ALEXANDER CAMPBELL FRASER

1819–1914

THE death of Professor Campbell Fraser in his ninety-sixth year severs the last link which connected our British philosophy of to-day with its own origins in the thirties and forties of the previous century —with Hamilton's attack on the Philosophy of the Unconditioned, Mill's early essays and the first edition of the *Logic*, and the trenchant idealism of Ferrier. Within the spacious limits of his life Professor Fraser saw the rise and decline of Hamilton's influence, and watched the older English empiricism of Mill take on the larger outlines of Spencerian evolutionism; he had already been teaching philosophy for twenty years when the first writings of Stirling, Green, and Caird heralded the wave of Kantio-Hegelian idealism that swept over our universities in the second half of the nineteenth century; and after the floodtide of that movement in the nineties, the most recent phases of contemporary thought—pragmatism, realism, Bergsonism—still found him an interested reader and critic. Through all these changes of speculative atmosphere and philosophical idioms he held on his own way, taking little part as an active partisan in the more technical controversies of the schools, but pondering unceasingly the central mysteries of our being and communicating to many students the spirit of his own reverent quest. The *Philosophy of Theism*, in which he endeavoured to sum up the results of his lifelong meditation, has much of the breadth and simplicity of statement which distinguish a personal deliverance from an academic argument.

Alexander Campbell Fraser was the eldest son of the Rev. Hugh Fraser, minister of the parish of Ardchattan in Argyllshire, and of Maria Campbell, daughter of the neighbouring laird of Barcaldine and Glenure. The manse of Ardchattan lies on the northern shore of Loch Etive, and there Fraser was born on September 3, 1819, in the last year of the reign of George III. He was fond of saying in the last years of his life that he had lived under six British sovereigns. He was the eldest of a family of twelve, ten of whom were sons, and the home life, as he records in his autobiography, was one of Spartan frugality. His mother, who had been educated in England and was closely connected with the Clapham set of Evangelicals, inspired the

boy with a lifelong sentiment for the Anglican Church, of which his youngest son afterwards became a clergyman. His early education was got at the parish school and from a private tutor till he was sent in 1833, at the boyish age then common in Scotland, to the University of Glasgow. Local sentiment and historic feeling were strongly developed in Fraser, and the first chapter of the *Biographia Philosophica* gives charming glimpses, all too short, of the old-world life in that isolated region of Argyllshire in the twenties of last century —'its Campbell lairds of Lochnell, Ardchattan, and Barcaldine; at home with their families for nine months in the year, travelling in winter to Edinburgh to share for three months the social gaieties of the Metropolis—a three days' journey or more in the family coach —all of them long ago travellers in the sable car that carries us all to Hades; uniting Highland pride with much Highland hospitality; still in sympathy with their clansmen, the simple peasants in whom the grace and chivalry of the Gael thus survived, unspoiled by the Saxon stranger, all of them accepting the claims of rank with child-like deference. The circulation of news and the means of locomotion were slow; the packman of Wordsworth's "Excursion" did duty for the local newspaper which now enlightens Lorne; an occasional "Courant" or London "Morning Herald", with tidings of the world beyond the mountains, passed from the house of the laird to neighbouring houses; visits by the postboy on two and latterly on three days each week were not seldom interrupted by storms. In summer and in winter the rudely furnished bi-weekly steamer from Oban was the only public communication with the civilization of the Lowlands. At home the picturesque garb of the Gael, on the very old and on the young, was a familiar sight; while the coloured coat and embroidered vest, instead of gloomy black, brightened the five o'clock dinner parties of the lairds, advancing afterwards to six, according to the fashion of the South. On Sundays the lairds and the peasantry for many miles round gathered, with their families, in the parish church, then happily one visible centre of the whole parochial community; supplemented at summer "Sacraments" by hundreds from other parishes, to be addressed in Gaelic by fervid preachers, in church and in the open air, till the day was far spent.' Fraser himself, it is somewhat curious to note, although a Celt both on the father's and the mother's side, never acquired 'the Gaelic'.

