

**SHELBURNE  
ESSAYS.  
THIRD SERIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649364121

Shelburne essays. Third series by Paul Elmer More

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**PAUL ELMER MORE**

**SHELBURNE  
ESSAYS.  
THIRD SERIES**



83023

# Shelburne Essays

By  
Paul Elmer More

—  
*Third Series*  
—

Τίτι χρή κρίνεσθαι τὰ μέλλοντα καλῶς κριθήσεσθαι ;  
ἄρ' οὐκ ἐμπειρία τε καὶ φρονήσει καὶ λόγῳ ;

ΠΛΑΤΟ, *Republic.*

G. P. Putnam's Sons  
New York and London  
The Knickerbocker Press

1907

83023  
28/7/07

PR  
99  
M7  
v. 3

COPYRIGHT, 1905

BY

PAUL ELMER MORE

Published, September, 1905

Reprinted, January, 1906; December, 1906

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

#### ADVERTISEMENT

The last essay in this volume, though written several years ago, has never before been printed. For permission to reprint the other essays thanks are due to the publishers of the *Atlantic Monthly*, the *Independent*, and the New York *Evening Post*.

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE CORRESPONDENCE OF WILLIAM COWPER . . . . .	I
WHITTIER THE POET . . . . .	28
THE CENTENARY OF SAINTE-BEUVE . . . . .	54
THE SCOTCH NOVELS AND SCOTCH HISTORY . . . . .	82
SWINBURNE . . . . .	100
CHRISTINA ROSSSETTI . . . . .	124
WHY IS BROWNING POPULAR? . . . . .	143
A NOTE ON BYRON'S "DON JUAN" . . . . .	166
LAURENCE STERNE . . . . .	177
J. HENRY SHORTHOUSE . . . . .	213
THE QUEST OF A CENTURY . . . . .	244



# SHELBURNE ESSAYS

## THIRD SERIES

---

### THE CORRESPONDENCE OF WILLIAM COWPER

IF, as I sometimes think, a man's interest in letters is almost the surest measure of his love for Letters in the larger sense of the word, the busy schoolmaster of Olney ought to stand high in favour for the labour he has bestowed on completing and rearranging the *Correspondence of William Cowper*.<sup>1</sup> It may be that Mr. Wright's competence as an editor still leaves something to be desired. Certainly, if I may speak for my own taste, he has in one respect failed to profit by a golden opportunity; it needed only to print the more intimate poems of Cowper in their proper place among the letters to have

<sup>1</sup> *The Correspondence of William Cowper*. Arranged in chronological order, with annotations, by Thomas Wright, Principal of Cowper School, Olney. Four volumes. New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1904.

produced a work doubly interesting and perfectly unique. The correspondence itself would have been shot through by a new light, and the poetry might have been restored once more to its rightful seat in our affections. The fact is that not many readers to-day can approach the verse of the eighteenth century in a mood to enjoy or even to understand it. We have grown so accustomed to over-emphasis in style and wasteful effusion in sentiment that the clarity and self-restraint of that age repel us as ungenueine; we are warned by a certain *frigus* at the heart to seek our comfort elsewhere. And just here was the chance for an enlightened editor. So much of Cowper's poetry is the record of his own simple life and of the little adventures that befell him in the valley of the Ouse, that it would have lost its seeming artificiality and would have gained a fresh appeal by association with the letters that relate the same events and emotions. How, for example, the quiet grace of the fables (and good fables are so rare in English!) would be brought back to us again if we could read them side by side with the actual stories out of which they grew. There is a whole charming natural history here of beast and bird and insect and flower. The nightingale which Cowper heard on New Year's Day sings in a letter as well as in the poem; and here, to name no others, are the incidents of the serpent and the kittens, and of that walk by the Ouse when the poet's dog Beau brought him the water lily. Or,

to turn to more serious things, how much the pathetic stanzas *To Mary* would gain in poignant realism if we came upon them immediately after reading the letters in which Cowper lays bare his remorse for the strain his malady had imposed upon her.

A still more striking example would be the lines written *On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture*. By a literary tradition these are reckoned among the most perfect examples of pathos in the language, and yet how often to-day are they read with any deep emotion? I suspect no tears have fallen on that page for many a long year.

Oh that those lips had language! Life has passed  
 With me but roughly since I heard thee last.  
 Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,  
 The same that oft in childhood solaced me;  
 Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,  
 "Grieve not, my child, chase all thy fears away!"

Short-lived possession! but the record fair,  
 That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,  
 Still outlives many a storm that has effaced  
 A thousand other themes less deeply traced.  
 Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,  
 That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;  
 Thy morning bounties as I left my home,  
 The biscuit or confectionary plum:  
 The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed  
 By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed:  
 All this, and more enduring still than all,  
 Thy constant flow of love, that knew no fall,—