

**MRS. HUMPHRY
WARD, HER WORK
AND INFLUENCE**

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Mrs. Humphry Ward, her work and influence by J. Stuart Walters

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Photo by H. Walter Barnett.

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J. STUART WALTERS

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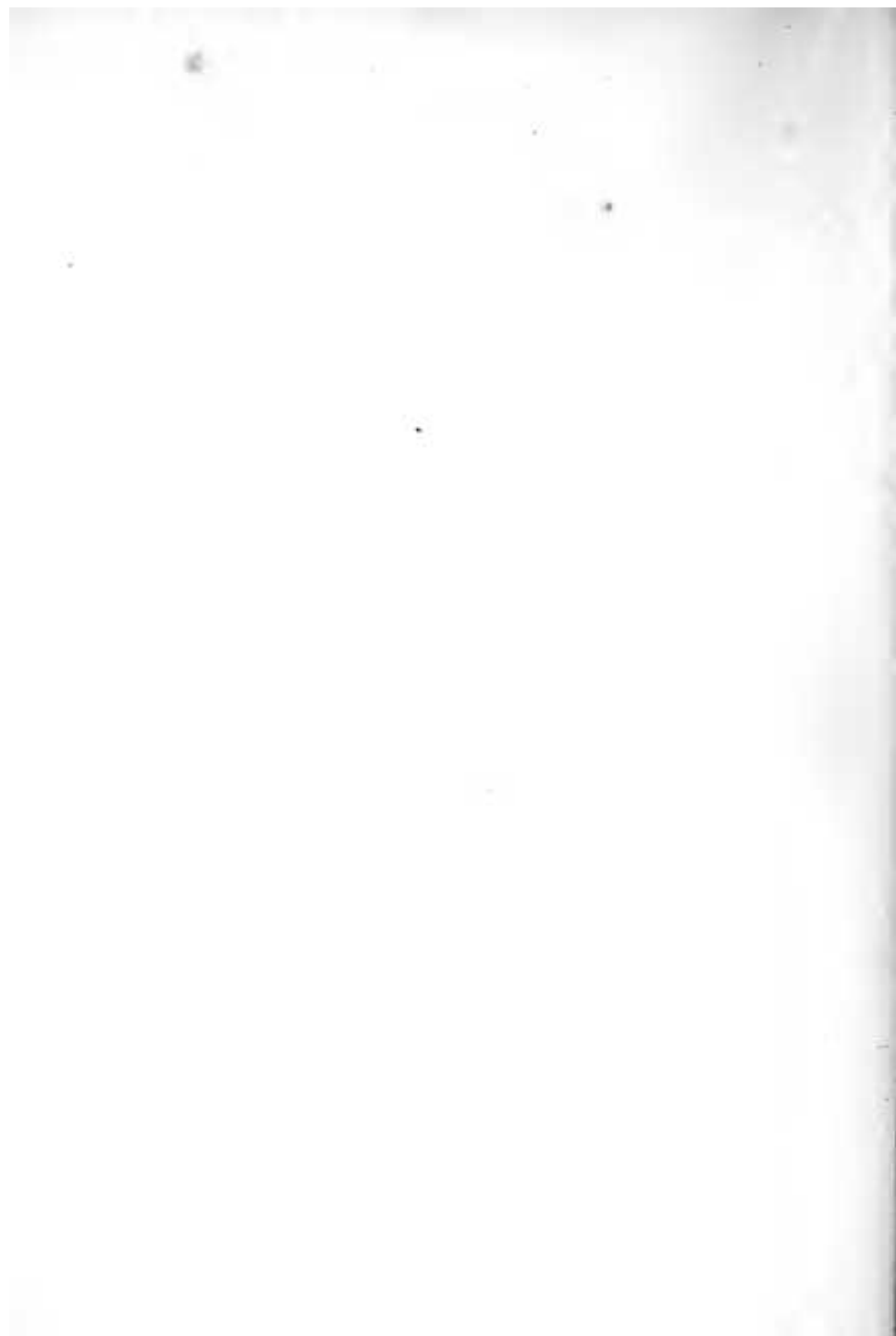
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THROUGHOUT the whole of the middle and the latter part of the nineteenth century England was the scene of a great religious and intellectual revival; and this revival, introducing as it did many new ideas, led, not unnaturally, to much divergence of opinion, and this again led to controversy. The spirit, in fact, of controversy was in the air—it swept the country from north to south, from east to west, gathering in its embrace alike religion and science, and politics, and literature and art.

Perhaps the chief and certainly the most turbulent of these movements was that in connection with religion.

At that time, as now, the Established Church was split into three factitious divisions, the dissecting causes being practically the same as they remain to this day; but since the stir caused by Wesley at the end of the eighteenth century enthusiasm had been looked on askance—there was a desire for peace, and peace had been allowed

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to degenerate into indifference on the part of the people, and into laxity on the part of the clergy.

The first sign of new life was a mild outbreak of Evangelicalism at Cambridge. Later came that outburst of Ritualism (or Tractarianism) at Oxford which had so marked an effect on the ethical development of the nation. This movement dates from a sermon on "National Apostasy" preached by Keble on July 14, 1833. Its causes were twofold: on the one hand, the spirit of Romanticism, turning men's minds to mediæval times; and, on the other, reaction from the great Liberal (or Rational) wave that swept away Catholic disabilities (in 1821 and 1822), which threatened the wealth of the Established Church, and brought German Rationalism over to England.

Something better was wanted to stem the tide—something more sturdy, more invigorating than the quiescent Anglicanism of the time. What all felt to be necessary was a positive dogma, based on a firm belief in a Church founded upon antiquity and free from error. But from this point onwards reformers failed to agree. "What," it was asked, "is meant by antiquity? Where draw the line?—at apostolic, patristic, or pre-Tridentine¹ times?" Freedom from error was of course essential, but again came the question

¹ Vide *Helbeck of Bannisdale* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1903), p. 387. The reference is, of course, to the œcumenical council held at Tridentum (Trent) in the years 1545-1563.