

Editor's Foreword

GREAT poets are the seers and prophets of a nation—of the world. Their function is to interpret life and nature in terms of beauty and passion, and through imagination and inspiration, reveal the Infinite and the True.

All writers of good verse cannot be great poets, and it is only the works of the latter that permanently endure; but those of minor qualities reflect and influence their own generation, and have an important mission in the evolution of national life.

In proportion as the individual or the nation despises or neglects poetry, there exists a state of moral and spiritual degeneracy. Materialism prevails, and loyal service and generous sacrifice give place to selfishness and unfair advantage. The memories of the young should be stored with beautiful and noble verse.

The centuries seem to mark distinct eras in the development and fashion of poetry. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Burns, Shelley, Keats, Byron, and later, Tennyson, were the dominating leaders of the remarkable school of English poets of the 19th century; and their standards are still potent. Browning cannot be classed with this school. He belongs to the 20th century. And today, Browning, Whitman and Kipling overshadow all others as leaders of poetic thought and expression.

More and more are the poets realizing that the quality of beauty is universal; and hence that there is nothing in this subjective-objective world, outside the pale of artistic expression. *More and more are they seeking themes of intense human interest, and striving for climaxes of spiritual beauty.*