

Our Contributors.

A HABIT THAT SAPS.

BY KNOXIAN.

We came across a fruitful idea the other day. We cannot name the man we owe it to, or one would gratefully do so. It was not Solomon, nor Shakespeare, nor Macaulay. Perhaps it was Mr. S. R. Crockett, author of the "Stickit Minister, and Some Common Men," that gave us the peg on which we propose to hang this contribution. Anyway, it is a good idea, and if a lot of people would burn it into their memories, they would become much stronger and better all round. The idea may be stated thus:

SELF PITY DEBILITATES.

Somebody may say "debilitates" is not a good kind of a word. Well, then, say weakens, or enfeebles, or impairs strength, or reduces mental and moral force, or any thing else you like, provided the idea is seen in distinct shape and through a clear medium, as Shedd would say.

To get good illustrations for this topic, one does not need to prance around the room, or tear one's hair, or ransack the library. The difficulty is one of selection purely. Living illustrations abound. There, for example, is the woman who is everlastingly pitying herself because she has to keep house and take care of her children. She is always weak, and self-pity is one prolific source of the weakness. If she could make up her mind once for all, that home is a good thing to have, especially in winter, and that even children may be useful some day, her strength would increase like an election majority under the promise of a new railroad.

There is one kind of a minister that nobody need ever expect to do much good, and that is the minister who is always pitying himself because he has to work. Now, look around among your clerical acquaintances, and select one the task is too easy given to that habit, and say if he is accomplishing anything, or ever did accomplish anything. Self-pity cuts the nerves of exertion. It fixes the attention of the minister on himself, and after a time he thinks much more about himself than about his work. When he has pitied himself a few years, his usefulness is clean gone.

Some ministers pity themselves because they have to labour in obscure places. They see men that they consider scarcely their equals, in more prominent positions, and they pity themselves because their own positions are not more conspicuous.

Let it be granted that under the system of settlement by call, some grotesque things do happen. The man who does not know that is scarcely fit to be a minister. The right time to have thought about the peculiarities of calling, was when entering the ministry. There is no sort of sense in entering the ministry of a church, that settles by call, and then kicking about the system. All intelligent people knew that the system is peculiar, and that under its working strange things do occur.

But supposing that the system were even worse than it is, pitying oneself would not mend matters. John Hall says the best way to get promotion to a larger sphere, is to make yourself conspicuously efficient in the one you occupy. Even that plan may not always be successful, but it is the only one that an honest man would care to try. The one thing clear is that self-pity makes matters worse, because it enfeebles the mind and destroys every hope of doing anything better.

After all, is it a manly thing to crave the prominence that a small statue has, by being placed on a high pedestal? Prominence, at best, may be a doubtful blessing, but certainly the kind a man gets because he happens to live in a certain place, is no credit to him. The pedestal on which he stands is the main thing. If people must talk about prominence in the ministry, and we think much of the talk is decidedly unwhole-

some—let the credit be given to the man who needs no pedestal. Dale, the author of the greatest work on Baptism, was a village pastor. Splendid work has been done by scores of ministers with ut any pedestal to shout on. It would puzzle most of our readers to name the part of Scotland in which the author of the "Stickit Minister" lives. We always did admire the Highlandman who said "Wherever McGregor sits is the head of the table."

No one can blame a minister for feeling bad at times on account of his poverty. He may not mind a little pinching himself, but it is hard to look at wife and children in want. It is not easy to look forward to old age or enforced retirement, from lack of strength, without a cent laid up for the rainy day. But pitying oneself does not improve the situation.

We have known a few public men who were much given to pitying themselves. With one marked exception, they were men who had made well out of the public service. The man who whines in public because he has to run elections or go to Parliament, does not know his business. The public, especially a considerable portion of the Grit public—don't care a straw if a man gives all his goods to feed them, and his body to be burned for them. Pitying oneself before the public is a poor business.

Moral. Don't make a habit of pitying yourself, but if you must do it, go where some people who call themselves orthodox go when a collection comes around for the schemes of the church—behind the woodpile.

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE.

