

**LATEST LITERARY
ESSAYS AND
ADDRESSES**

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Latest literary essays and addresses by James Russell Lowell

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JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

**LATEST LITERARY
ESSAYS AND
ADDRESSES**

1850



W. Lowell

LATEST LITERARY ESSAYS
AND ADDRESSES

OF

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

WITH
A
LIBRARY OF THE
RIVERSIDE PRESS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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1892

NOTE.

THE publication in a volume of the following Essays and Addresses is in accordance with the intention of their author. Most of them had been revised by him with this end in view. The only one of them concerning which there is a doubt, whether he would have published it in its present form, is the paper on "Richard III." With this he was not satisfied, and he hesitated in regard to printing it. It has seemed to me of interest enough to warrant its publication.

The essay on Gray was in large part written more than ten years before it was printed in the "New Princeton Review," in 1880. The essay on the "Areopagitica" was written at the request of the Grolier Club, of New York, for an introduction to an edition of the work specially printed for the Club. I am indebted to the Club for permission to include it in this volume.

CHARLES ELIOT NORTON.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS,
16 November, 1891.

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LATEST LITERARY ESSAYS AND
ADDRESSES.

GRAY.

1886.

THE eighteenth century, judged by the literature it produced everywhere in Europe outside of Germany and France, is generally counted inferior to that which preceded and to that which followed it. A judgment of especial severity has been passed upon its poetry by critics who lost somewhat of their judicial equipoise in that enthusiasm of the romantic reaction which replaced the goddess of good taste by her of liberty, and crowned the judicial wig with the Phrygian cap. The poetry of the period fell under a general condemnation as altogether wanting in the imaginative quality, and as being rather the conclusions of the understanding put into verse than an attempt to express, however inadequately, the eternal longings and intuitions and experiences of human nature. These find their vent, it was thought, in those vivid flashes of phrase, the instantaneous bolts of passionate conception, whose furrow of splendor across the eyeballs of the mind leaves them momentarily dark to the outward universe, only to quicken their vision of inward and