9-2010

The Ireland of James Anthony Froude: A Nineteenth Century Drama

Janet Murphy
Department of Humanities and Social Science, Institute of Technology, Tralee, Kerry, Ireland

The Ireland of James Anthony Froude

A Nineteenth Century Drama

Abstract

The Ireland of James Anthony Froude
A Nineteenth Century Drama

Using primary material in a manner unprecedented at the time, James Anthony Froude was an English historian of the Victorian era whose histories encompassed Ireland. Among his works relating to Ireland was a ten-book study of the eighteeth-century that extended from the penal era to the Union of 1800. While such scholars as W. E. H. Lecky objectified their histories by accumulating data, Froude supplemented his with anecdote, maintaining that the perfect history was told in the words and deeds of those who acted it out.

His methodology was not determinately structured: he laboured with vast quantities of primary material in order to produce a 'track' that his age could follow. Froude's interpretation of material inflamed scholars as well as the reading public and controversy plagued the historian's professional life from his first publication to his last. Modern historians have carried Froude's perceived reputation into current literature whereby he has been largely dismissed.

Froude travelled to Ireland frequently and during the period 1869 to 1872, took up summer residence there. His engagement with the country was not confined to his Irish history; it also informed his historical fiction, and his essays.

This thesis explores Froude's personal involvement with Ireland and the Irish by working chronologically through four texts pertaining to the country which span a period of forty years. The texts have been ordered under the following chapters:

A Victorian Refugee (*The Nemesis of Faith*)
A Victorian Resident (*A Fortnight in Kerry*)
A Victorian Rebel (*The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*)
A Victorian Swansong (*The Two Chiefs of Dunboy*)

My research has led to a reappraisal of Froude and has demonstrated how England's most controversial historian enriched Ireland's literature.

Janet Murphy
September 2010

Contents

Introduction

How can we help loving best those who
first give us possession of ourselves?
The Nemesis of Faith

It is a pity that Froude has already become one of *England's Forgotten Worthies*, wrote scholar Basil Willey in 1956, because his prose excels that of nearly all his contemporaries.[1] Froude had then been dead for sixty-two years, and an authorised biography had yet to be written.

In his lifetime, which spanned almost the entire reign of Victoria, historian James Anthony Froude had been a controversial figure. As Willey put it, 'almost every one of his principal works aroused dispute', and brought down 'obloquy and recrimination upon the author's head'. Indeed, Willey observed that echoes of the furore that surrounded Froude's works on Carlyle 'have not long died down'.

Today we approach Froude in silence, with all but an imagined hope of understanding the scale of fuss that took–incredibly–almost three generations to subside. We approach him too in ignorance, for his name is, generally, not recognised.

Such was also the case in July 1848, the period before Froude's career as an historian had begun. At eight o'clock on Tuesday, 4 July, this young unknown had boarded a ship in Avon in a state of distress. In today's terminology, he was probably suffering a breakdown. His destination was Ireland, and the Kerry mountains, where he hoped to be 'temptingly helpless'.[2] Burdened by personal grief, despairing at an impending career as a clergyman, Froude had fled England at short notice, later telling a friend, 'I ran away from England … I ran off at a few hours notice half distracted'.[3]

The year before, Froude had published a clumsy, experimental work, *Shadows of the Clouds*, an autobiographical novel that documented his family and school life in the fashion of today's memoir, or self help genre.[4] Its publication brought him no joy, and alienated him from his family. Yet the process of writing appealed, and in 1848, Froude was at work on a second novel of similar ilk. Solitude in the Kerry mountains to write would, he hoped, aid him in this task.

The content of this book, which would be published at the beginning of 1849, would move forward in his life and concentrate on matters religious: a literary thermometer to the heat of the Oxford Movement.[5] Its writing was cathartic, and its publication resulted in his severance from formal church life.

---

[1] Basil Willey, *More Nineteenth Century Studies: a Group of Honest Doubters (*first published by Chatto and Windus in 1956); Cambridge University Press edition 1980, Chp III, J. A. Froude. *England's Forgotten Worthies* published in the *Westminster Review* in 1852. Froude described it as 'an Elizabethan paper … on the old Navigators' (Dunn (1961) p. 185). Such writings culminated in his *History of England*.

[2] Waldo Hilary Dunn, *James Anthony Froude, A Biography*, Vol I 1818-1856, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, p. 121.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 124.

[4] Froude published this book under the pseudonym 'Zeta', by which he disguised the initial of his surname using the Greek alphabet.

