

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME

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Lays of Ancient Rome by Thomas Babington

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THOMAS BABINGTON

**LAYS OF
ANCIENT ROME**



W. Massey

LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME.

BY

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

EDITED, WITH NOTES,

BY

WILLIAM J. ROLFE, LITT. D.,

AND

JOHN C. ROLFE, PH. D.

WITH ENGRAVINGS.



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P R E F A C E .

AT the request of the publishers, the first name on the title-page of this book is that of the editor of the "English Classics" series in which it is included; but the better part of the work has been done by his son, John C. Rolfe, Assistant Professor of Latin in the Michigan State University. The senior editor has arranged the introduction, compared the text with the English editions and revised its punctuation, and helped in seeing the book through the press. The Notes are almost entirely the junior editor's, having received only occasional revision in minor points at the hands of his senior.

The editors are fully agreed in the opinion that parallel reading in English should accompany the study of Latin in our high schools and academics, where, especially in the preparatory course for college, so little time can be given to purely literary training. For such reading Macaulay's *Lays* are particularly well-adapted, both on account of their subjects and their many allusions to Roman customs and habits, and also, to our thinking, for their poetical merit. Certain critics, of whom the late Matthew Arnold is perhaps the most noteworthy, tell us that the *Lays* are not poetry; but in this instance we are content to be wrong with John Stuart Mill and Henry Morley and "Christopher North" (see pages 140, 143 below) and Edmund Clarence Stedman, if they are wrong, rather than to be right with Matthew Arnold, if he is right. Every teacher who has used the *Lays* with his classes can testify that boys enjoy them heartily. They have long been a part of the *curriculum* in the Boston Latin School and other of our best preparatory schools, and are included in the English reading required for admission to Harvard and other colleges. No doubt they would have been more generally introduced into schools but for the lack of an annotated edition. As Macaulay says (page 29 below), the learned reader does not need notes on the *Lays*, and for the unlearned they would have little interest; but the schoolboy needs them, and the average teacher is not "learned" enough to dispense with them in all cases. In preparing the present volume the editors have

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repeatedly been compelled to hunt up for themselves allusions on which classical instructors and professors were unable to give them help.

The Notes being mainly intended for the schoolboy, the quotations from classical authors have been drawn as far as possible from those read in preparatory schools. Explanations are also given of many points in ancient geography, history, institutions, manners, etc., which, even if the young folk have already learned them or could look them up in other books, it may be well to make readily accessible—if only as a review—in connection with the text of the poems. The occasional notes on English etymology are intended only as hints to teachers who are not already in the habit of letting their pupils dig a little among vernacular "roots" as well as Greek and Latin ones.

W. J. R.

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