

**STUDIES IN  
LITERATURE,  
SECOND SERIES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649715350

Studies in Literature, Second Series by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch

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**SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH**

**STUDIES IN  
LITERATURE,  
SECOND SERIES**



*By Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch*



On the Art of Writing  
On the Art of Reading  
Studies in Literature

# **Studies in Literature**

**Second Series**

# Studies in Literature

Second Series

By

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King Edward VII Professor of English Literature  
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New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons

Cambridge, England: University Press

1922

## PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION

I N prefacing a previous volume of *Studies in Literature* I allowed that the word "Studies" might well seem an exorbitant one for the familiar discourses bound within its cover, and gave half a promise to justify the title more thoroughly next time. That half-promise I am not keeping: and I want my American readers to forgive me, as I think they will when they know the reason why.

The experience of any teacher at Oxford or Cambridge in 1914 was as sorrowful as it was proud. He had packed in June and left a town teeming with balls, concerts, garden parties, river parties, all the happy riot that celebrates the close of an academic year: God's plenty—God's best plenty, of youth! He returned in October, to an empty university, to courts in which his was the only footfall, his the only litten window—to the short days, the long nights, the College

more dreary cold

Than a forsaken bird's-nest filled with snow.

Then, by and, by it was borne in upon us that the generation which had flown with such a rush of wing, in two weeks of August, would never come back, or a few stragglers only. I remember sitting in King's College Chapel on the third All Souls' Day of the War, while the Vice-Chancellor recited the names of the sons of Cam-



bridge who had fallen during the year, and the bare recital took more than forty minutes. Is it any wonder that, sitting by the Combination Room fire, after four years, we told one another that when the War ended there would be few young men for us to teach; and that, after teaching these, we could only spend the remainder of our days in studies which, at some later time, a recovered world might haply find serviceable? Well, anyhow, so it was: and under that conviction, in 1918, I gave my half-promise.

But then the miracle happened. The young men came pouring back from War, and overflowed us in such numbers that we could scarcely lodge them save by resort to medieval devices. They were not—woe is me!—the young men we had “loved and lost awhile.” But they were eager, and multitudinous; and neither the capacity of our lecture-rooms nor the frame of a college staircase had been prepared for any such invasion. If the hungry generations were not to tread us down—unless the hungry sheep were to look up and be not fed—we had to snatch the disused crook from the corner and employ it for all it was worth. And *that* is why these lectures—all spoken before a Cambridge audience (with the exception of the first, which inaugurated a “Byron Lectureship” at Nottingham University College) have missed to make good my half-promise.

ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH.

Cambridge, April, 1922

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