He used to recount among his early memories the arrival of the news of the death of George IV in that remote Highland parish. He was construing Caesar in the little schoolhouse when his father came over from the manse with the news, and the black-bordered *Courant* of the

day made a deep impression on his childish imagination. But three years earlier in the pages of the same newspaper the struggle of Greece with Turkey in 1827 and the victory of Navarino had already awakened him to contemporary history, an interest which remained keen with him through life. In other directions the intellectual pabulum accessible to the lad was somewhat severely limited. Novels were tabooed in the household, 'those of "Waverley" being pre-eminent for bad report. My worthy schoolmaster repeatedly warned me against Sir Walter, with an ominous foreboding of his future destiny on account of "the books of lies which the devil had tempted him to produce"'. Books of history, travel, and popular astronomy were, however, permitted, and the astronomical manuals (the autobiography hints with a gentle irony) were apt to raise disturbing questions 'which relaxed the faith of childhood in a way that the novels of Scott and Bulwer could never have done'. The theological works which were then the favourite reading in Lorne—books like Jonathan Edwards's *Sermons*, Boston's *Fourfold State*, and the volumes of the Puritan divines—made little appeal to him. But a *Vision of Heaven and Hell* with pictures, appended to an old copy of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, was a thing of terror to his childish fancy. 'It was there that I first encountered the name of Hobbes, who was found by the seer, in his imaginary journey through the place of torment, expiating his guilt for having written the "Leviathan".'

At the University of Glasgow, Fraser was in the same class with Hutchinson Stirling, afterwards well known as the author of *The Secret of Hegel*, and the pioneer of Hegelian thought in this country. But Glasgow did not suit young Fraser's health, and after a single session there his parents sent him to Edinburgh, with which his name was destined to be so long associated. The brilliant days of the *Edinburgh Review* and of Dugald Stewart's teaching at the University, as well as the glamour of Sir Walter, were in 1835 already things of the past; and philosophy in particular, as Fraser notes in his reminiscences, 'was at a lower ebb in Scotland than at any time since the advent of Francis Hutcheson from Ireland to Glasgow, rather more than a century before'. Sir William Hamilton, however, had laid the foundation of his European reputation a few years previously by his learned and brilliant articles in the *Edinburgh Review* on the 'Philosophy of the Unconditioned' and the 'Philosophy of Perception'; and his appointment to the Edinburgh Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in 1836 marked a new epoch in Scottish Philosophy. Fraser attended the class of Logic in Dr. John Ritchie's last year of office, and was present at Hamilton's

inaugural lecture, on which occasion John Wilson (the stalwart 'Christopher North', who had been preferred to Hamilton sixteen years before for the Chair of Moral Philosophy) acted as enthusiastic doorkeeper for the large audience that assembled to welcome the famous metaphysician. In Hamilton's second session, Fraser attended his more advanced lectures on metaphysics and became a member of the 'Metaphysical Society' organized by a group of Hamilton's enthusiastic pupils. David Masson, John Cairns, afterwards Principal of the United Presbyterian College, and Macdougall, who afterwards succeeded Wilson as Professor of Moral Philosophy, were among the first members of this society, which was described by Principal Cairns, in a memoir of one of the members who died young, as 'the romance —the poetry—of speculation and friendship'. Hamilton was also in the habit of inviting his best students to his house in the evenings for philosophical discussion, and Ferrier, then an advocate at the Scottish Bar, used to attend and take a prominent part in debate. To the end of his life Fraser recalled these gatherings with pleasure, and spoke with warmth of the kindness and encouragement he received from his distinguished predecessor.

After completing his Arts course Fraser passed through the classes of the Theological Faculty in preparation for the ministry of the Scotch Church. Dr. Chalmers was at that time the great luminary in the Edinburgh Divinity Hall. David Masson and Alexander Bain, both of whom (to quote an apt phrase of the former's) wandered afterwards in untheological wildernesses, attended the Divinity class about the same time as Fraser, and both have borne eloquent testimony to the impression produced upon their minds by the massive personality of Chalmers; but Fraser, while acknowledging the moral greatness and force of the man, did not come under his intellectual influence. Chalmers's analysis was not keen enough to content one who was by temperament a thinker and to whom philosophy was to be the business of his life. The young man found his teacher rhetorical rather than satisfying when real difficulties had to be faced. A striking chapter in the autobiography describes the metaphysical ponderings of these years, during which the 'Excursion', Coleridge's 'Aids to Reflection', Newman's sermons, and the liberal theology of Hooker, Chillingworth, and the Cambridge Platonists did more for the young student than the prelections of his official teachers. A prize essay on 'Toleration', written towards the close of his divinity course, was a subject, he tells us, 'in harmony with my strongly-felt revulsion from the lack of charity apparent in the ecclesiastical controversies which then disturbed Scotland'. Scotland was, in fact, upon the eve of the Disruption, and

