full, with two exceptions only: Whitman's 'Song of Myself,' and Lowell's 'Fable for Critics.' The poems of each author are arranged in chronological order, and dated. Wherever possible,

both the date of writing and that of first publication have been given.

The brief 'Biographical Sketches' at the end of the volume are designed only to give an easily accessible summary of the author's life, especially as related to his poetical work. They make no pretence of absolute completeness, or of presenting new facts based on original investigation; nor do they attempt any critical estimate of the poet's work,

except in a paragraph or two of brief summary at the end of each.

In the reference lists, however, I have tried to furnish full material for a complete and thorough study of each author. Under the heading Editions in each list are named (1) the standard library editions of the author's complete works; (2) the best library editions of his poetical works alone; (3) the best one-volume editions of his poems; and (4) in some cases, the best books of selections from his work. Under the heading Biography and Reminiscences are named in the first paragraph the most important biographies of the poet, and in the second paragraph other books or essays dealing chiefly with his life and personality. There follow sections devoted to Criticism and to Tributes in Verse. In this mass of material, I have indicated throughout the books, essays, or editions which seemed to me of most importance, and have added a brief word of comment where it seemed desirable. I have not tried to give in these reference lists a complete bibliography of all that has been written on each author, and have omitted many titles which seemed to be of little or no importance. But I have wished to name everything that could be of value, and preferred to err on the side of inclusion rather than of omission. It is probable, however, that some essential references may have been overlooked, and it is hardly possible that in giving so many titles and dates, all errors should have been avoided. I shall be grateful for any corrections or important additions.

In the notes, I have planned to give only essential facts about the origin or circumstances of composition of each poem, and to show its connection with the author's life, or with his other works. Critical comment has been excluded, except, in a few cases, that of the author himself or of contemporary poets. In the case of two poets, Emerson and Whitman, it has seemed worth while to give from their prose a good many passages which illustrate the ideas of the poems, while the poems illuminate the ideas of the prose-

The dates in italic figures, at the left, give the date of writing; those in Roman, at the right, the date of publication. To make these dates as accurate as possible has involved, in most cases, not only a thorough study of the biographies of the poets, but also a great deal of research among the files of periodicals to which they may have contributed. In a few cases, where I have felt that a poem had perhaps been published in a periodical before the year of its appearance in a volume, but have not been able to trace it, I have indicated

this by placing in parentheses the date of first publication in book form.

In making the selections I have tried to follow not so much my individual taste as the consensus of opinion, now pretty well formed, as to which poems of our elder authors are the best and most representative. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the ready generosity with which so many critics and teachers have given me the help of their advice and have put their special knowledge at my service. I have to thank, in the first place, Professor Charles F. Richardson of Dartmouth, and Professors W. P. Trent and Brander Matthews of Columbia, - three of the chief historians of American literature; and next Professor George R. Carpenter of Columbia, who has written the best biographies we have of more than one of our chief poets. The present volume was first thought of as a companion to Professor Carpenter's American Prose; and while I have departed considerably from the plan and method of that book, I have had throughout Professor Carpenter's generous approval and cooperation. I am also under special obligation to Mr. W. R. Thayer, to whose sure taste and thorough knowledge of our poets I have often appealed; to Mr. Ferris Greenslet, who has helped me with the selections and the reference-list for Lowell; and to Mr. Laurens Maynard, who has put at my service his remarkable collection of Whitman books, and given freely of his time and knowledge in helping me to trace each poem of Whitman to its earliest publication, and to compare its text with that of the original edition.

I gladly take this opportunity to thank also Professor Charles W. Kent, of the University of Virginia, whose edition of Poe's poems in the Virginia Edition of the Complete Works is invaluable, and who has also generously given his personal help; Professor Edwin Mims, of Trinity College; Professors W. L. Phelps, F. C. Prescott, A. H. Quinn, Henry N. Snyder, Charles L. Young, W. C. Thayer, G. Herbert Clarke, Richard Jones. J. H. Chamberlin, William B. Cairns, A. B. Milford, Frank C. Lockwood, Arthur P. Hall, Enoch Perrine, Vernon P. Squires, and Benjamin Sledd; Mr. Clyde Furst, of Columbia; Miss Jeannette Marks, of Mount Holyoke; Miss Lucy Tappan, the author of an excellent manual, Topical Notes on American Authors; and others who have kindly made suggestions or gone over my lists of selections. I wish also to thank the authorities of the Columbia, Harvard, and Cornell libraries, especially Mr. T. J. Kiernan, who have shown me many courtesies; and others without whose help the volume could not have been begun or completed.

For the use of copyrighted material, I am under obligation to Dr. Edward W. Emerson; Messrs. D. Appleton & Co.; Messrs. Harper & Bros.; Mrs. Sidney Lanier, and Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons: Mr. Horace Traubel and Mr. Thomas B. Harned, the literary executors of Whitman, and Messrs. Small, Maynard & Co., his authorized publishers; and of course, most of all, to Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., without whose coöperation no book of selections from the chief American poets could be undertaken.

CURTIS HIDDEN PAGE.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK CITY. October 1, 1905.

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<sup>1</sup> The poems of each author are arranged in chronological order. Exact dates will be found at the end of each poem.