[5] Willey identified Froude as of particular importance in nineteenth century study for displaying in his person 'the point where the [doctrinal] cross-currents meet and divide'.

Exactly how and where Froude spent his time in Killarney has not been documented by his biographers, despite the occasion causing him to make a profound decision on his future as a clergyman.[6]

For this reason I have returned Froude to this period of despair in nineteenth century Killarney to take up–briefly–where his biographers left off. I have retraced the ground that he covered in an environment far removed from England to try to gain a better understanding of what proved to be a lifelong attachment to the county, and the country.[7] In this manner I have reassessed *The Nemesis of Faith*, the first of four selected texts pertaining to Ireland which span the course of Froude's writing life. This reassessment has identified his location in Killarney during this period and followed his subsequent recuperation.

I have isolated Froude in Kerry to reassess my second selected text, *A Fortnight in Kerry*, for there Froude took up summer residence in the 1860s and acquainted himself with the gentry in the neighbourhood. The life he carried on during this period and the friendships he formed have not been adequately researched. An example is his friendship with Richard John Mahony of Dromore Castle, whose political concerns were published, with Froude's encouragement, in *Fraser's Magazine* and whose literature today forms a valuable contribution to the period of the Land War. Mahony is one of a number of relationships Froude forged in Ireland not mentioned by his biographers.[8]

I have shown in the two remaining texts, *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* and *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy,* how Froude's experiences in Kerry influenced these wider writings.[9] In the former Froude devoted an entire chapter of his first volume to the subject of smuggling, notably in Kerry and Cork, to which subject he returned in the latter, motivated as much by his exasperation at the accelerating political unrest in the country as the drama contained in the subject. Composed in the later stages of his life, *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy* is Froude's interpretation of English policy in Ireland towards the end of the nineteenth century and is symbolic of his unerring attachment to and concern for the colony in the closing years of his life.

A personal note on the inception of this thesis

An anonymous two-page article in a privately-bound collection of texts and pamphlets first drew my attention to Froude's literature. I have often reflected on how two pages from perhaps two or three hundred of a dozen similarly bound books could have halted my page-flicking for long enough to command attention. The grace of writing certainly, Froude's direct approach perhaps.[10] The answer, however, lies in his compelling

---

[6] The magnitude of this decision is explained by the requirement of ordination to enter the professions. Willey commented on the 'peculiar distinctness' of the direction Froude took at this time: 'He does not, like Newman, beat out his path to freedom by laborious study, subtlety and learning; he does not droop on tired wings like Clough, nor sail out blandly into enlightenment like Jowett or Arnold; nor does he use the ice-axe of Leslie Stephen or the eighteenth century armoury of John Morley …. No one except Froude, I think, came to rest so speedily'.

[7] In this I followed in a more physical than literal sense Froude's often espoused dictum that river water is most pure nearest to the fountain. Indeed, such close physical proximity enabled me to research Froude's literature in a manner which I believe would have been impossible elsewhere.

[8] A sketch of Mahony can be found in *Richard John Mahony of Dromore, a Nineteenth Century Gentleman* at www.lulu.com.

[9] Neither work would have been possible without Froude's close acquaintance with the country. In this respect Froude was qualified to observe and record events in Ireland–all too often to his detriment–at a level which his peers in England could not.

[10] An approach that would find no room in today's politically correct environment. For example he addressed the students of St Andrews in 1869 thus: There are but three ways to earn a living, by working, by begging or by stealing. Those who do not work, disguise it in whatever pretty language we please, are doing one of the two. (*Short Studies on Great Subjects* Vol II.)

dramatic style.[11] Those two pages (extracted, it later transpired, from *A Fortnight in Kerry*) transported me to a remote and picturesque Kerry hillside laden with grouse and pheasant; this scene was contrasted with a brutal, unsolved double murder.

As I have reflected upon Froude's style of writing, so I have wondered about the author. On reading those pages, I had perceived an attractive and energetic man climbing that Kerry hillside, and subsequent research proved my perception right. But Froude's attraction went beyond the physical. He believed in truth, 'truth only smells sweet for ever', and that maxim caused him to write with a gusto and fearlessness at odds with a naturally shy nature.[12] He had contemplated the outcome of such writing in Killarney in 1848, 'how gladly I would bear all the coldness, the abuse, the insults, the poverty, all the ill things which the world ever pays as the wages of authors who do their duty'.[13]

Still little is known about the personality behind the public figure. His literary contributions were both the focus and dissipation of interest. My hope is that close study of the selected texts in context with the little that is known of Froude's private life will allow an element of his personality to emerge, and so create a fuller picture of the writer heckled by his own century, and dismissed in the next. Better acquaintance with Froude may invite a warmer response to his literature in the twenty-first century.

