

**POETS OF THE SOUTH; A
SERIES OF BIOGRAPHICAL
AND CRITICAL STUDIES WITH
TYPICAL POEMS, ANNOTATED**

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Poets of the South; a series of biographical and critical studies with typical poems, annotated by
F. V. N. Painter

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A SERIES OF
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES
WITH
TYPICAL POEMS, ANNOTATED

BY

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POETS OF THE SOUTH.

W. P. 9

TO THE
ADMIRALTY

PREFACE

THE poets of the South, who constitute a worthy galaxy of poetic talent and achievement, are not sufficiently known. Even in the South, which might naturally be expected to take pride in its gifted singers, most of them, it is to be feared, are but little read.

This has been called an age of prose. Under the sway of what are regarded as "practical interests," there is a drifting away from poetic sentiment and poetic truth. This tendency is to be regretted, for material prosperity is never at its best without the grace and refinements of true culture. At the present time, as in former ages, the gifted poet is a seer, who reveals to us what is highest and best in life.

There is at present a new interest in literature in the South. The people read more; and in recent years an encouraging number of Southern writers have achieved national distinction. With this literary renaissance, there has been a turning back to older authors.

It is hoped that this little volume will supply a real need. It is intended to call fresh attention to the poetic achievement of the South. While

minor poets are not forgotten, among whose writings is found many a gem of poetry, it is the leaders of the chorus — Poe, Hayne, Timrod, Lanier, and Ryan — who receive chief consideration. It may be doubted whether several of them have been given the place in American letters to which their gifts and achievements justly entitle them. It is hoped that the following biographical and critical sketches of these men, each highly gifted in his own way, will lead to a more careful reading of their works, in which, be it said to their honor, there is no thought or sentiment unworthy of a refined and chivalrous nature.

F. V. N. PAINTER.

SALEM, VIRGINIA.

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POETS OF THE SOUTH

CHAPTER I

MINOR POETS OF THE SOUTH

THE first poetic writer of this country had his home at Jamestown. He was **George Sandys** who came to Virginia in 1621, and succeeded his brother as treasurer of the newly established colony. Amid the hardships of pioneer colonial life, in which he proved himself a leading spirit, he had the literary zeal to complete his translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which he had begun in England. After the toilsome day, spent in introducing iron works or in encouraging shipbuilding, he sat down at night, within the shadow of surrounding forests, to construct his careful, rhymed pentameters. The conditions under which he wrote were very far removed from the Golden Age which he described, —

"Which uncompelled
And without rule, in faith and truth, excelled."

The promise of this bright, heroic beginning in poetry was not realized; and scarcely another voice was heard in verse in the South before the Revolution.