although he felt at heart, as he says, that 'war about non-intrusion under the shadow of an unsettled final problem seemed like Nero diverting himself while Rome was burning', Fraser's circumstances inevitably involved him in the controversy and its consequences. When the Disruption took place, in 1843, his father left the manse of Ardchattan, and his teacher, Chalmers, became the great Free Church leader. Fraser followed their example, and was ordained in 1844 as junior minister of the Free Church of Scotland at Cramond in the immediate neighbourhood of Edinburgh. His friend, Cairns, describes him at this time as 'doing parish work with the spirit of a Berkeley evangelized'. But his strong native bent and all his tastes adapted him rather to the life of the scholar and thinker; and, as it happened, the ecclesiastical jealousies of the time opened up to him the career he coveted. Resenting the tests then imposed on University Professors, and distrusting apparently the philosophical teaching obtainable at an Erastian university, the authorities of the Free Church added Chairs of Logic and of Moral Philosophy to the curriculum of their theological college, and Fraser was appointed to the former Chair in 1846. There he taught for ten years, till the death of Sir William Hamilton threw open the University Professorship of Logic and Metaphysics.

From the very beginning of his career as a philosophical teacher, he appears to have exercised the power, so marked in later years at the University of Edinburgh, of communicating an impulse to his best students and rousing them to think for themselves. It is apparent from an introductory lecture of this time, extracts from which appear in his first published volume, that, from the beginning, he deliberately set this before himself as the true purpose of the philosophical classroom—not the communication of knowledge or instruction in a dogmatic system, but the awakening of the mind. He is prepared to be content, he says, with what many may call meagre attainments and partial knowledge, provided he may hope 'to see created among us here a vortex of thought, or at least a small eddy on the great stream of human intellectual activity'. The almost immediate foundation of a 'New College Metaphysical and Ethical Society' testified to the success which attended his efforts. Indeed, according to Dr. Taylor Innes, himself one of Hamilton's prizemen in his later years, 'the centre of youthful and philosophic enthusiasm in Edinburgh' at that time was, not so much in the university classroom, as amongst 'the students who clustered in the Free Church College round Professor Fraser, then in the glow of his speculative youth'.[1] The Society numbered

[1] *Memoir of John Veitch*, by Mary R. L. Bryce, p. 38.

among its members many who afterwards themselves occupied chairs of philosophy or theology, such as John Veitch (who was one of Fraser's students in his first year), A. B. Bruce, James Macgregor, William Knight, and Henry Laurie of Melbourne. When Fraser succeeded to Hamilton's chair, the Society migrated with him to the University.

During the ten years of his New College professoriate, Fraser became known to wider circles as editor of the *North British Review*. This able periodical was founded in 1844 under Free Church auspices; Professor McEwen, in his biography of Cairns, asserts that it 'originated in the silence of the *Edinburgh Review* as to the Disruption'. The avowed aim of its promoters, however, was to found a review which should be religious in tone, without being either denominational in its appeal or theological in its contents, and their programme was on the whole not unworthily realized. For ten or fifteen years, in the fifties and sixties of last century, the *North British Review* was a distinct force in the world of thought and letters. Fraser's first published article, a paper on Leibniz, appeared in its pages in 1846, and was followed at intervals by a number of others. When he assumed the editorship in 1850, Fraser consistently pursued a broad-minded policy, and proved himself singularly successful in attracting distinguished contributors from England as well as from Scotland. The names of Whewell, Whately, Kingsley, Freeman, Spencer, W. R. Greg, Nassau Senior, Brewster, Caird, Masson, and Dr. John Brown show how widely he cast his net. The editorship was the means of bringing him into pleasant relations with most of the leading thinkers and writers of the time. When in London in 1850 looking for contributors, and combining literary negotiations with his marriage tour, he had his first meeting with Thomas Carlyle in his house at Chelsea, where he spent an evening along with his future colleague, David Masson. 'I seem to see', he afterwards wrote, 'in a lurid fire-lit chamber, the weird-like figure of the sage, now and again replenishing the fire, while discharging merciless denunciation of the political and religious views of his generation and the unreality of its literature—all for the benefit of a young and inexperienced editor; the turgid monologue now and then relieved by occasional coruscations of Mrs. Carlyle's ready wit.' During this London visit he also saw John Stuart Mill for the first time. Unfortunately, in the end, Fraser's catholicity wore out the patience of Principal Cunningham of the New College and some of the narrower ecclesiastical supporters of the *Review*, and the editorship passed into other hands. After Fraser severed his connexion with it, the *Review* had a somewhat chequered history, ending its

