

**ARROWS OF DESIRE:  
ESSAYS ON BRITISH  
CHARACTERISTICS**

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Arrows of Desire: Essays on British Characteristics by J. S. Mackenzie

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BY

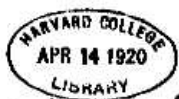
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*Lucy Agood fund*

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'Bring me my bow of burning gold ;  
Bring me my arrows of desire ;  
Bring me my spear : O clouds, unfold ;  
Bring me my chariot of fire.  
I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.'

BLAKE.





## PREFACE

THIS is a series of somewhat disconnected essays ; and, like many other recent publications, it owes its origin to the war. It has not been easy for anyone, in these last few years, to give his mind to purely speculative inquiries. Absorbing as the problems of the cosmos must be to all who have ever felt their fascination, devotion to them presupposes some degree of stability in the affairs of the little planet that we inhabit. When the whole order of our civilization was threatened, even those who were most completely destitute of any power to set against the forces that made for dissolution were at least bound to feel a certain call to contribute something to the great work of re-establishing a better and more enduring order. Those who could do little or nothing of a directly practical kind towards the furtherance of this end were naturally led to attempt at least to help in the interpretation of the conditions in which we are placed and in the consideration of possible means for their improvement. It is out of such an endeavour that these essays have grown. They are specially concerned with our own national life and character, the subject that seemed most readily accessible, and not perhaps the least important. Some aspects of it, no doubt, are not specially within the writer's province. To treat them satisfactorily there would have been needed a more intimate knowledge of history and literature, of anthropology and social conditions, than I have found myself able to acquire. But, after all, there are few who are competent to deal thoroughly with the manifold aspects

of a nation's life; and perhaps it is not presumptuous to hope that some readers will be found to whom the materials that have here been brought together may be of use. At any rate, I may say *Liberavi animum meum*; and, having completed this expedition in what are to me somewhat uncharted seas, I may be free to return to those safer territories in which, though full of pitfalls, I happen to be more at home. It will be observed that, even in this expedition, I have not ventured very far from the shore; and that I have summoned to my aid a considerable number of capable pilots.

Some of the earlier parts of the book were originally written to serve as an address to the Past Students of University College, Cardiff.

My obligations to many other writers will be sufficiently apparent; but I wish to offer very special thanks to Mr. Harold Peake, whose suggestions on the somewhat elusive problems of race I have found very enlightening.

*September, 1919.*

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