

A GUIDE TO GREEK TRAGEDY FOR ENGLISH READERS

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A Guide to Greek Tragedy for English Readers by Lewis Campbell

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LEWIS CAMPBELL

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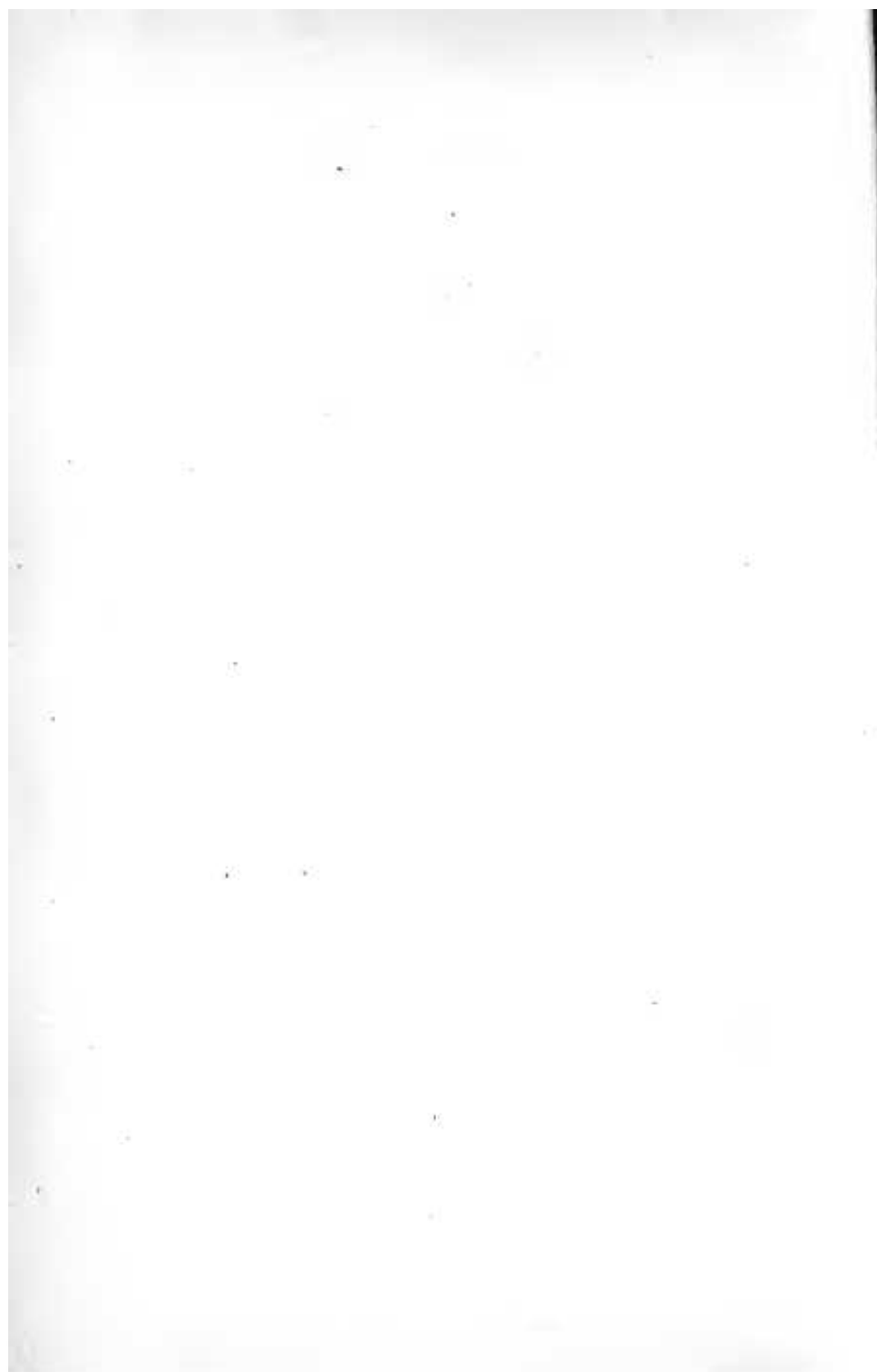
A GUIDE
TO
GREEK TRAGEDY

FOR ENGLISH READERS

BY

LEWIS CAMPBELL, M.A., LL.D.
PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS
AUTHOR OF 'AESCHYLUS IN ENGLISH VERSE'
'SOPHOCLES IN ENGLISH VERSE,' ETC.

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1891



PREFACE

THE present volume does not profess to be a repertory of facts and theories respecting the Greek Drama. For such results of learned and archæological research I would confidently refer the reader to Haigh's *Attic Theatre*, or, if a German scholar, to A. Müller's *Bühnenalterthümer*, and to the books there cited. My hope has been that by recording impressions made on myself by somewhat close and long-continued study of the originals, I might assist the reader of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, whether in Greek or English, to enter more completely into the spirit and intention of their works.

