EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY. POETRY AND THE DRAMA. THE GOLDEN TREASURY OF LONGER POEMS

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Everyman's Library. Poetry and the Drama. The Golden Treasury of Longer Poems by Ernest Rhys

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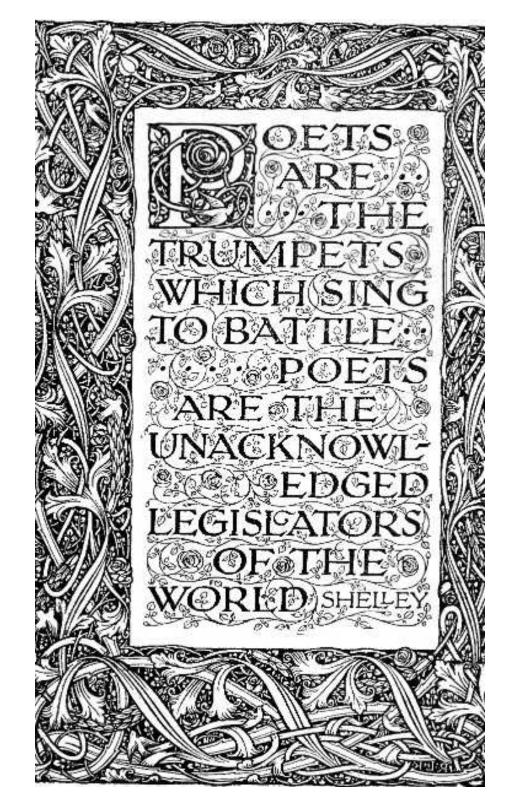
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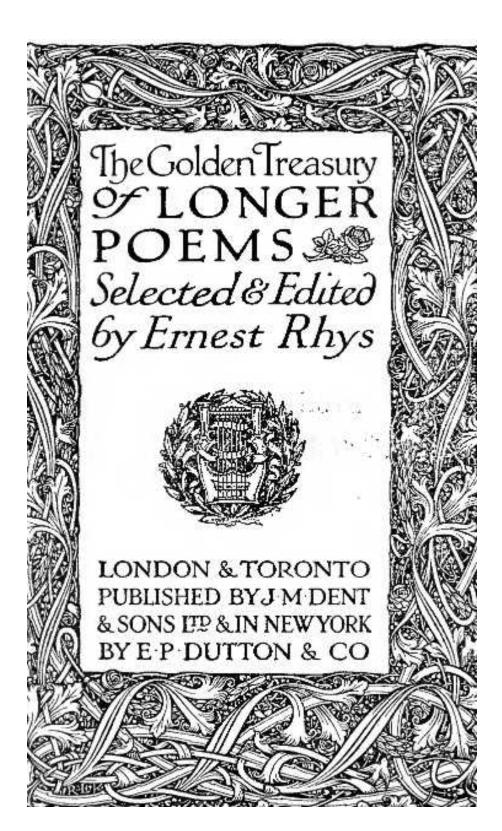


EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY EDITED BY ERNEST RHYS

POETRY AND THE DRAMA

THE GOLDEN TREASURY
OF LONGER POEMS
SELECTED AND EDITED BY
ERNEST RHYS





INTRODUCTION

This volume of longer poems is the natural successor to the two anthologies of songs and lyrics and the ballad book in the same library. It does not apply too rigidly its measure of length, being intended to take up the line of English verse at the point where the others paused, to maintain the record and make it of a piece with the rest. There are poems that are still lyrical, like Drayton's "Agincourt," and others, like Chaucer's "Knightes Tale," which show the sustained narrative power of English verse. Again there are poems, like Parnell's "Hermit," which knit up afresh the old ballad tradition of "Chevy Chase" and "Clerk Saunders." There are noble elegies, too, and tributes of poet to poet-"Adonais" and Ben Jonson's lines to the Beloved Memory of Shakespeare, while the English love of place and of Nature is heard again and again in its pages. In all this variety, the main purpose is to show the great succession of the English poets who wrote, as Coleridge says, with

> A light in sound, a soundlike power in light, Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere.

It keeps on the whole close to the recognised track. It does not forget the great prose writers, like Swift and Dr. Johnson, who influenced verse. But chiefly it upholds the princely line, in which Chaucer, Spenser, Marvell, Milton, Ben Jonson, Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, Pope, Goldsmith, Burns, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats are the masters and the great maintainers. In the shadow of their greater fame stand other poets worthy of remembrance, on whom as it were the true tradition took hold—men who were not great poets but who yet contributed to the rich store. Such were Joseph Warton, whose "Grave of King Arthur" is rescued from comparative forgetfulness, and Shenstone, whose "Schoolmistress" is the reminder of an old and pleasant mode of rural art. In other cases there is a question of poems that influenced the world and

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in a sense became part not only of the dialect of their own time, but of the permanent language of verse; and these too have not been forgotten. In a few instances items have been omitted because they are already printed in the poetry-books of the series: e.g., "Chevy Chase," "Robin Hood," and "John Gilpin." For space is precious and every poem has jealously to be considered, in the claim of the many that must be omitted.

On the modern side, the book stops short with the close of last century, where the personal glamour, as we may call it, and the deceptive contemporary estimate, enters the list. Who of us can tell what the lasting value is going to prove of some of those younger poets, under whose spell we may have willingly enough fallen?—in whose poetry,

As in a mansion like their proper home Even forms and substances are circumfused . . . And through the turnings intricate of verse Present themselves as objects recognised, In flashes, and with glory not their own.

We have only included then from the later pieces some of those which have already lasted a generation, and worn well, and stood the test of a change of generations and fashions.

E.R.

The following is a list of collections and anthologies that are related to the present volume:—

Dodsley, Collection of Poems, 1770; Chalmers, English Poets, 1810; Hales, Longer English Poems, 1898; Ritson, Metrical Romances, 1832; Southey, British Poets; Ellis, Early English Poets, 1803; Ellis, Early English Metrical Romances, 1805; Saintsbury, G., Caroline Poets, 2 vols., 1906; Chambers, Encyclopedia of English Literature, 1844-1905; Ward, English Poets, 5 vols., Chaucer to Rupert Brooke, 1880-1918; Campbell, British Poets, 1845; Scott, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border; Quiller-Couch, Oxford Book of English Verse, 1900; Quiller-Couch, Oxford Book of Victorian Verse, 1912; Newbolt's English Anthology of Prose and Verse; Chambers, English Pastorals, 1895; Manly, English Poetry (1170-1892); Herford, Tales in Verse, 1896.

Manly, English Poetry (1170-1892); Herford, Tales in Verse, 1896.
Everyman's Library editions of Browning (2 vols.), Tennyson (2 vols.), Burns, Keats, Wordsworth (2 vols.), Chaucer, Matthew Amold, Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry (2 vols.), Longfellow, Milton, Gray, Goldsmith, Emerson and Byron; Book of British Ballads; Volume of Heroic Verse; Early Romances of William Morris.

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