

**MODERN ENGLISH  
ESSAYS, VOL. 4**

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Modern English essays, Vol. 4 by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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MODERN  
ENGLISH ESSAYS

EDITED BY ERNEST RHYS



W. J. Lucas

# MODERN ENGLISH ESSAYS

VOLUME FOUR



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

EIGHTEEN essayists are grouped together in this volume, and it would be idle to say they are of one school, or intrinsically of the same character. They range from Edward Verrall Lucas, whose "Philosopher that Failed" comes from his *Character and Comedy*, to Logan Pearsall Smith, whose essay on the Rose is from *Trivia*. These are both books of one period, given to brief considerations of things; yet they are markedly diverse. One writer is a relisher of life and letters; the other, a spiritual sybarite. The latter is an American by birth; so is Professor Brander Matthews, whose function as professor and New York dramatic critic has not spoilt his hand as an essayist. His account of Maria Edgeworth is an "Everyman" essay. Another contributor is Hilaire Belloc. He has written books *On Nothing* (1907), *On Everything* (1909), and *On Anything* (1910). His essays here printed come from the first of the three. He and his congenial fellow prose-writer, G. K. Chesterton, who contributes two essays, write from the life and from the hour, much as did the eighteenth-century men. Joseph Conrad does not occur to us first as an essayist;



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yet his *Mirror of the Sea*, an essayist's book, is the most intimate of all his works, and his tribute in it to "The West Wind" a rare bit of eloquence. Here his tribute is to his old masters in the sea-tale, Marryat and Fenimore Cooper, from his *Notes on Life and Letters*. Other estimates and critical appreciations include Thomas Secombe on a congenial theme, Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton*; John Masefield on the Pilgrim Fathers, and Sir Oliver Lodge on Huxley.

Of the remaining contributors, two, H. W. Massingham and Henry W. Nevinson, serve to call up another review, *The Nation and Athenæum*, which has maintained the periodical essay with some verve. *The Fortnightly Review* comes into the record again with its editor's characteristic appreciation of Miss Mary Wilkins. Cunninghame Graham's essay, "The Grey Kirk," reminds us that he was an old *Scots Observer* contributor, and carries us north. Fiona Macleod held a region apart from which come "The Hill-Tarn" and "Winter Stars." Two writers who recall English scenes remain: the late Edward Thomas, who died, alas! in a foreign field and loved equally Welsh and English countrysides; and Mr. Arthur Waugh, a cordial critic and a Wessex man, whose account of "The City of Bath" comes from his book *Reticence in Literature*.

For the kind permission to use copyright essays in this volume, full and special acknowledgments are due to:

Mr. Hilaire Belloc and Messrs. Methuen and Co. for "On an Unknown Country" and "On the Approach of an Awful Doom."

Mr. G. K. Chesterton for "A Defence of Nonsense" and a Dickens essay.

Mr. Joseph Conrad for "Tales of the Sea."

Mr. W. L. Courtney and Messrs. Chapman and Hall for "Miss Mary Wilkins."

Mr. Cunninghame Graham and Mr. Duckworth for "The Grey Kirk."

Mr. Richard Le Gallienne and Mr. John Lane for "The Dream Children of Literature."

Mr. E. V. Lucas and Messrs. Methuen for "A Philosopher that Failed" (from *Character and Comedy*).

Mr. H. W. Massingham and *The Nation and Athenæum* for "Shaw and Swift."

Mr. H. W. Nevinson and *The Nation and Athenæum* for "Of Comfort."

Mrs. William Sharp and Messrs. Heinemann for "The Hill-Tarn" and "Winter Stars," by Fiona Macleod (William Sharp).

Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith, Messrs. Constable, and Messrs. Doubleday, Page and Co. for "The Rose," from *Trivia*.

*The Nineteenth Century and After* for "The Death of Swinburne."

Mr. Arthur Waugh for "The City of Bath."

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