

English Men of Letters

EDITED BY JOHN MORLEY

THOMAS CARLYLE



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BY

JOHN NICHOL, LL.D., M.A., BALLIOL, OXON

EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE following record of the leading events of Carlyle's life and attempt to estimate his genius rely on frequently renewed study of his work, on slight personal impressions—"vidi tantum"—and on information supplied by previous narrators. Of these the great author's chosen literary legatee is the most eminent and, in the main, the most reliable. Every critic of Carlyle must admit as constant obligations to Mr. Froude as every critic of Byron to Moore or of Scott to Lockhart. The works of these masters in biography remain the ample storehouses from which every student will continue to draw. Each has, in a sense, made his subject his own, and each has been similarly arraigned.

I must here be allowed to express a feeling akin to indignation at the persistent, often virulent attacks directed against a loyal friend, betrayed, it may be, by excess of faith and the defective reticence that often belongs to genius, to publish too much about his hero. But Mr. Froude's quotation, in defence, from the essay on *Sir Walter Scott* requires no supplement: it should be remembered that he acted with the most ample authority; that the restrictions under which he was at first entrusted with the MSS. of the *Reminiscences* and the *Letters and Memorials* (annotated by Carlyle himself, as if for publication) were