career in the seventies as the organ of Lord Acton and the English Catholics.

Hamilton died in May 1856, and the struggle for the Chair which he had made famous formed something of an episode in the domestic history of Scottish philosophy. Ferrier, then Professor at St. Andrews, was almost certainly at that time the most distinguished representative of metaphysics in Scotland. Eleven years older than Fraser, and the author of an important metaphysical work, he seemed marked out for the succession alike by the boldness of his speculations and the brilliance of his literary gifts. But Ferrier had sought out other masters than Reid and Stewart. He was understood to have drunk deep at German sources and, in his forcible style, he had spoken very contemptuously of the Scottish philosophers whom Hamilton had edited and expounded. Orthodox suspicions were aroused, and Dr. John Cairns (who had the offer of the Chair himself, as he had had that of Moral Philosophy on Wilson's death four years previously) came forward with an 'Examination of Ferrier's Theory of Knowing and Being', which was largely instrumental in deciding the issue. Cairns was himself a metaphysician of considerable power, and his pamphlet undoubtedly touched real weaknesses in Ferrier's system; but it also exaggerated its supposed theological tendencies, and thus fanned the prejudices of the electors. Denominational influences were also brought to bear upon the Town Councillors, with whom the patronage of the Chair then rested. A lively war of pamphlets ensued, waged both in prose and verse. Professor Aytoun mingled (or was believed to have mingled) in the fray with a skit in verse, 'A Diverting History of John Cairns'. More serious combatants entered the lists on Ferrier's behalf; but Cairns returned to the charge with a second pamphlet, 'The Scottish Philosophy, a Vindication and a Reply,' and on July 15 Fraser was elected by a majority of three to the Chair which he was to dignify for thirty-five years. After the election Ferrier delivered his soul in a 'statement' called 'Scottish Philosophy, the Old and the New', in which he vehemently repudiated the supposed Hegelian origin of his philosophy—claiming that it is 'Scottish to the very core, national in every fibre and articulation of its frame'—and denounced the procedure of the Town Council, inasmuch as, 'after the recent abolition of theological tests, they have arbitrarily imposed a philosophical test of the most exclusive character. It is well to know that a candidate for a philosophical chair in the University of Edinburgh need not now be a believer in Christ or a member of the Established Church, but he must be a believer in Dr. Reid and a pledged disciple of the Hamiltonian system

of philosophy.' It is pleasant to know that this somewhat envenomed controversy did not affect the friendly relations which continued to subsist between the two candidates. Ferrier died as long ago as 1864, and at the distance of nearly sixty years from the controversy there is ground for the view that, if Fraser did not possess his rival's literary brilliance and incisive statement, there was more of human breadth and more staying power in his thinking than in the somewhat meagre results of Ferrier's demonstrative method. But the more immediate sequel of the appointment was not without its surface aspects of humour. His 'idealism' had been one of the main counts against Ferrier, and Fraser soon afterwards laid the foundations of his wider reputation by his sympathetic exposition of the English idealism of Berkeley, which became central in his academic teaching for at least a quarter of a century.

