

**THE SACRED WOOD;
ESSAYS ON POETRY
AND CRITICISM**

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The sacred wood; essays on poetry and criticism by T. S. Eliot

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T. S. ELIOT

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ESSAYS ON POETRY AND CRITICISM

BY

T. S. ELIOT



NEW YORK
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1921



FOR

H. W. E.

“TACUIT ET FECIT”



CERTAIN of these essays appeared, in the same or a more primitive form, in *The Times Literary Supplement*, *The Athenæum*, *Art and Letters*, and *The Egoist*. The author desires to express his obligation to the editors of these periodicals.



INTRODUCTION

TO anyone who is at all capable of experiencing the pleasures of justice, it is gratifying to be able to make amends to a writer whom one has vaguely depreciated for some years. The faults and foibles of Matthew Arnold are no less evident to me now than twelve years ago, after my first admiration for him; but I hope that now, on re-reading some of his prose with more care, I can better appreciate his position. And what makes Arnold seem all the more remarkable is, that if he were our exact contemporary, he would find all his labour to perform again. A moderate number of persons have engaged in what is called "critical" writing, but no conclusion is any more solidly established than it was in 1865. In the first essay in the first *Essays in Criticism* we read that

it has long seemed to me that the burst of creative activity in our literature, through the first quarter of this century, had about it in fact something premature; and that from this cause its productions are doomed, most of them, in spite of the sanguine hopes which accompanied and do still accompany them, to prove