

**ALGERNON CHARLES
SWINBURNE. A
CRITICAL STUDY**

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Algernon Charles Swinburne. A critical study by Edward Thomas

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EDWARD THOMAS

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To
WALTER DE LA MARE

"Questions, O royal traveller, are easier than answers."

THE THREE MULLA-MULGARS.

NOTE

I AM very much indebted to Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton for permission to quote from Swinburne's prose and poetry in this book, and to my friend, Mr. Clifford Bax, for many consultations.

E. T.

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I

ATALANTA IN CALYDON

IT was the age of Browning's *Dramatis Personæ*, William Morris's *Defence of Guenevere*, Landor's *Heroic Idylls*, Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, Meredith's *Modern Love*, Robert Buchanan's *London Poems*: Longfellow, Alexander Smith and Owen Meredith were great men.

The year 1864 arrived. "The poetical atmosphere was exhausted and heavy," says Professor Mackail, "like that of a sultry afternoon darkening to thunder. Out of that stagnation broke, all in a moment, the blaze and crash of *Atalanta in Calydon*. It was something quite new, quite unexampled. It revealed a new language in English, a new world as it seemed in poetry." Two years passed, and, as an Edinburgh reviewer says, "into the midst of a well-regulated and self-respecting society, much moved by Tennyson's *Idylls*, and altogether sympathetic with the misfortunes of the blameless King—justly appreciative of the domestic affection so tenderly portrayed by Coventry Patmore's *Angel* in the