

**Dr Perry**  
**Victorian Literature Reading List.**

The best anthology of poetry is Christopher Ricks's *The New Oxford Book of Victorian Verse* (1987), but you will need to acquire or to borrow editions of the authors you choose to study.

**Some Background Reading.**

G.K. Chesterton's *The Victorian Age in Literature* (Oxford, 1913; often reprinted) is eccentric and dazzling. Robin Gilmour's *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-90* (Longman, 1994) is a steadier account of the background. Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (1957) is a bit leaden but full; Jerome Buckley, *The Victorian Temper: A Study in Literary Culture* (1951, 1981) is a bit more lively. Two very good books of intellectual history by Basil Willey: *Nineteenth century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold* (1949) and *More Nineteenth Century Studies: A Group of Honest Doubters* (1956).

I will be giving you more specific reading lists as we go along, but here are some more general titles that you might find illuminating or otherwise useful. For poetry: E.D.H. Johnson, *The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry: Sources of the Poetic Imagination in Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold* (1952); Isobel Armstrong (ed.), *Major Victorian Poets: Reconsiderations* (1969); Eric Griffiths, *The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry* (Oxford, 1989); Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics* (1993); Joseph Bristow (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry* (2000); Bernard Richards, *English Poetry of the Victorian Period, 1830-1890* (second edition, 2001); Matthew Reynolds, *The Realms of Verse 1830-1870: English Poetry in a Time of Nation-Building* (2001); Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, *Victorian Afterlives: The Shaping of Influence in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (2002). For the novel: John Sutherland's *Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction* (1988) is an invaluable handbook. There are classic readings to be found in David Cecil, *Early Victorian Novelists* (1934) and F.R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition: Eliot, James, Conrad* (1948). Also worth reading: Peter Conrad, *The Victorian Treasure-House* (1973); Gillian Beer's *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (1983).

**Main Authors**

(I list here under each author, first, suggested editions to use, and then what you might begin by reading.)

**Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)**

Carlyle's essays and books exerted an immense influence on the age and you should have at least some sense of them. 'Signs of the Times', first published in 1829, is included in many collections of Carlyle's prose; *Past and Present* crops up in second-hand bookshops all the time.

'Signs of the Times'. [ *Past and Present.* ]

**Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)**

*Aurora Leigh and Other Poems*, ed. Bolton and Holloway (Penguin).

*Aurora Leigh*. Read the first book, and read the rest if you like that.

‡ **Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)**<sup>1</sup>

The best edition is the generous selected edition by Christopher Ricks (paperback; Longman, 1989), but it is expensive. Alternatively, there is a volume in the Oxford Authors series edited by Adam Roberts, or a good selection from Penguin, edited by Aidan Day.

'Ulysses'; 'Morte d'Arthur'; 'Break, break, break'; 'Now sleeps the crimson petal', 'Tears, Idle Tears', and 'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height' (from *The Princess*); *In Memoriam* ii, v, vii, ix, xi, xv, l, liv, lv, lvi, xcv, cxix, cxxi, cxxiii. [ The rest of *In Memoriam*; *Maud*. ]

‡ **Robert Browning (1812-1889)**<sup>2</sup>

If you fall for Browning you will want the two-volume Penguin text, edited by Pettigrew and Collins, though it is expensive; the Oxford text, *Browning's Poetical Works 1833-1864* (1970), edited by Ian Jack, is cheaper and will do. If you do become an enthusiast, the work to move on to next is *The Ring and the Book*, Browning's epic of competing points of view: it comes in a separate volume from Penguin, edited by Altick. (Balliol library has one of the best collections of Browning material in the world: we also have the ring and the book memorialised in *The Ring and the Book*.)

'My Last Duchess'; 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister'; 'Fra Lippo Lippi'; 'Andrea del Sarto'; 'A Toccata of Galuppi's'; "'Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came'"; 'Porphyria's Lover'.

**Charles Dickens (1812-1870)**

*Great Expectations*; *David Copperfield*. [ *Oliver Twist*; *Bleak House*; *Hard Times*; *Our Mutual Friend*. ]

**Edward Lear (1812-1888)**

You should use *The Complete Verse and Other Nonsense*, ed. Vivien Noakes (Penguin)

Limericks from *A Book of Nonsense*; 'The Dong with a Luminous Nose'.

**Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)**

*Jane Eyre*. [ *Villette*. ]

**Emily Brontë (1818-1848)**

*Poems*, ed. Gezari (Penguin).

