

## PREFACE

WHILE occupying the chair of English Literature in the Imperial University of Tokyo from 1896 (*September*) to 1903 (*March*), Lafcadio Hearn divided his lectures into three main divisions. Five hours a week were devoted to textual readings from poetical works such as those of Tennyson or Rossetti; three hours were allotted to a series of lectures on the history of English Literature, each of which covered three successive academic years; for the remaining four hours a week, he lectured on miscellaneous themes in literature.

It is the whole of the lectures, belonging to this last category, which are contained in the three volumes, of which the first is now offered to the public, and which will be followed in due course by the second and third. Lafcadio Hearn's lectures on English literature compiled by the present editors has already made its appearance in 1927 under the title of "A History of English Literature" (*The Hokuseido Press*).

In 1915 and the two following years, on the advice of Pay Director Mitchell McDonald, U. S. N., Prof. Erskine had published the greater part of Hearn's lectures in four volumes with his own very illuminating prefaces. These lectures were selected from typewritten MSS. based on the notes taken in class by Messrs. M. Otani, R. Tanabé, S. Ibaraki, S. Uchigasaki, M. Kurihara, S. Kobinata, R. Ishikawa, J. Kishi, and T. Ochiai, all of whom were students of Hearn. Some of these typewritten MSS. which were left unused in the possession of the Hearn family, have been entrusted to the Hokuseido Press, and are now for the first time being published in the present volumes, thus making the latter a complete collection.

The lectures in these volumes are not arranged according to the chronological order of their delivery, but grouped

according to the nature of their subject-matter. "The Bible in English Literature" was Hearn's first lecture in the University and "Great Translators" was his last one. "On Reading," "On Composition," and "On the Value of the Supernatural in Literature" belong to the early days. "Shakespeare" is taken from the first cycle of Hearn's lectures on English literature.

It is most important to mention in this connection, that the editors have been extremely fortunate in securing the help and assistance of Prof. Nishizaki of the Toyama Koto Gakko. To him they are deeply indebted for his painstaking revision of the texts quoted, for his reference to those books of which Hearn made use when lecturing, and which are now, together with all the other books Lafcadio Hearn possessed, in the Hearn Library, belonging to the same school. It is as the result of Prof. Nishizaki's labours that the editors feel confidence in the authenticity and exactitude of their compilation. Already so much has been said of the merits of the lectures that any further addition by us, as editors, would be superfluous. One thing, however, deserves special notice and that is that these lectures were Lafcadio Hearn's intimate talks. Had he lived to see their publication, he would certainly have rewritten them many times and never permitted them to see the light of day in their present form.

In dictating Hearn gave the punctuation, and sometimes even the spelling of unfamiliar names, so that we, his students, could take down his lectures word for word. He lectured *extempore*, not from any fully prepared notes. He brought with him a tiny memorandum containing only names and dates, and a few volumes of poetical works or anthologies wrapped in a purple *furoshiki*. Undoing this, and placing the contents carelessly upon his desk before him, he would slowly begin dictating. When quoting any lines or verses, he used to refer to these books, bringing his right eye very close to the pages, and if the line-arrangement of a stanza chanced to be irregular, he would show the irregularity on the black-board. Being exception-

ally skilful at drawing, he used to make sketches on the board, should a description of anything exotic or unfamiliar to us occur in quotations. Sometimes a faint, shy smile would lighten up his face when he seemed satisfied with the effect of his drawing. Apart from this, the lecture went on uninterruptedly. Like the music of running waters the sentences flowed from his lips. We, his students, listened eagerly, busily taking down his words. Gradually the subject under discussion held us enthralled. Lafcadio Hearn took into account the mentality of his students and entered into it himself. His incomparable power of paraphrasing clarified passages difficult for us to understand, revealing often to us hidden conception and unsuspected charms. It often seemed to us as if we were actually leaning out from the bar of Heaven beside the Blessed Damozel, or walking along the corridors of the Palace of Art, till the bell for the fifteen minutes' recess broke the spell.

The memory of those days has been ever present with us in our work of editing these lectures. Now that they are going to be given to the public, we feel how much we owe Mrs. Hearn, whose affectionate devotion gave to our beloved master a haven of rest after his *wanderjahre*, and who, after surviving her husband twenty-eight years, passed away on February 18th of this year. Nor can we forget Pay Director Mitchel McDonald, U.S.N., and Mrs. Wetmore, the latter the biographer of Hearn, both of whom were his life-long and dearest friends and who always encouraged us in doing what we could perpetuate our master's memory.

R. TANABÉ  
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Tokyo, September, 1932.