

**THE MAKING OF POETRY:  
A CRITICAL STUDY OF ITS  
NATURE AND VALUE**

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# The Making of Poetry

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Its Nature and Value

By

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to  
MY MOTHER

1875



## PREFACE

THIS book might be called a critical essay toward a consistent view of poetry. I claim no finality for this view. I only hope that it will be of some real service to teachers and students whose interests and activities centre in literature; to the gentle-hearted reader whose mind, untouched by the sneaping frost of complacency, is eager to find the well-springs of his higher pleasures; to the man of affairs, professedly literary in taste or not, whose purged vision enables him to recognise in poetry the highest manifestation of principles that control all his best practical attainments.

If this critical study, by its nature as inadequate to its purpose as it is imperfect in achievement, will help to show a little more clearly how poetry is made, what its nature is, what the need and value of it are in our daily life, so that poetry may be more widely seen as touching "this uneasy heart of ours" with "morning radiance"; if it will help to reconcile conceptions commonly thought of as remotely idealistic with those dominant in activities all about us; if, even by implication, it will in some measure suggest the final dependence of our civilisation upon our esteem and cultivation of the higher ranges of

sensibility; if, finally, it will lead to a more extensive reading, joyous yet discriminating, of poetry, somewhat neglected of late in our "sabbathless pursuit of fortune"; the best hopes of the author will have been richly realised.

Poetry itself needs no advocate; calls for no defender. She is an elusive Muse. Neglected and ignored, she, in common with the other arts, takes vengeance, silent but unremitting, in narrowness of intellect, of morals, and of sensibility; propitiated and cultivated, she bestows her rewards bountifully in catholicity, openness, and flexibility of mind, and especially in the fine yet strong cultivation of those emotions upon which all the higher, as well as the best practical, expressions of life are more and more steadily seen to depend.

Approached from the point of view herein set forth, this subject offers a peculiar temptation to mount what Lamb calls "the airy stilts of abstraction." However ill my success, I have sought to avoid this temptation. I have likewise sought to avoid the direct statement of standards of literary judgment; the statement and the discussion of such standards make up the task of formal literary criticism. To facilitate the acceptance of certain ideas not usually set forth in a work of this kind perhaps, I have used selections from poems generally familiar. Occasionally, where lines were inaccessible, I have raked "the dust of old oblivion" to quote from memory. The

elementary conceptions of the first two chapters may be cursorily passed over by the more practised reader.

To the books, from Plato to Benedetto Croce, I stand in general indebtedness; those whose influence I am most conscious of are the *Poetics* of Aristotle and the *Kritik of Judgment* of Immanuel Kant. For helpful suggestions I am indebted to Mr. D. Nichol Smith, Goldsmiths' Reader in English in Oxford University; and to my colleagues, Professors H. M. Belden, R. D. Miller, and F. M. Tisdell. Professor Miller also kindly read the proof. An indebtedness which goes deeper than these I have acknowledged on another page.

A. H. R. F.

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI,

April, 1912.