five thousand entries which include not only authors and titles but also
genre and forms of literature, will, at its moderate price, be welcomed by
the general reader in Japan no less than by the student.

—Y. Y.

"ENGLISH POETRY AND PROSE"

ENGLISH POETRY AND PROSE. By Takeshi Saito.

The Japanese student now has an instrument by which he can form a
fair idea of the scope and general progress of English Literature, not by the
too common method of reference to secondary material, but by reading for
himself these carefully selected passages from the English literary store-
house. Dr. Saito has rifled the stores with a discriminating eye and a
skillful hand, so that even in the case of passages excerpted from novels—
usually a ticklish business in anthologies—he has succeeded in giving the
student a typical and informing example.

My feeling with regard to the teaching of English Literature in Japan
is that a successive, sequential picture of the whole field is often lacking,
and that those of us who have our pet hobbies in various fields too often
ride them independently and without making those connections without
which the student will never see the history of literature as a whole. Thus
it seems to me that with many ardent students it must be the case that they
think England's literature began with Chaucer; after his death nothing
until Spenser; after Shakespeare another hiatus until Milton, and so on.
This, at least, would appear from the curricula, and certain it is that our
students here are weak in their knowledge of the connective links between
one age and another, weak in their feeling for literature as a continuous
though changing stream.

Something of that continuity could not fail to strike any student who set
himself the pleasant task of reading through English Poetry and Prose.
From Beowulf to T.S. Eliot Dr. Saito has assembled many of the best and
most representative passages of the intervening millenium; and he has
managed this in condensed form, there being 550 pages of text. It will be
seen, therefore, that this volume is considerably less in extent than the
Cunliffe, Pyre, and Young anthology or the Shafer From Beowulf to
Thomas Hardy familiar to American college students. I think Dr. Saito
ENGLISH POETRY AND PROSE

has shown wisdom in so restricting himself—and with the treasures that lay before him it must have been a hard task to refuse entry to many a passage of merit. The volume is subtitled "Representative passages selected and annotated for Japanese students," and I believe that the compiler's wish to provide a suitable introductory volume to the whole field of English will be better achieved by a book of this size than by one which through excess of delights might cloy the student's taste.

A happy thought was the first section of ten pages titled "The National Character" and containing passages to familiarize the Japanese student with the nature of the country and people in which his explorations are to occur. I wish that in this section Dr. Saito had found space for a passage from Sir John Fortescue—his praise of English highwaymen, for instance; from one or other of the Elizabethans, possibly Sir Walter Raleigh; and one from Galsworthy—the character of old Jolyon, or one of the many strong and dignified paragraphs of loyalty to England.

It was, as I have said, a great task to bend the full circumference of a millennium into the narrow scope of five hundred pages. Riding my own hobbies now, I regret that there was not space for a few lines of Anglo-Saxon poetry in the original—say the beautiful hymn of Caedmon which reads like music even to the untutored ear. And I should have liked something from the Venerable Bede—the story of Caedmon or the famous passage comparing life to the flight of a swallow through the hall. It has always seemed to me that the lines describing the queen Wealthieow's reception of the warriors is a passage well worth quoting from Beowulf, for the light it throws on customs of that early time, as well as for its poetry. And I missed the noble lines which follow Malory's description of the death of Arthur:

Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather will I say, here in this world he changed his life.

An indefinable thrill always strikes one in these lines and in the Latin epitaph following them, without which the strength of the Arthur legend and the death scene itself lose something of their force. From Ben Jonson I should have liked one of the lyrics, such as the Hymn to Diana ("Quean and huntress chaste and fair"), or the familiar and ever lovely "Drink to me only with thine eyes," or the touching poem on the death of his son. We often think of Ben, not entirely without reason, as a didactic and impatient fellow, confusing him perhaps with Dr. Johnson; and it is therefore a pleasure to read him, in the grace of his lyrics or in the manly
sorrow of the last mentioned poem.

To my mind Herrick, Carew, Lovelace, and Suckling are more important than Cowley or Christopher Smart in the progress of English poetry, and I wish Dr. Saito had been able to include them in his frigate, even if it had been necessary to throw Cowley and Smart overboard—together, if need be, with some of the Wordsworth or Shakespeare passages which most students would probably discover for themselves. I should also have liked one example of a short lyric from Byron.

All these are but personal preferences, and every lover of literature will have his own perfect anthology stored away in memory. Needless to say, no two such anthologies would be the same, and as Dr. Saito knows his audience far better than I ever shall, it is somewhat superfluous for me even to suggest the inclusion of personal favorites.

It was a pleasure to find Donne represented by his sermons as well as his poems, and to discover passages from Sir Thomas Browne, Lyly, Young, Beddoes, Landor, and others who may not be particularly familiar to Japanese students. The selection from Hardy's The Dynasts was also welcomed on the same score. The sixteen illustrations, beautifully reproduced and many of them from the editor's own collection, add greatly to the appearance of an attractive volume and to the pleasure and profit with which the student will handle it.

The book, aside from its value as a chest of treasures for private consumption, will also be widely used, I am sure, as parallel reading for courses in the history of literature or for reading classes. The notes are ample enough to save the student's time without insulting his intelligence. I wish every student of mine would read this book from Introduction to Index. Perhaps such a reading would have the happy result of suppressing that old question, "Who is your favorite author?"

My one request to Professor Saito is that he speedily set about the preparation of a companion volume for American Literature.

—W. Bradford Smith

A CHINESE GRAMMARIAN

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