

**INTRODUCTION TO POETRY:
POETIC EXPRESSION -
POETIC TRUTH - THE
PROGRESS OF POETRY**

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Introduction to Poetry: Poetic Expression - Poetic Truth - The Progress of Poetry by Laurie Magnus

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LAURIE MAGNUS

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MURRAY'S
HOME AND SCHOOL
LIBRARY

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

A decorative border in a black and white Art Deco style surrounds the text. It features stylized leaves and flowers, with a more complex floral design at the bottom center.

INTRODUCTION
TO POETRY

POETIC EXPRESSION—POETIC
TRUTH—THE PROGRESS
OF POETRY

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LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE ST.

1902

To the Hermit of Piper's End

PREFACE

THIS book is intended to convey the elements of taste and judgment in poetry by the natural or direct method of literature-teaching. In other words, its object is to stimulate a reasonable pleasure in poetry. Elsewhere I have written, "If the new learning is to replace the old in our national system of education, English literature will bear the burden of that discipline in taste and character which has been borne so honourably and so long by the classics of antiquity. . . . It must be left to teachers to discover for themselves the right methods of study. Already it is becoming fairly clear that certain time-honoured modes will have to be discontinued. There is a general agreement—and any point of common meeting is welcome—that the history of English literature and the contents of English letters are two very different studies. The kind of knowledge which is gained by reading up the lives of authors, with lists of

their works and dates, and reproducing the result as accurately as may be, is valueless as culture and discipline. . . . If English literature is really to take its place as a serious mental discipline, we must rid ourselves of the old limitations. . . . One wants to teach children *how* to read, to help them to hear with trained ears the most perfect and melodious speech which the lips of men have ever uttered, and to appreciate at its right value an art which is no mere ornament, but an interpretation of the life of man. . . . In literature-teaching, as at present conducted, no such bridge [between the School and University] has been built, and the need of it has hardly been perceived in this country. At no stage is the learner helped to look for the large conclusion, or to think out for himself the idea underlying the facts." *

I shall, perhaps, be pardoned this long quotation from myself if I add that the present little book is, as far as I know, the first attempt on this side of the Atlantic to supply the need that is pointed out. It has seemed to me more useful to make that attempt, however imperfectly and inadequately, than to continue to reproduce the opinion of teachers as to the

* *National Education: Essays towards a Constructive Policy*, ch. i. (John Murray, 1901.)

existence of the need. Experiments of the kind have been made in America, but the books in question are difficult to recommend, chiefly on account of what may be called the pedagogic bias of their writers, which leads them too frequently to use a deterrent scientific terminology. I may mention two works, however, which may profitably be consulted: *Some Principles of Literary Criticism*, by C. T. Winchester, Professor of English Literature in Wesleyan University (New York, Macmillan, 1899), and *The Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages*, by Henry Osborn Taylor (New York, the Columbia University Press, 1901).

Among recent authorities in England, I am chiefly conscious of my debt to Professor Saintsbury's series of volumes, *Periods of European Literature* (William Blackwood & Sons), to the *History of English Poetry*, volumes I. and II., by Professor Courthope, C.B. (Macmillan), and to the Oxford lectures on *Life in Poetry: Law in Taste*, by the same author and publishers. The *Two Lectures Introductory to the Study of Poetry*, by the Rev. H. C. Beeching (Cambridge University Press, 1901), are full of illuminating thought, as is the monograph on *Milton* which Mr Edward Arnold has published for Professor Walter Raleigh, now of Glasgow. But

I hope that there will be found enough of new matter in this book to justify its appearance in a series designed for home and school use.

L. M.

LONDON,
March 29, 1902.