The thirty-five years of Fraser's university professoriate passed serenely, filled with congenial work and brightened by pleasant intercourse with his colleagues and other friends. In 1850 he had married Miss Dyce, the daughter of an old Aberdeenshire family, and his wife's bright and animated personality helped to make their house one of the centres of academic and literary society in Edinburgh. Her unwearied kindness made her an excellent hostess, and by her management and tact she shielded her husband from the minor worries of life, and enabled him to devote himself unreservedly to his university work and to philosophical authorship. The long vacations then enjoyed by the Scottish Universities usually made possible a visit, soon after the close of the winter session, to London or Oxford or to friends in other parts of England, and the later autumn months were mostly spent with his growing family at some manse or farm-house in Yarrow or in his native Argyllshire. The pastoral ballad-haunted beauty of Yarrow was further endeared to him by its Wordsworthian associations. Wordsworth had been a great influence in his life, and in three successive years the autumn holiday was spent at Grasmere in the heart of the poet's country.

In these long summers, freed from academic duty, Fraser was able to turn to continuous literary work, in the course of which his own thought gradually matured. Up till the date of his University appointment, his only publication had been six 'Essays in Philosophy', collected from the *North British Review* and issued in support of his candidature for the Chair. In his second session he expanded an introductory lecture under the title 'Rational Philosophy in History and in System', but he was deeply impressed by Bacon's warning of the danger that lies in the 'over-early and peremptory reduction of

knowledge into acts and methods'. As he put it in the preface to his first volume, 'the perfection of philosophical opinion and any well-grounded assurance of certainty in those high matters are the results only of cautious, long-continued and patient reflection.' Accordingly we find him in no hurry to commit himself to a finished system. During the first ten years of his professorship, his literary output amounted only to four or five articles in the *North British Review* and *Macmillan's Magazine*. Two of these, however, dealing freshly with Berkeley and opening up new aspects of his thought, led to an invitation from the Clarendon Press to edit a Collected Edition of the works of that philosopher. Fraser set about the task *con amore*, and was soon fortunate enough to unearth a real philosophical treasure in the shape of the Commonplace Book kept by Berkeley during the early years at Trinity College, Dublin, when his new theory of the material world was first shaping itself in his mind. Its vivid, unstudied, and sometimes unguarded phrases are of extraordinary interest for the light they throw on the motives of his thought and the progress of his ideas. Enriched with this and other unpublished matter, and accompanied by a 'Life and Letters' on which an infinity of loving pains had been bestowed, the edition appeared early in 1871. The Life was the first adequate presentation of Berkeley's fascinating personality and romantic career, and the editor's philosophical prefaces and annotations to the different works contained a fresh interpretation of Berkeley's spiritual idealism which, by emphasizing its deeper aspects and giving it a new setting in relation to modern problems and difficulties, made it a real factor in the philosophical movement of the later nineteenth century. The edition as a whole was a monument of scholarly care and sympathetic exposition. It had occupied Fraser for five years, and it made his name a household word wherever English philosophy is studied; and in spite of the larger range and more independent grasp of some of his later work, it was probably to the end as the editor and interpreter of Berkeley that he was most widely known. A volume of *Selections from Berkeley*, largely used in the universities, was published in 1874, and in 1881 Fraser contributed to Blackwood's Philosophical Classics for English readers a charming sketch of Berkeley's life and thought, in which he was able to make use of fresh documents for the Life, and, in the concluding chapter, to outline more firmly his own philosophical position. The subject pursued him as late as 1901, in which year he brought out for the Clarendon Press a new and re-arranged edition of the Collected Works with a biographical and critical Introduction.

Honours now crowded upon Fraser. The honorary LL.D. of

Glasgow University and, later, the D.C.L. of Oxford and the D.Litt. of Trinity College, Dublin—the universities one of which nursed Berkeley's youth and the other sheltered his age—were a recognition of the services he had rendered to literature and philosophy by his edition. In 1882 he was elected a member of the Athenaeum Club, an honour which was grateful to him on account of the pleasant *pied à terre* which it afforded him during his annual visits to London. Meanwhile his work on Berkeley had naturally led him back to a closer study of Locke, as the fountain-head of English philosophy. In spite of much that is defective in Locke's statements, Fraser was attracted by his robust common sense, his honest acknowledgement of the limitations of human insight, and his ultimate reliance on the certainties of moral experience; and he lived much in his company during the eighties and early nineties. In the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article on Locke, in a volume on Locke, companion to his Berkeley, in Blackwood's series, and finally in an elaborate edition of the *Essay* with prolegomena and notes, published by the Clarendon Press in 1894, he gave to the world the results of his study, endeavouring, as in the case of Berkeley, to interpret Locke's thought sympathetically, according to the author's own intention and the spirit of the whole, instead of treating him merely as the first stage in the development of English and French sensationalism. Fraser's treatment thus formed a valuable and much-needed complement to T. H. Green's polemical handling of the same subject in his 'Introduction to Hume'.

