

**THE BEGINNINGS OF THE
ENGLISH ROMANTIC
MOVEMENT. A STUDY IN
EIGHTEEN CENTURY LITERATURE**

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The Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement. A Study in Eighteen Century Literature by
William Lyon Phelps

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A STUDY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
LITERATURE

BY

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TO
PROFESSOR J. P. MAHAFFY
OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN, IN REMEMBRANCE
OF A FEW DAYS IN A DULL VACATION
MADE BRIGHT BY HIS
KINDNESS



PREFACE.

THIS little book gives the results of a search in English literature from 1700 to 1765, for the beginnings of the English Romantic movement. The minor poetry from 1725 to 1765, although desperately dull reading, has satisfactorily rewarded my search. I have reached no startling conclusions, but there is some matter in the book that may fairly be called new; and a number of points suggested by previous study have been more fully developed. The Spenserian Revival is treated with some approach to thoroughness, and my list of imitations I believe to be much longer than any other ever printed. In the discussion of Ballad Literature and in the chapter on Gray I have also gone carefully into details.

So far as I am aware no book has ever been written on the history of English Romanticism, so that the matter given here is the result of first-hand study. Every statement of fact and every critical opinion, unless the contrary is distinctly stated, are based on references to the original sources, so far as these have been accessible. The prose and poetry of the period I have read very largely in first and early editions. An original edition with the author's first preface is often of the greatest value to the student of a literary development.

The utmost care has been taken to secure accuracy in dates. In this kind of work dates are exceedingly important, and different histories, encyclopædias and dictionaries vary so widely from each other, that accuracy is not always easy. Every doubtful date has here been followed up carefully, and the date finally given is based on the best evidences and authorities.

In this book I have tried to establish two things. First, that the spirit of Romanticism has never been wholly extinct in English literature. Second, that between the years 1725 and 1765 the Romantic movement was a real, if quiet force, and that in these forty years may be found the seeds which sprang to full maturity in Scott and Byron, and in all the subsequent Romantic literature of the nineteenth century.

My thanks are due to the officials of the Boston Public Library, and to the librarians of Harvard and Yale Universities, who have always shown me the utmost courtesy. I cannot sufficiently express my obligations to Professor H. A. Beers of Yale, and to Professor Barrett Wendell of Harvard. It was at the suggestion of the former that I first entered upon this line of study, and the generous loan of his own manuscript notes on the period has been an invaluable help. It was Professor Wendell who first suggested the idea of printing my results, a thought that had not previously occurred to me. He also read all of the first draft of my manuscript and made many useful suggestions. My thanks are due to Professor John M. Manly of Brown, who read and annotated my manuscript, and to Professor George Lyman Kittredge of Harvard, who assisted me materially in countless places with his wide learning and unfailing kindness. Mr. Thomas Sergeant Perry of Boston, and Professor T. R. Lounsbury, of Yale, also read extracts and helped me by many fruitful hints, and by much friendly counsel; and I should also like to express in common with so many other students my appreciation of the inspiration and general stimulus I have received from the kind words of Professor F. J. Child. No sincere student ever came into close contact with this Teacher without becoming both a better scholar and a better man.

Any corrections of errors, or suggestions, will be gratefully received and promptly acknowledged.

W. L. P.

YALE UNIVERSITY, 10 March, 1893.

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