In 1956, Basil Willey wondered at why the nineteenth century's master of prose is, bafflingly as well as pitifully, all but forgotten. More than half a century later, the wonder remains.

Janet Murphy
Killarney
July 2010

[11] Froude believed the drama of history was imperishable, 'attention floats loosely over generalities, only individual instances can seize it and hold it fast.' ('England's Forgotten Worthies', *Short Studies on Great Subjects Vol I*). In this respect, his most perfect English history was in the plays of Shakespeare.
[12] *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, Vol II, 'Calvinism'.
[13] *The Nemesis of Faith,* Kessinger Publishing edition, www.kessinger.net p. 23.

Chapter One
A Victorian Refugee

Chapter One: A Victorian Refugee

i: Froude's First Visit to Ireland and his Religious Crisis

> At the beginning of the century a
> Catholic was as rare as a frost in July
> *Short Studies III*

Victorian historian James Anthony Froude's first visits to Ireland spanned the decade of Irish watershed history, the Great Famine. He first visited in 1841, again in 1844, 1845 and 1848. During these early visits he developed an attachment to the country that endured throughout his life, as evidenced in his literature, and one that saw him take up summer residence there in the 1860s.

His earliest publications, *Shadows of the Clouds* (1847*)* and *The Nemesis of Faith* (1849) were composed during this early decade, and both texts contain autobiographical material about Froude's life in England but also of his time in Ireland during its bleakest decade. Scrutiny of the latter text shows that for Froude at least, the Famine year of 1848 was not all of misery.

It was in the summer of 1841 that Froude had first set foot on Irish soil. 'Ireland', he wrote, 'was a new country on which our curiosity had been aroused. O'Connell was in the zenith of his power. Catholic Emancipation and the system of party government had given him a commanding position at Westminster'.[14] Froude felt that in accepting a temporary teaching post offered to him by Rev. Cleaver, a clergyman in Co. Wicklow, he would be able to see at first hand the 'new country'.[15]

The offer of work had come during his student life at Oxford. He had been biding his time for a vacancy for Fellowship (that is, paid work at the university). In the meantime, students were expected to fend for themselves by private tutoring. The job offer involved tutoring one of Rev. Cleaver's sons in the family household, a parsonage in Delgany, situated between the sea and the Wicklow mountains. His duties were light and the household open and relaxed. The religious atmosphere of the household was in stark contrast to that which he had known in England.

Religion was a poignant feature of 1840s England, and a contentious topic. The spectre of Catholic England had stirred from its three hundred-year-old grave; people were unsettled, and guarded–as Froude saw it: 'Conventual institutions are springing up as mushrooms after an autumn rain'; 'cathedrals rise, and churches, with schools and colleges and convents and monasteries'.[16]

Froude could make no sense of the rapidly rising, towering buildings. 'Why does Protestantism stand still while Rome is advancing?' he asked, 'what is the meaning of so strange a phenomenon?'.[17] His father an archdeacon, Froude had been unquestioningly content with his religious upbringing and its Protestant teaching: 'religion as taught in the

---

[14] Waldo Hilary Dunn, *James Anthony Froude, A Biography 1818-1856*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, p. 63.
[15] *ibid.*
[16] James Anthony Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects,* Vol III, London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898, 'Annals of an English Abbey', p. 8 and 'Revival of Romanism', p. 132.
[17] *ibid.*; the genesis of the 'strange phenomenon' Froude later identified as the liberal philosophy of the 1832 Reform Bill.

Church of England meant moral obedience to the will of God … but the essential thing was practice. People went to church on Sunday to learn to be good'.[18]

In Wicklow, Froude found the Bible spoken of without reserve and views expressed by intelligent men of the English church which shocked him, for there thinking and opinion were open. The form of religion practised by his host family was Evangelicalism, a branch of Protestant Christianity with emphasis on the authority of the gospels. At Oxford, the Evangelicals were ridiculed, and Froude had been taught that they were to be despised 'as fruit of the Reformation', a rebellious system without foundation.[19]

