

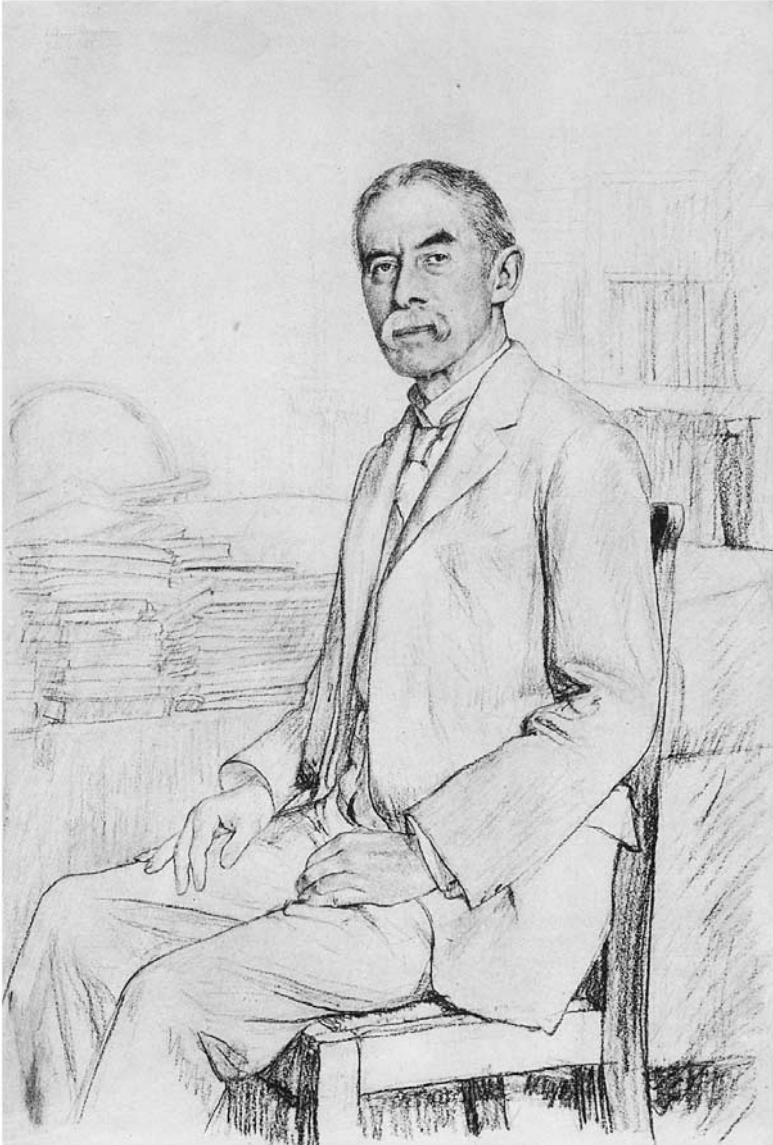
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A. E. HOUSMAN, *aet.* 67  
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# A. E. HOUSMAN

A SKETCH  
TOGETHER WITH A LIST OF HIS WRITINGS  
AND INDEXES TO  
HIS CLASSICAL PAPERS

by

A. S. F. GOW

*Fellow of Trinity College  
Cambridge*

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## PREFACE

When a scholar of A. E. Housman's eminence has disposed of much of his work in periodicals, the convenience of scholars no less than respect for his memory commonly demands the publication of his Collected Papers. Housman's will, however, contains the following clause:

I expressly desire and wish my desire to be made as widely known as possible that none of my writings which have appeared in periodical publications shall be collected and reprinted in any shape or form.

This prohibition caused little surprise to his friends, nor is its reason in doubt. Housman's publications extend over more than half a century; and as he was no longer prepared to endorse a good many of the opinions expressed during that long stretch of time, he was unwilling to see them gathered together in a form which might seem to imply that they had his continued approval. Still, as the title-page of his London Introductory Lecture reminds us, *nescit vox missa reverti*, and Housman's prohibition will not prevent scholars from wishing to know what his opinions were. I do not think there is any lack of *pietas* in making the path easier for them, nor should I have compiled this book unless I had felt some assurance that Housman would not have disapproved of it; but I would ask those who use it

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to remember why they have to look for his papers in the places of their original publication, and to reflect that the earlier a paper is, the less certainly does it represent the author's mature opinion.

In the year 1925 Housman allowed me to collect from parcels in his rooms such offprints of his articles as were still available. They numbered nearly a hundred, and tempted me to compile a complete list. This list Housman himself revised, and the resulting typescript proved useful, so that in the following year, partly for that reason and partly as a compliment to Housman, three friends, Mr E. Harrison, Professor D. S. Robertson, and Mr A. F. Scholfield, joined me in printing a hundred copies of it. To keep it up to date thereafter was not difficult, for Housman sent me offprints of anything he wrote and I was in sufficiently close touch with him to know on what work he was engaged.

