

**OXFORD LOCAL EXAMINATIONS.  
THOMSON'S SPRING: WITH A LIFE OF THE  
POET, NOTES CRITICAL, EXPLANATORY, AND  
GRAMMTICAL, AND REMARKS ON THE  
ANALYSIS OF SENTENCES, WITH ILLUSTRATIVE  
EXAMPLES. FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS**

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Oxford Local Examinations. Thomson's Spring: With a Life of the Poet, Notes Critical, Explanatory, and Grammatical, and Remarks on the Analysis of Sentences, with Illustrative Examples. For the Use of Schools by Walter M'Leod

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**WALTER M'LEOD**

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE present edition of Thomson's "Spring" is specially intended for pupils qualifying for the Oxford Local Examinations, in June. The Regulations issued by the University state that Junior Candidates will be required to satisfy the Examiners in "The *Analysis and Parsing* of a passage taken from 'Spring,' in Thomson's *Seasons*;" and that a few questions suggested by this portion of the poem will be added. This text-book has therefore been published, in order to provide candidates with a manual of the information required on the several points specified in the Regulations.

The work is arranged under the following heads:—  
1. A Life of Thomson, with Critical Remarks on his Works; 2. The Analysis of Sentences, with numerous illustrative Examples; 3. The Poem, with Notes—Critical, Explanatory, and Grammatical. The

Notes, which are numerous, contain short historical accounts of the persons and places named in the poem, brief descriptions of all the birds and plants, and such notices of the phenomena of nature as were considered necessary to a clear comprehension of the text. Difficulties in grammar and the analysis of sentences have been explained; and the etymologies of peculiar or uncommon words have been given. The introduction of exercises in derivation tends not only to elucidate the word under consideration, but also to impress its meaning more firmly on the mind of the pupil.

The work is similar, in arrangement and treatment, to the edition of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," which has been so favourably received by teachers; and is printed, as regards the punctuation and the text, from an edition of the "Seasons" by Bolton Corney, Esq.—a volume which is regarded as the most accurate of all the published editions of Thomson's works.

Although this text-book has been specially prepared for middle-class schools, it is believed that the work may be used with advantage wherever the reading of poetry forms a subject of school instruction.

The Editor has to express his obligations to the following works, which he has consulted in the

preparation of the notes appended to the poem:—  
“Thomson’s Seasons,” by Dr. Andrew Todd Thomson;  
Howitt’s “Homes and Haunts of the English Poets;”  
Maunder’s “Natural History;” and Knight’s  
“English Cyclopædia.”

WALTER M’LEOD.

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*March 1863.*

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OUTLINE  
OF THE  
LIFE OF THOMSON.

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JAMES THOMSON was born on September the 11th, 1700, at Ednam, in Roxburghshire, of which his father was the minister. His mother, whose name was Trotter, was co-heiress of a small estate in that county. He was educated first at the grammar school of Jedburgh, a place that he delights to recollect in his poem of "Autumn." From this school he was removed to Edinburgh, where he was admitted as a student of divinity in 1719.

Thomson was educated for the ministry, but the following incident was the means of turning him from divinity to poetry:—"The Rev. Mr. Hamilton, who then filled the chair of divinity, gave as a subject for an exercise a psalm in which the majesty and power of God are described. Of this psalm Thomson gave a paraphrase and illustration as the exercise required, but in so poetical and figurative a style as to astonish the audience. Mr. Hamilton complimented the performance, and pointed out to the audience its most striking points; but, turning to Thomson, he suggested that, if he intended to become a minister, he must keep a stricter rein over his imagination, and learn to be intelligible to an ordinary congregation." Thomson, having resolved to try his fortunes in