TWELVE
AMERICAN
WRITERS

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GEORGE ARMS

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HENRY D. THOREAU
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE
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WALT WHITMAN
MARK TWAIN
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TWELVE AMERICAN WRITERS

Edited by
WILLIAM M. GIBSON
and
GEORGE ARMS

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we have represented Howells extensively as the discriminating critic he was, and we are
cheerful in admitting that the judgment of the various American literary communities has not
captivated with our own. Then, simply, our intent to give each writer adequate representation
in a one-volume anthology accounts for the limitation to twelve.
Those who read and study the anthology may wish to know about its order, texts, and
annotation. Our ordering of the twelve writers is primarily but not strictly chronological,
and the arrangement seems to us to anticipate the pattern of most, if not all, courses in Amer-
ican literature. Within the divisions of fiction, poetry, and criticism, the order is chronological
for each writer except Whitman, whose poems from Leaves of Grass appear to greater advan-
tage, we believe, as Whitman finally placed them. We have used what we regard as the best
text, usually the last to receive the author's final supervision. On a few occasions, acknowl-
edged at the appropriate point in the anthology, we have used modern texts prepared by con-
temporary scholars, such as Jay Leyda's in his excellent edition of Melville's tales. Following
individual works, the dates on the left are for composition (when in italic type) and for first
printing (when in Roman). Dates at the right are for the text used when such dates have not
been stated elsewhere. Our annotations in both headnotes and footnotes offer what seems useful
for most students. Though we trust they are reliable, we have consciously tried not to
anticipate or to close out the fresh response of each reader to what he reads. Identifications
and definitions that may be made from desk dictionaries remain unglossen.

Except to say that it is large, we find it hard to assess our debt to the many friends and col-
leagues who have been of real, though indirect, help. For answers to specific questions or for
especially close associations in American literary study we wish to record our thanks to Leon
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WILLIAM M. GIBSON, New York University
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