In 1891 Fraser resigned his Chair. During the long period of his professorship he had taken an active part in the business and administration of the University. Three years after his appointment he was elected Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and he discharged the duties of that office for more than thirty years, while from 1877 onwards he was also the representative of the Senatus on the University Court, the governing body of the University. In both capacities the meditative philosopher proved himself an excellent man of business. But his chief work was in the classroom with his students, and here, by common consent of those most capable of judging, Professor Fraser left the reputation of a great teacher. He was a great teacher not exactly in the sense of a dominating personality—for I do not think that he made much impression on the average undergraduate, apt to be indifferent to philosophy—still less as a man with a dogmatic message which he impressed upon his pupils, but because he possessed a singular power of awakening and stimulating the philosophic instinct in his best students. Doubts

and questions were presented to them rather than solutions, but ways were pointed out along which solutions might be found. The mystery of the world was emphasized, but faith in an intellectual and moral harmony was kept alive; and so there was created in the old classroom an intellectual eagerness combined with elevated feeling which seemed to make it an ideal home of the philosophical spirit. Like Socrates, Professor Fraser was fond of declaring himself 'a seeker', and it was because his students divined in him a fellow-seeker that he was so good a guide to their opening minds. I cannot do better than quote from the warm address presented to him by his old honours students on the occasion of his academic jubilee in 1906. 'You never sought', the signatories say, 'to impose upon our minds a dogmatic system of belief, but with a deeper trust in the eventual harmony of the results of all serious and independent thinking, sought to stimulate us to a constant individual effort in the pursuit of truth. And while yourself a scholar whose work upon the classics of English philosophy has achieved a world-wide reputation, you never failed to set before us a higher ideal of philosophical study than that of mere scholarship and research—the ideal which we saw exemplified in your own work as a thinker and teacher, of ever-renewed and unwearying meditation on the questions that are most ultimate and fundamental in the spiritual life of humanity.' It was the natural consequence of such an influence that the Edinburgh class of Logic and Metaphysics became a training-ground of philosophical thinkers who went out to fill Chairs in most of the universities of the English-speaking world. No fewer than seven of Fraser's pupils have held Chairs of Philosophy in the Scottish Universities, while nine others have become Professors in the Universities of Australia, India, Canada, and the United States. The Chair of Green in Oxford and that of Sidgwick in Cambridge were both filled by philosophers of his training. In the kindred study of theology, at least six Principals and six Professors received from him their first impulse to philosophic thought.

In anticipation of his retirement, Professor Fraser had installed himself a year before at Gorton House, near Hawthornden, looking across the wooded ravine of the Esk to Roslin Chapel and the line of the Pentland Hills. In this pleasant country retreat he lived and worked for eighteen years, till the death of his wife in 1907, soon after which he returned to Edinburgh, where his last years were spent. The Gorton year was usually diversified by a round of visits in England, where a son and a daughter were now settled, and by a shorter visit to the shores of Loch Etive or to the Border country; and as the house was within easy reach of Edinburgh by afternoon train, old