BY REV. LOUIS H. JORDAN, B. D.

The world of letters may well mourn today, for it has suffered the loss of an illustrious citizen. Not in England only and in the British Colonies, but wherever English Literature is read and studied, James Anthony Froude has long been accorded the reverence due to the authority of a master. Amid the names which lend distinction to this brilliant Victorian era, few are more widely known or more justly revered than his from whom we now stand parted. During half a century his pen has seldom rested, and it has ever been wielded with the consummate skill of an artist. For the moment, if we except the genius of Ruskin, he appears to have left no successor. There was in his literary style a grace and graphic touch, a simplicity and purity, a definiteness and naturalness which remain absolutely unrivalled. It may be a couple of decades before we shall be permitted to look upon his like again.

Within the domain of his special historical researches, it cannot be said that Mr. Froude was either lawgiver or leader. Rather was it true that, in a field where most he longed for disciples, all men forsook him and fled. He said to me once, with something of sadness in his tone, that his attempt to convince his countrymen of the error of their historical conclusions had apparently failed. I observe that in his introduction to *The Divorce of Catherine of Aragon*,—the recent supplementary volume with which he closes his *History of England*,—he reiterates this rather disheartening conviction: "At the close of my life. . . I am still substantially alone in maintaining an opinion considered heretical by orthodox historians." This passing reference to heresy and orthodoxy has a pathetic interest for those who are acquainted with certain episodes in Mr. Froude's eventful career.

But it is not of the Professor, viewed either as essayist or historian, that I feel like writing to-day. To me he proved a friend, and it is with the more tender interest and the closer knowledge of friendship that I shall ever regard him now. It is easy for those who never knew him to pronounce him combative, cynical and crotchety: for so he may at times have seemed. But it is only those who knew his patient and tireless industry, his fearless and conscientious loyalty to his convictions, his struggle against physical weakness, and his persist-

ency in spite of hindrances which would have subdued a less resolute spirit, that can fully appreciate what English scholarship has lost. To some he occasionally unbosomed himself, as he did not to those who were never weary of disparaging him: the latter precluded the possibility of them ever understanding him. His friends became quickly attached to him. His conversation had a peculiar charm: for of late years he travelled much, and his experiences had enriched him with many rare and racy reminiscences. His memories of the various literary treasures which he had examined in different parts of the world made him a special favorite among those whose opportunities for original investigation had been more limited than his own. It was within the narrower circle, then, of those who were no strangers to the man himself,—of those whom, in some measure at least, he had taken into his confidence,—that the bulletins from the sick room were so eagerly and sorrowfully scanned. As week succeeded week, and the stern struggle with death went on, many sadly foresaw that death would probably win for the sufferer had grown frail by reason of age, and he had drawn much too heavily upon his strength during the preceding two years.

The circumstances under which Mr. Froude returned to Oxford were in every sense significant. They were as dramatic in fact as were any of the alleged fictitious situations which Mr. Froude's own hand has delineated. Forty four years before he was selected to fill the chair of Modern History, his university career had ended under a cloud. His brother Hurrell, an advanced High churchman, had recently died at the early age of thirty-three. Mr. Froude's own convictions, touching the Oxford movement, were still in process of transition. But he was not long in reaching a rational conclusion, and the measure of his later sympathy with the Newman school, with which he and his brother had been brought into such close contact and connection in Oxford, found unambiguous expression in *The Nemesis of Faith*. A great uproar was raised forthwith, and the author of it all felt himself constrained to resign his Fellowship in Exeter. He turned his back upon Oxford, practically disowned by his *Alma Mater*, and one need not much wonder that he turned his back also upon that high calling, to entering upon which he had for years been looking forward. From the engagements of a first step, already taken in this direction, he sought and obtained formal and welcome release.