Froude was twenty-three. His life experience had not extended far beyond his educational environment; indeed, he was still recovering from the effects of a broken engagement, which he had taken badly. It was a jolt to discover the distinction between experience and the classroom. He later wrote of his educators, 'I felt that I had been taken in and I resented it ... history was all in favour of the views of my Evangelical friends…. and I concluded that Protestantism had more to say for itself than my Oxford teachers had allowed'.[20]

This awakening shook too the confidence which he had so earnestly held in one particular mentor at his Oxford university, John Henry Newman. Newman, latterly Cardinal Newman, founder of what is known today as University College Dublin, was in 1841 a 40-year-old Protestant churchman who sought to revive the Church of England by way of a return to practices of early Christianity. With Oxford associates and former tutors John Keble and Edward Bouverie Pusey, he had been writing *Tracts for the Times*, the first published in 1833, the last, Tract 90, appearing during the months of 1841 that Froude was in Ireland.

Froude's elder brother Richard Hurrell, classmate and friend of Newman, had died in 1836 of tuberculosis (a disease then prevalent that had taken Froude's mother and was to take four siblings, one of whom had died just months before Froude's 1841 visit). Froude identified Richard as, from the start, the foremost of this group which became known as Tractarians. From this connection Froude was able to see 'something from the start of the men of whom the world was talking'–not as an active member of what later became known as the Oxford Movement, but as 'little more than a curious and interested spectator'.[21]

In 1841, Froude was fascinated by Newman, and had attended his sermons since entering the university in June 1836. He described Newman as 'kind, gentle and utterly unaffected, with a most striking presence', his face 'remarkably like that of Julius Caesar'.[22] In later years Froude wrote a detailed biography of the Movement and those involved which provided a clear picture of the mesmeric effect Newman had on Oxford students

> no one who heard his sermons in those days can ever forget them ... he seemed to address each of us, as the eyes of a portrait appear to look at every person in a room…. a tone of infinite pity [ran] through them. [His] mind was world-wide. He was interested in everything…. he seemed always to

[18] James Anthony Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects,* Vol IV, London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1883, 'The Oxford Counter-Reformation', p. 239.
[19] *ibid.* p. 296.
[20] *ibid.* p. 300.
[21] *ibid.*.p. 257.
[22] James Anthony Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects,* Vol IV, London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1883, 'The Oxford Counter-Reformation', p. 273 and Dunn (1961) p. p. 47-8.

> be better informed on common topics of conversation than any one else who was present. He was never condescending ... he was lightness itself ... we came to regard him as an idolized master. The simplest word which dropped from him was an intellectual diamond….[23]

Froude also noted how literary critics of the day were puzzled by Newman's poetry, which he penned under the name Delta, for 'it was all that poetry was, and something far beyond'.[24]

These recollections, however, were written four decades after 1841. A passage in Froude's first publication, *Shadows of the Clouds*, published in 1847, gives a more contemporary idea of the intellectual bond that grew, and always remained, between them. It relates to the spiritual crisis the period was bringing to bear not only on Froude, but on society in general

> In my dark hour I went to Newman. I was with him some hours, laying bare the secrets of my soul to him, and he left me with a feeling for him I never had for man. He pressed my hand in his, and dropped tears upon it--yes, tears.... He told me my sins, and he wept for me.[25]

But in 1841 Froude had formed no clear idea of where he stood in the religious debate. The religious climate was described by Marshall Kelly as an 'immoral stew of decomposed holiness'.[26] Rupert Christiansen, biographer of Froude's friend and contemporary, Arthur H. Clough, has provided a concise picture of what caused this climate: 'In brief, three factions battled it out. Some took a fiercely Evangelical position, preaching a Bible-bashing Protestant fundamentalism which asked no sophisticated questions of religion and put a straitjacket on life. Others, influenced by the research of German scholars into the historical facts behind the story of Jesus, took a more liberal line.... [and] the Tractarians, so-called after a series of tracts or essays that they periodically issued on points of doctrine. Their view was that the Church of England had lost its sense of spiritual direction', a view interpreted as a step towards Roman Catholicism.[27]

This period of uncertainty grew out of a narrow and inefficient educational system as offered by Oxford, a curriculum confined to theology, classics and a little mathematics or logic. Christiansen writes, 'By today's standards colleges were tiny. Few of them housed more than a dozen Fellows and forty undergraduates (only a minority of whom aspired to an honours degree). The principal medium of teaching was the lecture to classes of about 20.... Otherwise, apart from writing essays and sitting exams, students were very much left to themselves. Women formed no part of the university, and only those prepared to subscribe to the Church of England were admitted. Compared with German equivalents, the standard of scholarship was abysmally low'. Young men, he continued, 'sought to open its gates and horizons: the Church of England was the focus of rebellion'. To be no longer sure of your Christian ground in the 1840s was 'a very dizzying precipice to be peering over'.[28]

