POPE

ESSAY ON CRITICISM
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EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFACE.

A M P L E acknowledgment must be made at the outset of my obligations to the monumental edition of Pope's Works, begun a quarter-of-a-century ago by the Rev. Whitwell Elwin and completed within the last few years by Professor Courthope. Mr Elwin's variorum notes upon the Essay on Criticism have been of the greatest service to me in the preparation of my own, and of the wide learning and sound judgment, conspicuously displayed in Mr Courthope's Life of Pope, I have availed myself freely both in the Notes and in the Introductory sections of this book. Of the numerous works of reference to which I am indebted, justice requires that I should mention two in particular, viz., the Century Dictionary and Chambers's Cyclopaedia of English Literature. In tracing the meanings of words, illustrating their uses, and supplying their etymologies, I have repeatedly borrowed materials from the Century Dictionary with no sparing hand.

The Essay on Criticism is an excellent book, not indeed for children, but for pupils who are fitted by their age and education to read it with intelligent interest. In the hands of a competent teacher it will prove an instrument for stimulating a zest for questions of literary history, philology,
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versification, style, fine art. Frequent divagations along these by-paths account for the length to which in this edition the commentary has run as compared with the small number of pages occupied by Pope’s text.

I have supplied no biography of the author. Johnson’s Life of Pope is a classic of our Literature and can be bought for threepence. Mr Leslie Stephen’s Pope, (in the ‘English Men of Letters Series’) costs a shilling. To tell again what Johnson and Mr Stephen have told so admirably would be an impertinence, or worse. The general reader, whose knowledge of Pope is limited to the two facts that he built a grotto and translated Homer, will gain a useful notion of the man and his works from Mr Birrell’s short paper in the Second Series of Obiter Dicta.

A. S. WEST.
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Pope’s *Works*, edited by Elwin and Courthope, 10 vols. Mr Courthope’s *Life of Pope* is contained in Vol. v.
Stephen’s *Pope*, English Men of Letters Series.
Dryden’s *Poetical Works*, Globe edit.

1806. 2 vols.

Macaulay’s *Essays*, People’s edit. 2 vols.
Lowell’s *My Study Windows*, Scott Library.
De Quincey’s *Collected Works*, 16 vols.
Birrell’s *Obiter Dicta*, Second Series, 1st edit.
Taine’s *History of English Literature*, Van Laun’s Translation, 4 vols.

Hallam’s *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, 4 vols.
Bacon’s *Essays*, Pitt Press Series.
Moore’s *Life of Byron*, 1 vol. (Chatto).