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978-0-521-09074-2 - Mark Pattison and the Idea of a University

John Sparrow

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MARK PATTISON
AND THE IDEA OF A
UNIVERSITY

THE CLARK LECTURES
1965

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BY

JOHN SPARROW

Warden of All Souls College, Oxford



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TO
JOHN BRYSON

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The frontispiece reproduces a photograph of Mark Pattison taken in about 1880 and now in the possession of the author.

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PREFACE

The lectures that make up this book were delivered, in a shorter form, in Cambridge in the autumn of 1965. I should like to record here my gratitude to the Master and Fellows of Trinity College for honouring me with the invitation to be Clark Lecturer and for the friendly hospitality with which they welcomed me when the lectures were delivered.

When I was invited by the Syndics of the University Press to submit the lectures for publication, I hesitated; I was conscious (as I still am) of how much they suffer from being the work of an inexperienced lecturer and an untrained historian, and of how far my clumsy and superficial patchwork falls short of doing justice to its subject. In accepting the Syndics' invitation I yielded to feelings that I tried to express in the last lecture (pp. 133–4, 146–9): I am sure that Pattison's personality—which I have done my best, however inadequately, to bring to life in the first two lectures—deserves to be better appreciated and more widely known; and I believe that the sketch of his experience of Oxford reform contained in the third and fourth lectures, superficial though it is, may suggest lessons that should be of profit to the University today.

I must mention two books that provide a detailed background to the historical and personal sides, respectively, of my story: the first (which did not come out, unfortunately, until my work on the lectures was already far

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advanced) is Mr W. R. Ward's *Victorian Oxford* which contains an exceedingly detailed account of the history and literature of reform in the University in the nineteenth century; the second is Mr V. H. H. Green's *Oxford Common Room*, which paints a lively and authentic picture of Lincoln College, and its Head, during Pattison's Rectorship. Mr Green's book, like mine, is based on a close familiarity with the thousands of pages of the Pattison MSS. in the Bodleian, and those who have read *Oxford Common Room* will recognize in my first and second lectures several passages quoted by him from Pattison's correspondence. I should like to assure such readers, and Mr Green himself, that this is not a case of plagiarism, and that every one (I believe) of these quotations was among a number of passages that I had transcribed from the MSS. before his book was published.

All Souls College, Oxford
November 1966

JOHN SPARROW