---

[23] *ibid.* p. p. 282-4.
[24] *ibid.* p. 278.
[25] Zeta (pseudonym James Anthony Froude), *Shadows of The Clouds*, London: John Ollivier, 1847, p. 157.
[26] Marshall Kelly, *Froude: A Study of his Life and Character*, London: Henry J. Drane, 1907, p.31.
[27] Rupert Christiansen, *The Voice of Victorian Sex Arthur H. Clough 1819-1861*, London: Short Books, 2001, p .p .23-39.
[28] *ibid.*

As matters stood in Ireland, Froude was finding just how dizzying this precipice was. With no clear standing in the intellectual argument, he was unable to separate his regard for Newman from Newman's opinions. In Wicklow, his religious indecision cost him his job.

Rev. William Cleaver, Froude's employer, had asked him to leave. Froude left it on record that he held Mr. Cleaver and his family in the highest possible regard, 'more beautiful human characters than those of my Irish Evangelical friends I had never seen, and I have never seen since'.[29] An autobiographical sketch penned towards the end of his life testifies to a respect and affection for this family that never dimmed.

It is clear that Froude was grateful for the opportunity provided by Rev. Cleaver to tutor. However, the distinguished and professional historian with a brilliant career under his belt who wrote of the event, decades later, 'it was decided, though I believe with mutual regret, that we should part,' also wrote that river-water is most pure nearest to the fountain. An account of the consequences of 'speaking out' in *The Nemesis of Faith* throws a contemporary light on how small communities functioned in the 1840s, and how voicing an opinion then, even in a supposedly open environment, could affect those who ventured to do so.

Tract 90, hot-off-the-press in 1841, was Newman's ultimate challenge to the Church of England. In it he questioned the legality of the Articles on which Protestant religion is founded. His Tract was being 'universally condemned as dishonest' and viewed as a concerted effort to return England to the Roman Church. As Froude later put it, 'Our fathers had risked their lives to get rid of Romanism. It was not to be allowed to steal into the midst of us again under false colours. So angry men said at the time'. [30]

In Ireland, where Protestants and Catholics stood as irreconcilable antagonists, Froude's view of Tract 90 would naturally have been called into question. His regard and open defence of Newman who, whatever his religious persuasions, Froude admired, was too novel a view to be accepted by the unwavering Rev. Cleaver. Cleaver believed that his son's education would be at risk from a man of so liberal a persuasion. An episode Froude described in *The Nemesis of Faith* drew on his experiences both in Ireland and during a short period he was to spend as a curate at Torquay in Devon five years later. Representing himself in the story as 'Mr. Sutherland', Froude expressed his disgust at the inquisitorial nature of religious opinion in the 1840s by means of a letter addressed to a fictional friend, 'Arthur'.

'I must tell my story', wrote Sutherland to Arthur, describing an invitation to dine with a family in the parish at which conversation turned to the subject of the Bible Society. 'I think there is a spiritual scent in us which feels mischief coming, as they say birds scent storms' he wrote, 'who could have guessed from the plain unthreatening surface of that quiet little assembly, what a cunning mine had been run below it–that I had been brought there to be dragged into an argumentary examination'. Detailing the revolting scene before which Sutherland found himself, and into which he allowed himself to be drawn, he regretted that he had been duped out of temper into voicing his opinion

> I dislike societies generally; I would join in none of them. For your society in particular, as you insist on my telling you, I think it is the very worst, with the establishment of which I have been

[29] James Anthony Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects,* Vol IV, London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1883, 'The Oxford Counter-Reformation', p. 302.
[30] *ibid.* p. p. 305-7.