Greek tragedy, as an interpretation of human life, contains much which the world cannot afford to lose. It carries an imperfect lesson relative to a transitional age, yet one that is of lasting import, and inseparable from the vehicle of dramatic art in which it is couched. To render

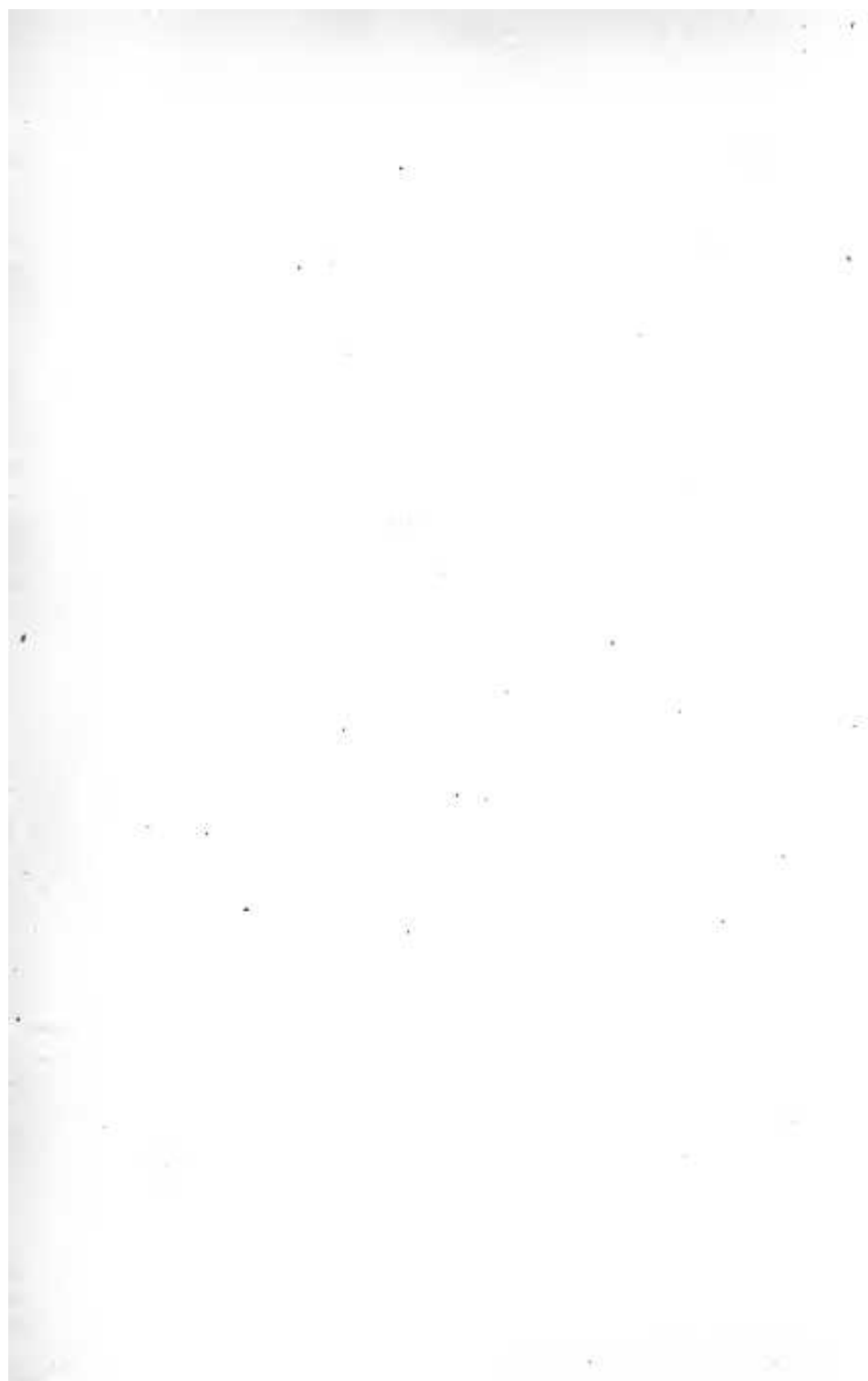
Aeschylus and Sophocles, and, in part, Euripides, more accessible to the countrymen of Shakespeare is, I trust, at least a respectable endeavour.

This little book is meant to be used as a companion volume to *Sophocles in English Verse* (1883) and *Aeschylus in English Verse* (1891), published by Kegan Paul and Co. I have therefore quoted very sparingly from either. Nor have I availed myself to a much greater extent of the permission of Macmillan and Co. and the Messrs. Black to repeat statements formerly made in "Green's Classical Writers" (*Sophocles*) and the *Ency. Brit.* (art. *Sophocles*), where I have treated more fully of the central figure in the immortal group of Athenian tragic poets than was possible within the limits here allotted to me.

LEWIS CAMPBELL.

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CHAPTER I

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WHAT IS TRAGEDY? ¹

THE purpose of this book is to afford some assistance to those who desire to obtain a real hold—whether in studying the originals or by reading translations—of the chief masterpieces of Greek Tragedy, considered as a great and important phase of human culture.

As a preliminary step, before entering on a nearer scrutiny, it is well to endeavour to form a general conception of the phenomenon, of which one part is here to be described. Such an endeavour must largely be guided by light derived from experience and tradition, and even when the result has been formulated, it may have to be subsequently modified so as to be brought into closer harmony with fact.

¹ Books to consult: Aristotle's *Poetics*; Lessing's *Dramaturgie* (*Dramatic Notes*, in Bohn's Series); Hegel's *Aesthetic*; Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*, Eng. Trans. vol. iii. c. 37; Dryden's Prose Writings.