

**A FIRST YEAR IN
CANTERBURY
SETTLEMENT, WITH
OTHER EARLY ESSAYS**

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A first year in Canterbury settlement, with other early essays by Samuel Butler

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SAMUEL BUTLER

**A FIRST YEAR IN
CANTERBURY
SETTLEMENT, WITH
OTHER EARLY ESSAYS**

A First Year in Canterbury Settlement

With Other Early Essays

By

Samuel Butler

Author of "Erewhon," "The Way of All Flesh," etc.

Edited by R. A. Streatfeild

London : A. C. Fifield,

1914

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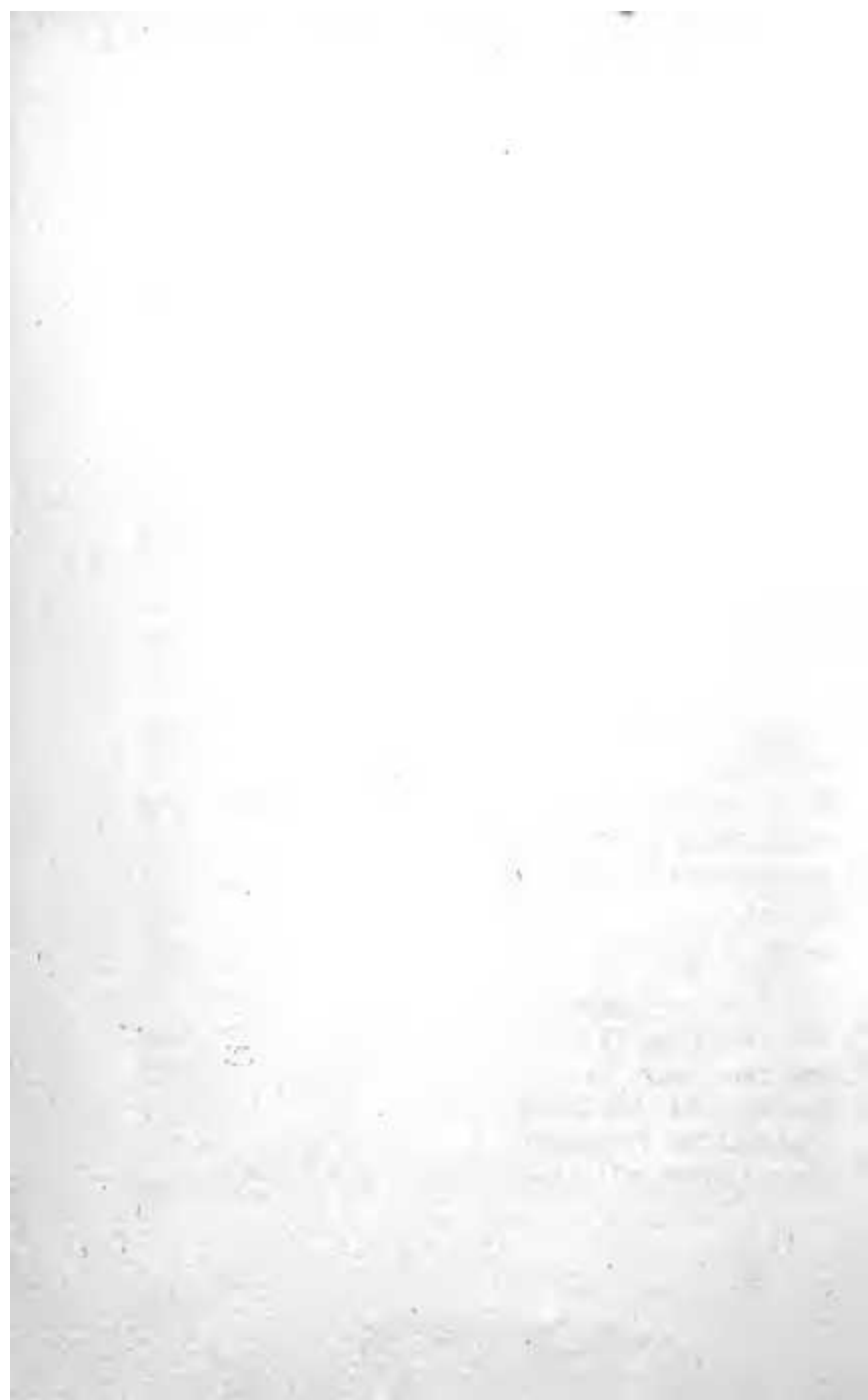
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Introduction