> acquainted. Considering all the heresies, the enormous crimes, the wickednesses, the astounding follies which the Bible has been made to justify, and which its indiscriminate reading has suggested; considering that it has been, indeed, the sword which our Lord said that he was sending; that not the Devil himself could have invented an implement more potent to fill the hated world with lies, and blood, and fury; I think, certainly, that to send hawkers over the world loaded with copies of this book, scattering it in all places among all persons–not teaching them to understand it; not standing, like Moses, between that heavenly light and them; but cramming it into their own hands as God's book, which He wrote, and they are to read, each for himself, and learn what they can for themselves–is the most culpable folly of which it is possible for man to be guilty.[31]

At this point it became clear to Froude the invitation to dinner had been part of a preconcerted plan of interrogation; 'the enemy is among us', pronounced his antagonist, 'with what purpose are you come a wolf among these sheep?'. Froude concluded the account with a description of how Mr Sutherland was banished from the parish after the 'tongues had been busy'.[32]

Rev. Cleaver did not however, abandon Froude altogether. It was decided that Froude would make a three-week tour of Ireland and the reverend provided him with letters of introduction, as was then the way, to aid his travels. At the end of the tour, it was agreed, Froude would return to Dungany to escort Cleaver's son to England where he was about to enter Oxford. Julia Markus, Froude's most recent biographer, has suggested that this helped Froude to avoid the embarrassment of having to explain the circumstances to his father.[33] They were not on good terms; it was his father who had engineered the break of his engagement a few years earlier.

Froude embarked on his enforced tour. It took him from Cork to Kerry, Galway to Mayo, Offaly and back to Wicklow. Froude left a sketch of this tour in his autobiography, and one particular story in it supports the religious temper of Ireland in 1841.[34] Unresolved religious opinion had caused Froude to be dismissed from his job; perhaps it was well for Froude. For those Protestants whose religious conviction was determined, the stakes were far higher. Froude was in Co. Offaly, the last visit of his tour, at Leap Castle, property of Mr. Darby

> Leap Castle is an old Danish fortress near Parsontown. The castle and the large estate attached to it were the property of Mr. Darby, who, under the influence of strong religious conviction, had become voluntarily poor and a leading member of an enthusiastic Protestant sect. He had left Leap to be managed by his brother Horatio, who, though under religious convictions equally strong, had remained in the Church of England and resided in a dangerous part of the country, doing his duty as an effective magistrate and landlord.
>
> While admirable in these capacities, Mr Horatio Darby was rash enough to extend his notions of duty and to retain a sense of the purpose with which the Scotch and English settlers had been planted among the Irish. Being a man of education, he gathered about him weekly the clergy of the neighbourhood and read St. Paul's epistles with them. I was present on one of these occasions, and had rarely heard a better lecture. He was particularly anxious that his tenants and their families should become acquainted with the New Testament. They spoke only Irish. Mr. Darby obtained copies of the Irish Bible and an Irish Scripture Reader from Dublin, who could go from house to

[31] James Anthony Froude, *The Nemesis of Faith*, USA: Kessinger Publishing www.kessinger.net p. p. 30-35. There is extant a letter from Rev. Cleaver to Mr. Darby dated April 1827 in which he urged Darby to attend to a couple desirous to conform 'would it be too much to say–every day during the present week'. Copy with Janet Murphy courtesy Max Weremchuk.
[32] *Ibid.*
[33] Julia Markus, *J. Anthony Froude The last Undiscovered Great Victorian*, New York: Scribner, 2005, p. 29.
[34] Froude never published his autobiography, which covered only about half his life; composed during his late years it was discontinued due to ill health, and formed much of volume one of Dunn's biography.

house and instruct.

This man, who was described to me as fearless and devoted to his work, had been singularly successful, so successful as to call for the displeasure of the neighbouring priests. He received more than one notice that his life was in danger. When he paid no attention, Mr Darby heard that he had been denounced by name from the altar of an adjoining chapel. Knowing too well what this might mean, he hesitated to expose further a valuable life, and advised the Scripture Reader to return to Dublin. The Reader, however, refused to quit a post to which he conceived that he had been called, continued his visits, and about a week after was brought into the hall of the castle on a shutter dead. Mr Darby himself told me the story in the very hall where shortly before the bleeding body had been lying. He had been able to do nothing. No one would give evidence. The murderers remained unpunished.[35]

Froude's account of the Darbys, the former described here by him as 'an enthusiastic leader of a Protestant sect' throws light on the history of a religious movement that had begun in Dublin circa 1827 and had become known as Brethrenism; under Darby's leadership it had assumed the title of Exclusive Brethrenism, his followers known as Darbyites. Research published on Darby by Max Weremchuk has revealed a close association between Darby and Rev. Cleaver in a Protestant community whose interconnections he described as 'a family affair'.[36]

ii: In Pursuit of St. Patrick 1844/5

Doubtless the *Lives of the Saints* are
full of lies. Are there none in the *Iliad*?
Short Studies 1

