

PREFACE

This volume contains a selection from the nondramatic verse of Victor Hugo and is intended for use in schools and colleges. The editors have constantly kept in mind that it is a book for class use. The poems chosen are, it is hoped, varied enough in matter and style to give students a fairly adequate and just view of Hugo's work. In making a classification of the poems the aim was to satisfy practical demands rather than critical exactness. The scheme of classification has regard chiefly to matter and not to form. Within each group the poems are arranged, for the most part, in chronological order, so that students may study the changes which occurred in Hugo's ideas and style as his life went on. The poems are given, with rare exceptions, in their complete form, for to read only the best parts of a poem is to have of it an imperfect and distorted knowledge.

In the matter of annotating, the editors have sought not to invade unduly the domain of the instructor. The footnotes deal mainly with words and meanings which do not usually occur in the smaller dictionaries. The critical and historical explanations have been kept within modest limits, for which the teacher will doubtless be thankful.

The editors have found, in their experience, that proper names frequently cost students a good deal of time and trouble, and it occurred to them that a sort of skeleton encyclopedia, containing all proper names found in the volume, might be provided for the student without encroaching on the province of the teacher. They regret that in the case of certain names they are unable to afford any help.