

EXTEMPORARY ESSAYS

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Extemporary essays by Maurice Hewlett

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MAURICE HEWLETT

**EXTEMPORARY
ESSAYS**

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ESSAYS BY THE SAME WRITER

'IN A GREEN SHADE'

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BY

MAURICE HEWLETT

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PREFACE

The Maypole and the Column

IN days of more single purpose than these, young men and maidens, in the first flush of summer, set up a maypole on the green; but before they joined hands and danced round about it they had done honour to what it stood for by draping it with swags of flowers and green-stuff, hanging it with streamers of divers colours, and sticking it with as many gilt hearts as there were hearts among them of votive inclination. So they transfigured the thing signified, and turned a shaven tree-trunk from a very crude emblem into a thing of happy fantasy. That will serve me for a figure of how the poet deals with his little idea, or great one; and in his more sober mood it is open to the essayist so to deal with his, supposing he have one. He must hang his pole, or concept, not with rhyme but with wise or witty talk. He must turn it about and about, not to set the ornaments jingling, or little bells ringing; rather that you may see its shapeliness enhanced, its proportions emphasized, and in all the shifting lights and shadows of its ornamentation discern it still for the notion that it is. That at least is my own notion of what the essayist should do, though I am aware that very distinguished practitioners have not agreed with me and do not agree at this hour. The modern essayist, for reasons which I shall try to expound, has been driven from the maypole to the column.