On August 11 2008, it was reported in the press that bones were to be removed from the body of Victorian Cardinal John Henry Newman whom Pope Benedict XVI planned to sanctify, the bones to be venerated as holy relics and shared out among key churches in England and the Vatican.[37] Subsequent reports detailed the exhumation when the grave was found empty but for 'a handful of tassels from the cardinal's hat', though the absence of a body had not deterred the Vatican's plans for beatification. For this Newman must be declared 'blessed', for which two miracles are required to be credited to him. One is being investigated, that of 69-year-old Boston deacon Jack Sullivan, whose spine was cured after praying to the cardinal. A second miracle is yet to be researched and ascribed to Newman.[38]

That John Henry Newman is still creating headlines more than a century after his death would not have surprised Froude. The idea that he was to be made a saint, however, would have amused him. The subject of sanctification had become a matter of contention between the two men. Two years had elapsed since Froude's visit to Wicklow. Newman had retired from his benefice and resigned from preaching at St. Mary's Church, Oxford. Living in a village outside Oxford called Littlemore, he had invited Froude to take part in a projected series of biographies of the English and Irish saints. Froude had accepted and

[35] Dunn (1961) p. 70.

[36] John Nelson Darby: a biography by Max S. Weremchuk, Loizeaux Brothers, First American Edition, May 1993. www.mybrethren.org/bios/framjndw.htm 'Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted by Rev. William Reid, William Oliphant & Co, 1876', accessed 3 Jan 2009.

[37] *Irish Daily Mail,* 11 August 2008, p. 32; 4 September 2008, p. 20; 6 October 2008, p. 5; 4 November 2008, p. 5.

[38] The irony here is that Newman, if beatification takes place, will be remembered even before the fantastic embellishments that time will supply, not as Froude would have him, as the man responsible for the intellectual recovery of the Roman church, but as one who inherited one of the nonsense stories that Froude abhorred: St. John, patron saint of bad backs.

had begun research on a project whose object, he wrote in later life, 'was to get the supernatural believed in somehow; and the facts, true or false, were to be arranged in the form best calculated to work conviction'.[39]

In 1845, after two years study, 'the saints' life-writing had to be abandoned as hopeless'.[40]

In 1843 however, that conclusion had yet to be drawn and much work was ahead of Froude in tracing small acorns of reality 'till they developed into monarchs of the forest.'[41] Having concluded a Life of St. Neot, Froude was contemplating, at Newman's suggestion, a Life of one of the greatest of the Irish saints, St. Patrick. For this Froude travelled to the West of Ireland in 1844 and again in 1845, on this occasion with his friend George Butler. These periods spent in an Ireland destined for famine, one 'swarming with inhabitants…. near nine millions of them, and of these, two millions vagrants', left an indelible impression on Froude.[42]

Froude witnessed Ireland from both sides of the cultural divide; he lived among the people 'in their own pigsties of homes' and was entertained by the Protestant magnates, their 'stables full of horses, their woods of game, and their heads of humour and amusement'. Both parties he observed were living 'as if to-morrow would be as today; light-hearted, reckless, unconscious of a future'.[43]

Landlordism was at its zenith, and the culture contained in Froude's descriptions of musical entertainment by the 'old blind family piper [who] played the Irish airs of the West'; the funeral at which mourners, 'the women in their bright blue and crimson cloaks … in wailing groups' stretched a mile of the road, were facets of cultural relevance in this pocket of Ireland. Yeats and Synge would later incorporate the West of Ireland into their writings; Froude had visited upon the final hours of a pre-famine culture from which they would draw.

Froude pursued his research of St Patrick; his journey continued through Connemara to the sites about which he had been reading, but he found it 'impossible to separate the truth from the wilderness of nonsense'. It paled in the living reality of Ireland, a reality that affected him sufficiently to be able to recall it strikingly during an American lecture almost thirty years later, and again in an address delivered in 1876, more than thirty-one years after his journey [44]

> I was staying the year before the Irish famine at a large house in Connaught. We had a great gathering there of the gentlemen of the county; more than a hundred of us sat down to a luncheon on the lawn. My neighbour at the table was a Scotchman, who was over there examining the capabilities of the soil. 'There,' he said to me, 'you see the landed gentry of this county. In all the number there may be one, at the most two, who believe that the Almighty put them into this world for any purpose but to shoot grouse, race, gamble, drink, or break their necks in the hunting-field. They are not here at all for such purposes, and one day they will find it so.' The day of reckoning was nearer than he thought. Next year came the potato disease ... and the whole set of them were swept clean away.[45]

[39] Dunn (1961) p. 77.
[40] Dunn (1961) p. 93. Froude found the testimonies of cases of miracles 'simply worthless, and the multiplication of nothing remains nothing still', *Short Studies IV,* p. 322.
[41] Dunn (1961) p. 77.
[42] Dunn (1961) p. p. 86-90.
[43] *op. cit.*
[44] *Short Studies II,* 'Ireland Since the Union', p. 540.
[45] *Short Studies III,* 'On the Uses of a Landed Gentry', p. 408.