But the situation was completely reversed when, in 1892, the heretic was recalled to be awarded one of the very highest honors in the gift of the University. The appointment was indeed a Crown appointment; nevertheless doubtless, the University authorities were consulted. Nay more, Mr. Froude was installed in the chair which had been held since 1884 by Edward A. Freeman, the idol of Oxford but his own most relentless critic! I fancy Mr. Froude secured the coveted post because his claims upon it were too conspicuous to be successfully ignored; but at the same time it was none the less a triumph. Moreover, Oxford's action in this connection furnished an additional illustration of the change in current sentiment which, within the last quarter of a century, has revealed itself in the University. Only by a scanty majority was it recently resolved that the projected statue to Cardinal Newman should not be erected beside the Martyr Monument in St. Giles; and in the year 1893, less than twelve months after the recall of Mr. Froude, there was dedicated in the grounds of University College a handsome Mausoleum, commemorative of the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley,—a youth who from that very institution, as a young man forever branded and disgraced, had formally been expelled for publishing his disquisition on *The Necessity of Atheism*. Surely it must have been a satisfaction to Mr. Froude to receive and accept the summons which restored him, after so long an absence, to scenes which had once been familiar. To the very last, he considered

he had been dealt with very harshly during this crisis. Because he had scorned to conceal his real sentiments under the cloak of silence, he had been summarily cashiered. His difficulties had been denounced, not explained or even sympathetically lessened. But although he had bravely spoken out what he believed, and had been equally outspoken as to his unwelcome beliefs ever since, he was now being invited to come back and to assume the office of a teacher! Verily the times had changed; and wrongs, long unredressed, exacted stern retribution!

It was my good fortune to hear the new professor deliver his public inaugural lecture. By a coincidence, it was spoken just two years ago to-day! I remember, as if it were but yesterday, the expectant throng that assembled in the theatre of the University Museum. The auditorium is not very large, and so it was quite uncomfortably crowded. There was evidently a restless interest amongst those who had come to listen, an interest that was not wholly friendly to the lecturer. Perhaps one half of his auditors were merely curious, others were malevolently-minded critics. Some who ought to have been present were conspicuously absent. The address, in view of all that led up to it and that entered into it, secured the closest attention from the outset. It might fairly be called Froude's *Apologia pro Historia sua*. The lecturer said that, in beginning his work as an authorized teacher of history, he had no wish to modify his published historical judgments. His continued investigation of the sources had only served to confirm him in these conclusions which he had reached many years before. He stated and examined various current theories of History as a separate department of learning; and then he stoutly maintained that his own well-known conception of it was the only one that could ultimately commend itself! The Heads of Houses were scandalized, and they did not hesitate quite frankly to say so. *The Oxford Magazine*, which echoes with fair accuracy the voice of University opinion, felt impelled to sneer at the new comer, and spoke of his tenure of the chair as being likely to give a reactionary stimulus to historical study and teaching in Oxford. But the crowning grievance of the Dons lay in the fact that Mr. Froude made no reference to Mr. Freeman, save in the line of some indirect criticism of his method; and such deliberate, remorseless iconoclasm was deemed simply intolerable. If Mr. Froude had courted the fierce whirlwind of controversy, he could not have selected better means whereby to raise it, but as a matter of fact, in perfect consistency with his whole career, he neither courted nor feared it.

My personal contact with Mr. Froude came about in this way. With the purpose of gaining a more intimate acquaintance with student life in Oxford, I matriculated in the University after the usual manner. I attended few lectures, as I spent my forenoons either in my study or in the Bodleian Library; but the bold Inaugural of Mr. Froude, and his announcement that he would lecture during Term on the Council of Trent, led to my immediate enrolment among his students. I was anxious to see how one who had passed through the experiences which are discovered to us in *The Nemesis of Faith* would carry himself in the face of several critical questions which would necessarily present themselves. Besides, as a student of Church history, I hoped to obtain some suggestive material belonging to the era of the Reformation in Europe. The progress of that movement in England has been pronounced by Mr. Froude "the greatest incident in English history,—the root and source of the expansive force which has spread the Anglo-Saxon race over the globe, and imprinted the English genius and character on the constitution of mankind; and I knew we would be sure to hear something more about Henry VIII, and Philip II, and Charles V. This is the period of history to which Mr. Froude has devoted many years of admittedly diligent research, and certainly I have good cause to recall