friends and associates often found their way thither. He was seventy-two when he retired, but the main harvest of his own thought was still to be garnered. The edition of Locke's *Essay*, already referred to, was the firstfruits of his leisure, and his appointment as Gifford Lecturer brought him back to his lecture-desk in his old university during the winters of 1894–5 and 1895–6. This Lectureship, with its demand for twenty lectures on 'Natural Theology', that is to say, on the central subjects of philosophical interest, supplied him with just the stimulus he needed; and in his two courses on 'The Philosophy of Theism', he was able, for the first time, to give independent and constructive expression to the slowly-matured convictions of a life-time. Fraser was fond of describing his position as a *via media* between the agnosticism which would limit man's knowledge to the ascertained uniformities of physical science and the too daring gnosticism (as he called it by way of contrast) of Hegelian idealism, which seemed to him to claim a species of omniscience which would banish all mystery from the universe. Deeply impressed as he was by the mysteriousness of existence, and himself not without an infusion of the sceptical temperament—which showed itself in his keen delight in the writings of Hume—he insisted strongly on the element of faith which must lie at the basis of all our conclusions. His own standpoint was that of a theism based upon moral faith. Taking his stand, like Kant, upon the moral experience of mankind, he insisted that our reliance on the constancy of physical law itself rests ultimately on a faith in the moral trustworthiness of the universe. In other words, the work of science no less than the moral life itself presupposes a species of moral trust which is the only alternative to universal scepticism. Such a *via media*, he contended, was the only reasonable human attitude. The Gifford Lectures were an impressive handling of the philosophical problem from this point of view. They were followed in 1898 by a little volume on Thomas Reid, the father of Scottish Philosophy, in which an excellent portrait is given of the man and his work, and in 1901 by the new edition of Berkeley's Works, already referred to. In 1904 Fraser published, under the title *Biographia Philosophica*, an autobiographical retrospect, in which personal reminiscence is charmingly combined with a meditative restatement of his philosophical results. In an article in the *Hibbert Journal* for January 1907, characteristically entitled 'Our Final Venture', he returned once more to present in short compass his fundamental position—'final faith in Omnipotent Goodness, immanent in the heart of the real universe in its whole organic evolution'. Even then his career of authorship was not closed. In 1908 he

contributed to Constable's series of 'Philosophers Ancient and Modern' a little volume on *Berkeley and Spiritual Realism*, in which there is at least as much of his own maturer way of putting things as of his favourite philosopher; and still later he was occupied in revising his *Selections from Berkeley* for a sixth edition. In the preface, it may be noted, he again uses the term, Spiritual Realism, to describe his own position--'a Realism that is fundamentally Spiritual, although after a native rather than a German fashion'. When he penned this preface, in October 1910, he had already entered on his ninety-second year.

During all these years Professor Fraser maintained an active interest in his old university. At the beginning and the end of each session it was his custom to appear at the opening and the closing meetings of the philosophical classes, and the venerable figure in the scarlet gown of the Oxford D.C.L. was a notable feature on the platform at graduations and other academic celebrations. In 1906, on the fiftieth anniversary of his inaugural lecture as Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, he was publicly presented with a congratulatory address by the Senatus Academicus and a similar tribute from his old honours students. Three years later, on the attainment of his ninetieth birthday, a feelingly-worded letter from a number of his old colleagues, friends, and pupils, expressive of their gratitude and affection, gave him much pleasure. During the last three or four years, while he became physically feebler, his mental faculties remained unimpaired and his bodily senses were as keen as those of a young man. Till within a few months of his death, he was able to drive out every fine day—often far into the country—and up to the very last he welcomed a talk with old friends in the afternoon. In May of last year, when M. Bergson was delivering his Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, the old man called upon him and talked interestingly of the days of Cousin and Hamilton and of the close relations that have existed between French and Scottish philosophy. In the autumn of the year, without any bodily ailment or even discomfort, he continued gradually to lose strength. When the end came, it came unexpectedly: he breathed his last almost imperceptibly on the morning of December 2, 1914.

Born four years after Waterloo, he passed away amid the clash of an even more stupendous conflict. During the last months he read, or more frequently listened to, the daily records of the war. He followed its progress, its horrors and its glories, with a full appreciation of the tremendous issues at stake; yet there was observable a subtle touch of aloofness, the detachment of one

on whom the burden of these things and of the future was no longer laid. The sunset of his long life had come, and his face was turned toward the outstretched past. When his thoughts occasionally wandered, during the weakness of the last few days, the listeners could perceive that they carried him back to his familiar lecture-desk or to the hills and waters of the western land whence he came.

It was a life planned on a large scale, full of important achievement, singularly rounded and complete.

A. SETH PRINGLE-PATTISON.