

CHOICE READING

Prose Selections

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THE NATIONAL PUBLISHING CO.
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PROSE SELECTIONS FROM LIVING ENGLISH

[*Spoken and Written*]

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Edited by

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PREFACE

AN anthologist is confronted with a task not merely difficult but foredoomed to a certain measure of failure. He is somewhat in the position of a man with a small house to furnish and the contents of a far vaster mansion which have been stored for many centuries to draw on. Much must be left behind neglected in the store. The task becomes even more difficult when a simple, definite, scholastic purpose is to be served, namely, the choice of prose suitable for the students of the post-secondary or pre-university year, for writers don't write for them. In English literature there is plenty of material that is good and plenty of material that is easy; but the good is not always easy and the easy is rarely good. One test, however, was applied before the inclusion or the exclusion of a piece was decided upon. It may be stated in the words of a valuable, educational report: 'Proper emphasis should be laid on the constant interaction of the two processes of comprehension and expression.' In the early stages of foreign language study, students are often confronted with literary passages beautiful in themselves, but often beyond their quick understanding without the aid of adequate help and almost always beyond imitation as patterns of expression. An essay by Elia or Stevenson, a snippet from Boswell or Macaulay leaves the student panting and out of breath with laboured delight. The present attempt is to provide students with choice reading for quick and easy comprehension and with models of expression guiding them to exercise their own powers. Telling a tale, relating an incident or an anecdote, reflecting on the significance of an apparently trivial experience, describing a scene or a situation or a person, setting forth

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