

INTRODUCTION

SIMPLICITY and directness are essential to the highest class of verse. In the judgment of poetry this principle must never be lost sight of.

Goethe, perhaps the greatest literary mind since Shakespeare, is noted for his simplicity and directness of manner. The effort to dwarf the writing of verse into an obscure cult will fail so long as the people keep themselves familiar with the verse of the great poets of the past—whose work is true and beautiful because of its very character of direct simple naturalness.

It may be difficult to explain to the layman the conditions which produce poetry. But no one of a poetical temperament (and I believe that the greater mass of readers have such an inclination) can fail to appreciate a true poem. The failure to appreciate verse to-day is not owing so much to the inability of the public to recognize a poem, as to the attempt of certain critics to force upon the world as poetry what is after all at the most only clever verse. The result is a confusion in the mind of the ordinary reader who in the past was accustomed to judge by his own feelings.

There is no doubt that poetry is first and last a high