

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE.

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, who has been recently appointed to succeed the late Professor Freeman to the chair of Modern History at Oxford, is the most brilliant man of letters now living among us. Belonging as he does to a generation which was neither machine-made nor planed down to the same level of conventionality, he is also one of the most interesting figures at the present day.

Mr. Froude was born in 1818. He was the son of one of the best-known among west-country clergymen, Archdeacon Froude, of Dartington, near Totnes. Archdeacon Froude was a squire-parson, a landlord, an active justice of the peace, a hard rider, a learned antiquary, an accomplished artist, and a prominent leader among the clergymen of the old High Church school. He and his son Hurrell accompanied the late J. H. Newman in 1832 on that expedition to Rome from which the future Cardinal returned with the conviction that he had "work to do in England." His two elder sons were both distinguished men. Richard Hurrell Froude was one of the leaders of the Tractarian movement in its early stages, and after his death in 1836, his *Remains* were edited by his most intimate friend, J. H. Newman. His second son William, who died in 1879, was one of the greatest masters of applied mathematics. One of his daughters, who died in early life, was, perhaps, the one woman whom Newman might have married, and it has been supposed that "Lead, kindly Light" contains an allusion to her lamented death.

James Anthony Froude, the youngest of three brothers, went up to Oxford in 1836 as an undergraduate of Oriel. He obtained a second class in classics, and was elected to a fellowship at Exeter. The atmosphere in which he was plunged at Oxford was theological; and his connection, through his brother Hurrell, with the Tractarian movement, as well as his own inclinations and early training, seemed to dictate the choice of the clerical profession as his career in life. In 1845 he was ordained deacon. But, before he had proceeded to priest's orders, that change came over his opinions which has so deeply coloured, if not embittered, his subsequent career. There still remains one literary record of his Anglican ministry. In 1847 he preached a sermon at the Church of Ottery St. Mary on the death of the Reverend George May Coleridge. The sermon was subsequently printed.

A year later he had altogether changed his religious standpoint, and from that time forward he has devoted himself to literature as his profession. Nothing better was ever written, it may be added, on the Tractarian movement than Froude's *Letters on the Counter-Reformation*. It is his *Apologia*. Of Keble he speaks with respectful antipathy. Isaac Williams and Newman were the only two leaders who impressed him. No tribute of homage that has been paid to the late Cardinal is more effective than that which is wrung from the quivering lips of Mr. Froude.

The list of his published works is long. His first appearance in the literary world was anonymous. His *Shadows of the Clouds* contains a number of short stories, in which he displayed those picturesque, imaginative, and narrative powers that have made him famous. The volume was published in 1847 under the signature of "Zeta." A year later appeared *The Nemesis of Faith*, an explanation of the reasons that had brought about a change in his religious opinions.

For the next few years he devoted himself to the preparation of his *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth*. The work was published in twelve volumes, which appeared at intervals between the years 1856-70. Last year he published a supplemental volume on *The Divorce of Katharine of Arragon*. During this period he wrote frequently for the *Westminster Review*, and also acted as editor of *Fraser's Magazine*. His contributions to periodical literature were collected at different times under the title of *Short Studies on Great Subjects*. The several series were published in a uniform edition of four volumes in 1878-83.

In 1869 Mr. Froude was elected Rector of the University of St. Andrews. While holding this office he delivered an Inaugural Address to the University in 1869, which has been published separately. In connection with the rectorship of St. Andrews may also be mentioned his two published addresses on *The Influence of the Reformation on Scottish Character* (1865), and *Calvinism* (1871).

In 1879 he published his *Cæsar: a sketch*. He has also contributed *Bunyan* to the "English Men of Letters" series, and *Lord Beaconsfield* to the "Prime Minister" series. His *Luther: a short biography* was reprinted from the *Contemporary Review* in 1883.