*Wuthering Heights*. Poems: 'The night is darkening round me'; 'It's over now; I've known it all'; 'I know not how it falls on me'; 'Cold in the earth, and the deep snow piled above thee!'; 'The Prisoner'.

**John Ruskin (1819-1900)**

*Selected Writings of John Ruskin*, ed. Dinah Birch (Oxford World's Classics).

*Unto this Last* (1860) is one of Ruskin's great pieces of social protest: you can often find it second-hand. (There is a separate edition from Penguin, edited by Clive Wilmer.) Ruskin was the greatest art critic of his day, and Professor of Fine Art at Oxford: admirers of Turner will enjoy Ruskin's noble championing of him in *Modern Painters*. (Begin with the excerpts from volume III.) The Ashmolean Museum has a fine collection of Ruskin material which we can go look at.

*Unto this Last*; 'The Pathetic Fallacy' excerpted from *Modern Painters*.

**George Eliot [ Mary Ann Evans ] (1819-1880)**

*Middlemarch*. [ *The Mill on the Floss*; *Silas Marner*; *Daniel Deronda*. ]

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<sup>1</sup> No formal connection with Balliol, but a frequent visitor, as he was close friends with Benjamin Jowett, addressee of the poem 'To the Master of Balliol'.

<sup>2</sup> Honorary Fellow of Balliol, 1867.

**Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-1861)<sup>3</sup>**

The best text in print is probably the *Selected Poems*, ed. Shirley Chew (Carcanet).

*Amours de Voyage*; 'The Latest Decalogue'.

‡ **Matthew Arnold (1822-1888)<sup>4</sup>**

*Selected Poems*, ed. Keith Silver (Carcanet) is in print.

'To Marguerite—Continued'; 'Dover Beach'; 'The Scholar-Gipsy'; 'Thyrsis'. [ Prose: 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time'; 'The Study of Poetry'. ]

**Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)**

'When I am dead, my dearest'; 'From the Antique'; 'May'; 'A Birthday'; 'By the Sea'; 'Goblin Market'.

**Lewis Carroll [Charles Lutwidge Dodgson] (1832-1898)**

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass*, ed. Hugh Haughton (Penguin).

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. 'Jabberwocky'.

**Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909)<sup>5</sup>**

*Poems and Ballads and Atalanta in Calydon*, ed. Kenneth Haynes (Penguin).

'The Garden of Proserpine'. [ 'Illicit'; 'A Match'. ]

**Walter Pater (1839-94)**

A critic of great influence on, among others, Wilde and Yeats. *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, ed. Adam Phillips (Oxford World's Classics).

'Leonardo da Vinci' and 'Conclusion', in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*

**Thomas Hardy (1840-1928).**

The Oxford course regards Hardy the poet as a twentieth century writer, Hardy the novelist as a Victorian.

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. [ *Jude the Obscure*; *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; *Far from the Madding Crowd*. ]

**Henry James (1843 - 1916).**

*The Aspern Papers*. [ *The Portrait of a Lady*; *What Maisie Knew*. ]

‡ **Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)<sup>6</sup>**

There is a serviceable Penguin, edited by W.H. Gardner; but most useful is the Oxford World's Classics text of the *Major Works*, edited by Catherine Phillips.

'The Wreck of the Deutschland'; 'The Windhover'; 'Pied Beauty'; 'As kingfishers catch fire'; 'No worst, there is none'. [ more poems ]

**George Grossmith (1847-1912) and Weedon Grossmith (1852-1919)**

The masterpiece of Victorian humour. *The Diary of a Nobody*, ed. Kate Flint (Oxford World's Classics).

*The Diary of a Nobody*.

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<sup>3</sup> Balliol, 1837-41.

<sup>4</sup> Balliol, 1841-44.

<sup>5</sup> Balliol, 1856-60.

<sup>6</sup> Balliol, 1862-66.

**Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)**

Wilde is an important essayist as well a playwright and writer of fiction. There is a single-volume *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, ed. Merlin Holland (HarperCollins). *Intentions* is often found second-hand.

*The Importance of Being Earnest*. 'The Decay of Lying' (from *Intentions*). [ *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. ]

**A.E. Housman (1859-1936)**

The *Collected Poems and Selected Prose*, edited by Christopher Ricks, is published by Penguin.

'1887'; 'It nods and curtseys and recovers'; 'Into my heart an air that kills'; 'Oh who is that young sinner'; 'Bredon Hill'. [ 'The Name and Nature of Poetry'; other poems. ]

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