By R. A. Streatfeild

SINCE Butler's death in 1902 his fame has spread so rapidly and the world of letters now takes so keen an interest in the man and his writings that no apology is necessary for the republication of even his least significant works. I had long desired to bring out a new edition of his earliest book A FIRST YEAR IN CANTERBURY SETTLEMENT, together with the other pieces that he wrote during his residence in New Zealand, and, that wish being now realised, I have added a supplementary group of pieces written during his undergraduate days at Cambridge, so that the present volume forms a tolerably complete record of Butler's literary activity up to the days of EREWHON, the only omission of any importance being that of his pamphlet, published anonymously in 1865, THE EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST AS CONTAINED IN THE FOUR EVANGELISTS CRITICALLY EXAMINED. I have not reprinted this, because practically the whole of it was incorporated into THE FAIR HAVEN.

A FIRST YEAR IN CANTERBURY SETTLEMENT has long been out of print, and copies of the original edition

are difficult to procure. Buller professed to think poorly of it. Writing in 1889 to his friend Alfred Marks, who had picked up a second-hand copy and felt some doubt as to its authorship, he said: "I am afraid the little book you have referred to was written by me. My people edited my letters home. I did not write freely to them, of course, because they were my people. If I was at all freer anywhere they cut it out before printing it; besides, I had not yet shed my Cambridge skin and its trail is everywhere, I am afraid, perceptible. I have never read the book myself. I dipped into a few pages when they sent it to me in New Zealand, but saw 'prig' written upon them so plainly that I read no more and never have and never mean to. I am told the book sells for £1 a copy in New Zealand; in fact, last autumn I know Sir Walter Buller gave that for a copy in England, so as a speculation it is worth 2s. 6d. or 3s. I stole a passage or two from it for EREWHON, meaning to let it go and never be reprinted during my lifetime."

This must be taken with a grain of salt. It was Butler's habit sometimes to entertain his friends and himself by speaking of his own works with studied disrespect, as when, with reference to his own DARWIN AND THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES, which also is reprinted in this volume, he described philosophical dialogues as "the most offensive form, except poetry and books of travel into supposed unknown countries, that even literature can assume." The circumstances which led to A FIRST YEAR being written

have been fully described by Mr. Festing Jones in his sketch of Butler's life prefixed to *THE HUMOUR OF HOMER* (Fifield, London, 1913; Kennerley, New York), and I will only briefly recapitulate them. Butler left England for New Zealand in September, 1859, remaining in the colony until 1864. *A FIRST YEAR* was published in 1863 in Butler's name by his father, who contributed a short preface, stating that the book was compiled from his son's journal and letters, with extracts from two papers contributed to *THE EAGLE*, the magazine of St. John's College, Cambridge. These two papers had appeared in 1861 in the form of three articles entitled "Our Emigrant" and signed "Cellarius." By comparing these articles with the book as published by Butler's father it is possible to arrive at some conclusion as to the amount of editing to which Butler's prose was submitted. Some passages in the articles do not appear in the book at all; others appear unaltered; others again have been slightly doctored, apparently with the object of robbing them of a certain youthful "cocksureness," which probably grated upon the paternal nerves, but seems to me to create an atmosphere of an engaging freshness which I miss in the edited version. So much of the "Our Emigrant" articles is repeated in *A FIRST YEAR* almost if not quite verbatim that it did not seem worth while to reprint the articles in their entirety. I have, however, included in this collection one extract from the latter which was not incorporated into *A FIRST YEAR*, though it describes at greater length an