

**EXCURSIONS IN
CRITICISM: BEING SOME
PROSE RECREATIONS OF A
RHYMER**

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Excursions in Criticism: Being Some Prose Recreations of a Rhymer by William Watson

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WILLIAM WATSON

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By WILLIAM WATSON

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THAT THIS LITTLE VOLUME MAY BE
GRACED WITH THE NAME OF ONE OF
THE TRUEST OF POETS AND MOST MAG-
NANIMOUS OF MEN I VENTURE TO IN-
SCRIBE IT, WITH APOLOGIES FOR SO POOR
AN OFFERING,

TO
GEORGE MEREDITH

S. 1139 Apr 1936.

THE articles in this volume have already appeared in the *National Review*, the *Spectator*, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Academy*, the *Bookman*, and *Atalanta*, to the editors of which periodicals my thanks are due for courteous permission to reprint.

W. W.



CONTENTS

	PAGE
SOME LITERARY IDOLATRIES,	I
THE PUNISHMENT OF GENIUS,	23
KEATS AND MR COLVIN,	37
THE LANCASHIRE LAUREATE,	46
MR HARDY'S 'TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES'	70
CRITICS AND THEIR CRAFT,	81
LOWELL AS A CRITIC,	89
COLERIDGE'S SUPERNATURALISM,	97
THE MYSTERY OF STYLE,	104
MR R. H. HUTTON,	113
MR AUSTIN DOBSON'S 'HOGARTH'	121
IBSEN'S PROSE DRAMAS,	127
MR MEREDITH'S POETRY,	133
DR JOHNSON ON MODERN POETRY,	140

4

5

6

7

8

EXCURSIONS IN CRITICISM

SOME LITERARY IDOLATRIES

EXAGGERATION is often picturesque; and Mr Swinburne's phrase, describing Dekker and Webster as 'gulfs or estuaries of the sea which is Shakespeare,' is as picturesque as Landor's very different verdict, in which Shakespeare's dramatic contemporaries are scornfully dismissed as the mushrooms that sprang up about the roots of the oak of Arden. Landor's extreme and undoubtedly sincere disparagement of the 'old dramatists' cannot with plausibility be referred to the mere prejudices of a bigoted classicist, for although in theory his classical prepossessions may have approached the verge of bigotry, in practice they did not hinder him from heartily appreciating much that was at variance with his severe ideals. His 'paganism,' his 'Atticism,' his utter inability to