

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-67319-9 - An Anthology of the Poetry of the Age of Shakespeare

Chosen and Arranged by W. T. Young

Frontmatter

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*THE CAMBRIDGE ANTHOLOGIES*

AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE POETRY  
OF THE  
AGE OF SHAKESPEARE

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To  
M. G.

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AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE POETRY  
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AGE OF SHAKESPEARE

CHOSEN AND ARRANGED

BY

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THE CAMBRIDGE ANTHOLOGIES are intended for the general reader, who, whilst he is familiar with the greater masters, has little leisure, and, it may be, little inclination, to become a professed student of literature. They seek to provide such a reader with first-hand knowledge of the literary atmosphere and social conditions in which these masterpieces were created. At present, this need is satisfied only by reference to histories of literature, which have too many pre-occupations to deal justly with it, or to authorities even less accessible.

It is the object of this series to let each age speak for itself, and to give coherence and prominence to what seem to be its significant features. Thus, the thought, temper, manners and activities of the period of Shakespeare, which is the theme of the first two volumes, are exemplified in selections from contemporary poetry and prose. The former illustrates the literary interests, models and aspirations, as well as the lyrical and rhetorical quality of the time; the latter gives a picture of the Elizabethan Englishman, painted by himself, in pursuit of his business, sport or roguery.

Volumes dealing in like manner with other periods will follow, and the series will include a history of English literature for general readers.

W. T. YOUNG.

J. DOVER WILSON.

10 August 1910

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## PREFACE

THIS series of books aims at an adjustment of the claims of literature and literary history. Only the instructor in literature knows how prone the student is to sacrifice his right to first-hand knowledge and private judgment, and to rely upon the critic and historian. In this book, some selections are presented with no more of history or criticism than is implicit in an arrangement of the poems according to subject and chronological succession. This should suffice to set in clear view the kinds of poetry practised by the Elizabethans, and the process of development through which each has passed; and it should help to disentangle the study of poetry from the encumbrance of formulas, epigrams and generalisations, which are sometimes substituted for it; poetry may very well stand without them.

The bulk of the book consists of lyric; three arrangements of this section were considered before the present one was adopted. The basis of it is chronological, the criterion being the date of birth of the author; this has the advantage of facility of reference, though it does not exemplify so clearly as one previously attempted the varied themes touched upon by these poets. The book lies open to the charge of offering rather meagre selections of the

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other kinds ; the defence is that it does not pretend to do anything more than illustrate Elizabethan poetry. It is hoped at the same time that the student who has read what is here given of *Rosamond*, or *Nimphidia*, or *The Induction*, or whatever may have drawn his interest, will be induced to turn to the complete poem and make his approach to the author through his work.

The source of the text is specified in all cases in a head-note ; the dates are those of publication, except in the case of Shakespeare's plays, where a conjectural date of performance is accepted. When two dates are given (as, for example, *Astrophel and Stella*, 1591—1598) they, in general, indicate that the poem was first published at the earlier date, whilst the text is derived from the edition of the later date. The text is modernised except in the case of Spenser, whose archaisms are deliberate and must not suffer violence.

In the matter of punctuation, as little alteration is admitted as is consistent with the production of a comprehensible text. Emendations are adopted only where the printed copy is obviously corrupt ; instances are :—*Faction* for *affection*, page 24 ; *guards* for *guides*, page 62 ; *Melpomene* for *Melponie*, page 65 ; *struck* for *stuck*, page 85 ; and some few others. Every poem is taken directly from the original, excepting only those rare cases in which the British Museum contains no early copy. When titles accompany lyrical poems, they are taken from the source named ; for poems in other sections, titles have been invented. There are one or two cases in which the attribution to certain authors may appear dogmatic ; 'Silence augmenteth grief' is fathered upon Fulke Greville, though this is not an established conclusion ; similarly, 'Underneath this sable hearse' is accredited to Ben Jonson, albeit the MS. in T.C.D. is signed William Browne.

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The responsibility for the selection falls upon the editor alone ; it may be premised that the design of the book does not admit the pursuit of novelty to any large extent, and, furthermore, that the ground of choice is not always supreme excellence, but often rather representative or illustrative quality.

To Mr A. H. Bullen every student in this province is a debtor ; the student who follows Mr Bullen through his sources will find, first, that there are still many gleanings in a wide field ; and, secondly, that the harvest garnered into his selections from the dramatists, song-books and romances, includes all the richest produce. To Mr E. K. Chambers, and to Messrs Routledge (the present publishers of the *Muses' Library*), the writer is beholden for permission, readily granted, to use the text of the poems of John Donne ; and to Messrs Macmillan for the same indulgence in regard to extracts from Spenser. To the interest and suggestions of Mr A. R. Waller the book owes the pruning of some faults, and the addition of some features which should increase its usefulness. Thanks are due also to those in charge at the Museum, and to the skilful and exact readers of the Cambridge University Press.

W. T. Y.

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*If all the pens that ever poets held  
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,  
And every sweetness that inspired their hearts  
Their minds and muses on admired themes;  
If all the heavenly quintessence they 'still  
From their immortal flowers of poesy,  
Wherein as in a mirror we perceive  
The highest reaches of a human wit;  
If these had made one poem's period,  
And all combined in beauty's worthiness,  
Yet should there hover in their restless heads  
One thought, one grace, one wonder at the least  
Which into words no virtue can digest.*

MARLOWE