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POPE
ESSAY ON CRITICISM

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1917

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107620100

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First edition January 1896
First published 1896
Reprinted October 1896, July 1908, January 1917
First paperback edition 2013

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-62010-0 Paperback

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PREFACE.

AMPLE 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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PREFACE.

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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The references in the Introduction and Notes are to the following editions :

- Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*, Chandos Classics, 1 vol.
 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.
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 ,, *Discourses on Satire and On Epic Poetry*, Cassell's National Library.
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