

**ENGLISH COMPOSITION:
A MANUAL OF THEORY
AND PRACTICE**

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English Composition: A Manual of Theory and Practice by L. Cope Cornford

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'For as it is hurtful to drink wine or water alone ; and as wine mingled with water is pleasant, and delighteth the taste : even so speech finely framed delighteth the ears of them that read the story.'

—2 Maccabees xv. 39.

ENGLISH COMPOSITION

A Manual of Theory and Practice

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P R E F A C E

It is not too much to say that, for a very long time, the soundness of the theory which assumes that the long and laborious study of the dead languages of Greece and old Rome, must needs result in a knowledge of the living tongue of England, has been taken for granted. But, surely, actual experience has taught us, on the contrary, that, to acquire a working knowledge of a language by any method, other than the simple plan of studying the language itself, is (in fact) a thing impossible.

The educational authorities of France and Germany have already arrived at this conclusion; and their school curriculum provides carefully graduated methods of instruction, ranging from the elements of the national tongue, to a complete system of the theory and practice of composition therein; methods which (as every teacher knows) do indisputably achieve their end: that of enabling the pupil to speak and to write his own language with facility, correctness, even with elegance. And, in so far as I have been able to adapt certain points in these methods to a different genius and tradition, I have been glad to borrow them.

Furthermore, I have many other obligations to

acknowledge: both to those scholars and critics whose labours in the great mine of English classics have sensibly lightened my own; and to those authors and publishers whose courtesy has enabled me to make whatever use of copyright work I desired. I have to thank Mrs. Thackeray Ritchie for her kind permission to quote certain passages from her father's works; Mr. Henley, for leave to use an essay taken from his *Views and Reviews*, and to draw upon his notable collection in *Lyra Heroica*; Mr. Henley again, and Mr. Charles Whibley, for leave to draw upon their collection in *A Book of English Prose*; Mr. Henry Craik, upon whose *English Prose Selections* I have drawn freely; Messrs. Cassell and Company, Messrs. Chatto and Windus, Mr. Heinemann, Messrs. Macmillan and Company, Mr. Murray, and Messrs. Smith, Elder and Company, for their courtesy in granting me permission to use extracts from copyright works published by them.

And should the study of this little work prove of service to the youth of England: in helping them a little way towards the understanding, appreciation, and use of that their rich inheritance, the English tongue; the author's ambition will have been achieved.

L. C. C.

BRIGHTON, June 1900.