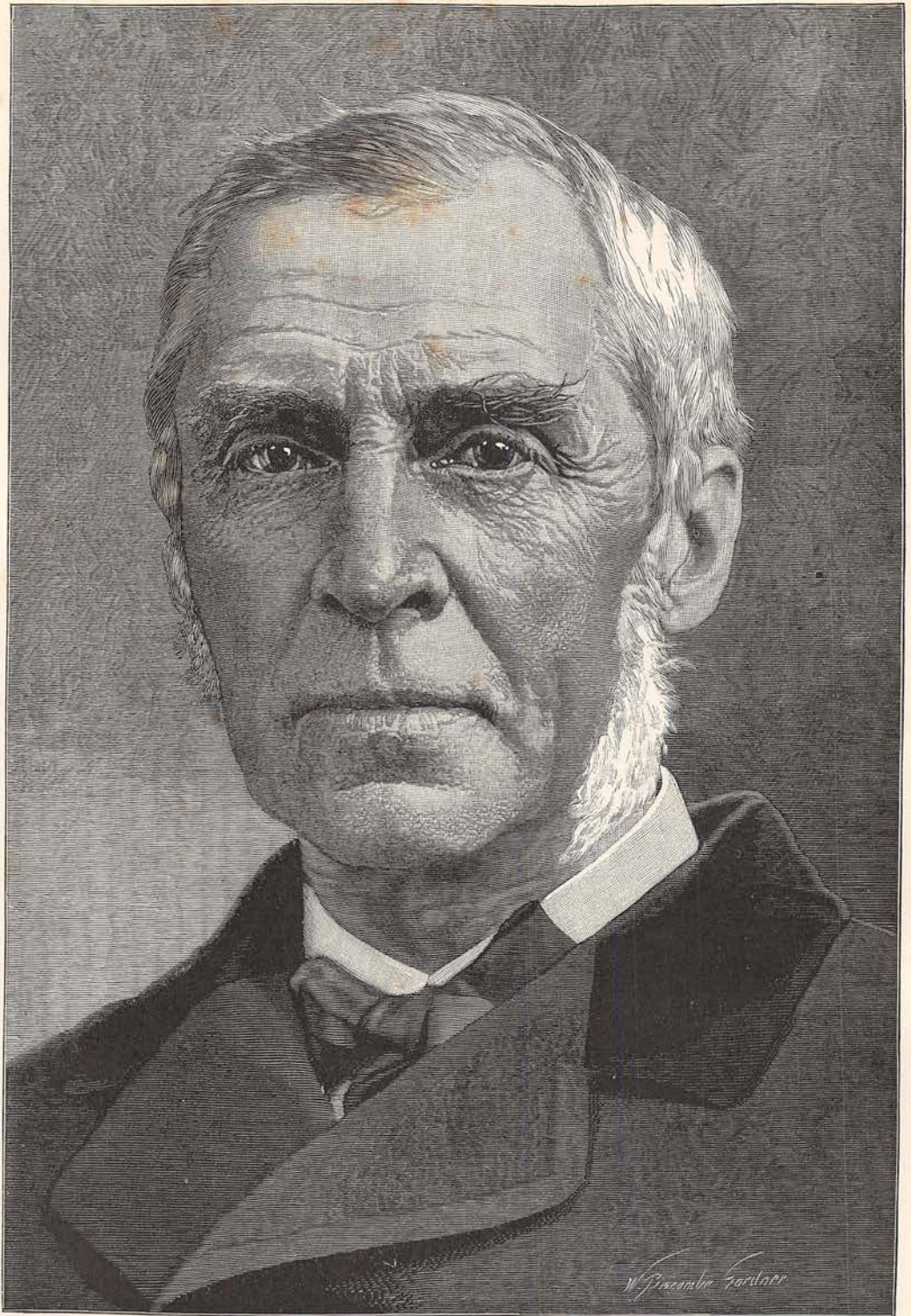
Mr. Froude has always been keenly interested in the problems of contemporary politics. *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* appeared in 1872-4. On the subject of Colonial Federation he holds strongly pronounced views. In 1880 he was sent by Lord Beaconsfield on an important political mission to South Africa to aid in the Federation of the South African colonies. He embodied the results of his experiences in *Two Lectures on South Africa* (1880). His two recent books on Australasia and the West Indies, though in form books of travels, are in substance discussions of the great questions of Colonial Federation and Imperial Supremacy. *Oceana* appeared in 1886, and *The English in the West Indies* in 1888. Another political work of Mr. Froude's belongs rather to the class of pamphlets. His *Liberty and Property* was published in 1888. Besides these political writings, he has also contributed prefaces to several controversial or historical works on Irish questions. His novel *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy* (1889) takes for its subject the condition of Ireland in the eighteenth century.

No other writings of Mr. Froude's have been more discussed, or have provoked more heated animadversion than his biography of Thomas Carlyle, and his editions of works left in manuscript by the Sage of Chelsea. *The Life of Thomas Carlyle in London 1834-81* appeared in 1884. *The Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*, and the *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, both edited by Mr. Froude, appeared respectively in 1881 and 1883. Carlyle had left his papers, as his will, written with the feebleness and repetitions of old age, records, to "my kind, considerate, and ever-faithful friend, James Anthony Froude." It still remains a mystery why the biographer, whom Carlyle trusted as his son, made so strange a use of his bequest as only to lift the curtain on the failings of his subject.

The list here given contains, we believe, all the published works of Mr. Froude. It only remains to sum up some of the literary gifts which they richly display.

In all his writings Mr. Froude proves himself to be a great master of English prose, endowed with a brilliant, persuasive style, which is simple yet rich, easy and colloquial, but at the same time charged with the light and heat of vivid imagination. His mastery of style, combined with his great rhetorical gifts, his remarkable powers of narration, and keen sense of the picturesque, gives to all his work an exceptional artistic merit. He is a brilliant man of letters; but he has not the temperament of a scientific historian. He is a born controversialist, always thinking about the problems of the present, when professedly engaged on the problems of the past. Regarding history as only a branch of literature, an ardent hero-worshipper, a lover of paradox, he is always defending some favourite cause, advocating some cherished idea, exalting a strong man, exposing clericalism, attacking an economist, or justifying the ascendancy of the Teutonic race. To these gifts and characteristics he owes as much in some directions as he loses in others.

When Mr. Froude was chosen to succeed the late Professor Freeman, some misgiving was expressed as to the wisdom of the appointment. We do not share those misgivings. We can ourselves sufficiently remember the stimulus that Mr. Froude's genius gave to the study of historical subjects, to rejoice that others, at the most impressionable period of their lives, will be brought within the range of his intellectual influence. It has been objected that he is not a scientific historian. The same objection might be brought against his predecessor in the Oxford Chair. Opposed as were the late Professor Freeman and his successor, they had several features in common which they would have been the last to discover. Both were born controversialists, and both were unscientific. Both ignore the general principles on which human progress depends; neither can separate history from contemporary controversy; and in default of historic laws, both believe in the predominance of race.



J A Froude

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