This list, corrected, brought up to date, and slightly rearranged, forms the second part of the present volume; and so far as his classical work is concerned I hope that it may be found substantially complete. For the section headed 'English', however, I make no such claim. In particular, it does not direct the reader to published poems which Housman did not reprint in his two volumes of poetry, nor to the first publications of those which he did, and it does not enumerate the many impressions and reprints of *A Shropshire Lad*, *Last Poems*, and his Leslie Stephen Lecture. These lists are not a bibliography in the modern sense of the word, and strict bibliographers will find much else to repre-

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hend in them; but in this matter I count it sufficient defence to say that, of the three tasks I have declined to undertake, Housman would have regarded the first with annoyance and the others with contempt. I suspect, however, that the English list, deliberately incomplete in these respects, is accidentally so in others. Apart from the poetry, its contents are, with few exceptions, by-products of the twenty-five years he spent in Cambridge, and though Housman did not remember, or did not direct me to, similar writings of an earlier date, it seems unlikely that there were none. It might therefore have been wise to omit this section altogether, but I have not done so since some of its contents are of considerable interest and might easily escape the enquirer. There is, moreover, ground for hope that its omissions are not numerous, for friends who knew Housman during his life in London have been unable to tell me of any casual publications of that period, nor, though Housman commonly kept cuttings of anything he had written in other than classical periodicals, were any found among his papers.

In the index of passages in classical authors which forms the bulk of the third part of the book, my aim has been to include not only passages on which Housman wrote notes but also those to the correction or interpretation of which his incidental comments make some contribution. I have not, however, admitted passages where he merely expressed in passing his agreement or disagreement with a particular reading or interpretation. Such judgments are very numerous, especially

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where he is reviewing a book or weighing the merits of one manuscript against another; and from papers of this kind in particular it is probable that no two index-makers would have drawn precisely the same selection. My tendency has been rather to include than to omit, but since the lists which precede the index are so arranged as to facilitate the enquiries of those who wish to ascertain all the opinions expressed by Housman on a particular author, I have not, in doubtful cases, expended meticulous care upon my decision. The index of subjects contains a brief, and therefore somewhat arbitrary, selection of topics which, for one reason or another, seemed to deserve separate record.

The sketch which I have prefixed to these lists and indexes requires perhaps more apology, and if any comprehensive biography were in prospect it would not have been written. But Housman the poet and Housman the scholar, though not so far apart as is sometimes supposed, at least demand of a biographer qualities widely different and seldom united. Moreover, Housman's life falls into several markedly distinct sections, and it is hard to see who could treat of them all with sufficient knowledge. In these circumstances it seemed likely that the scholars for whom the lists and indexes are intended might welcome a brief outline of his life and some account of his scholarship; and since, to borrow his own phrase, 'now begins the steady encroachment of oblivion as those who remember him are in their turn summoned away', I have not thought it impertinent to interweave with these an impression



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of Housman as I knew him during the last twenty-five years of his life.

Of Housman's life before he came to Cambridge I could not have written without assistance from those who knew him during that period, and assistance has been most generously given me. His brother and sister, Mr Laurence Housman and Mrs E. W. Symons, have helped me at every turn, and with them I must thank Mr A. W. Pollard and the late Canon E. W. Watson, his contemporaries at St John's College, Oxford, Mr E. W. Hulme, his senior in the Patent Office, and Professor R. W. Chambers, his pupil at University College. Among others to whom I am indebted for information I must particularly mention Mr D. J. Walters, the present Head Master of Bromsgrove School. Written sources of information are naturally scanty, but I have quoted freely from a paper by Professor Chambers, and have taken some facts from others by Mr Pollard and Mrs Symons. These are to be published in a memorial number of *The Bromsgrovian*, of which I have been allowed to see the proofs. I have also seen an appreciation of Housman's scholarship by Professor D. S. Robertson which is to appear in *The Classical Review*.

In the preparation of the book as a whole I am greatly indebted to Mr E. Harrison, Professor Robertson, and Mr A. F. Scholfield who have grudged no time or pains in assisting me. My thanks are due also to the President and Fellows of St John's College, Oxford, for leave to reproduce Mr Francis Dodd's drawing, to Messrs

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## P R E F A C E

Jonathan Cape Ltd. for permission to print a poem from *More Poems*, and to the staff of the University Press for the care they have taken over a troublesome piece of typography.

A. S. F. G.

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