Before Froude returned to England, he contracted smallpox from a sick child he had nursed in a fisherman's cabin at Oughterard. Sickening at Ballyovey in the wilds of Mayo, thirty miles from help, he was nursed by the local populace; 'no words can describe the affectionate care which I experienced from everyone'. Delirious at times, Froude suffered a number of distressing dreams that he later attributed to his 'theological perturbations'. He wrote of how he called on 'airy floating figures' to reveal God: they did, but the revelation 'resembled a gigantic lobster'.[46]

Retrospective accounts, though valuable documents, are constructed when the emotion of the moment has passed away and the result can be a filtered and unclouded image of events. It is important to recognize that there were many clouds on Froude's horizon in 1845, clouds that were gathering fast. Two years of religious study for Newman had been countered with other reading, for he had discovered the works of Thomas Carlyle, whose publications had been generating interest since the early 1820s, '*French Revolution* fell in my way, and then his *Heroes and Hero Worship* and *Past and Present* ... it left me with a craving for wider knowledge than the Oxford curriculum afforded. *Goethe* had been Carlyle's teacher. Oxford knew nothing of *Goethe*, knew nothing of modern languages or modern literature outside England. Even of English literature it was in almost absolute ignorance ... I read and read'.[47]

The French Revolution, published in 1837, had established the emerging Carlyle's reputation as an historian in its handling of a period that was then close enough in time to be held still in popular memory.[48] It is difficult to equate the subject matter of this work, which covered the period of the last quarter of the eighteenth century, to one of a similar period in our own age (a biography of Ian Paisley's history in Northern Ireland might draw comparison in time-frame). *Heroes and Hero Worship* and *Past and Present*, published in 1841 and 1843 respectively, encouraged a view of the world through the history of those who had made it, together with a conscious look at the social conditions of England at the time. These works were in stark contrast to the 'wilderness of nonsense' that was being asked of him by Newman.

The logic and the nonsense were causing Froude anxiety. Back from Ireland, the saint project had been abandoned as hopeless, but the religious pressures remained. The effects of Newman's Tract 90 were still to the fore. Tract 90 had questioned the authority of the Church of England. Only later could Froude acknowledge that

> Newman had done his work. He had broken the back of the Articles. He had given the church of our fathers a shock from which it was not to recover in its old form. He had written his Tract that he might see whether the Church of England would tolerate Catholic doctrine. Had he waited a few years, till the seed which he had sown had grown, he would have seen the Church unprotestantizing itself more ardently than his most sanguine hope could have anticipated.[49]

---

[46] Dunn (1961) p. 89.
[47] Dunn (1961) p. p. 72-74.
[48] Carlyle's work cast a different light on accepted ideologies and thus steered the ongoing debate. It was not until the 1840s that the life altering significance of the Industrial Revolution began to be felt by politicians and intellectuals. Carlyle railed against the materialism of a new England. Those who lived before the railways belonged to another world, the sense of division of the pre-and post-industrialization world 'can never have been so strong as for those authors who grew up into the railway age'. Dickens looked at this dual world in *Dombey and Son*, 'in no other novel is the double image so powerful', Tillotson (1954) p. p. 107-8. As Dickens looked on the double image of the physical world, Froude's *Nemesis* addressed the spiritual.
[49] *Short Studies IV,* 'The Oxford Counter-Reformation', p. 308.

But in 1845 John Henry Newman did not wait. He turned his back on the Church of England and converted to Catholicism at the very time that Froude was required to make a tough religious decision of his own. Had Froude not been held back by his Irish experience, he later wrote, his own future may too have been very different.[50]

As it was, Froude became, in 1845, the Rev. Froude of the Church of England, as was legally required of him by his University, but taking Deacon's Orders with notions of its meaning still unfixed led to more torment. 'I was willing to listen to what was said on both sides,' he later wrote, 'to my sorrow I did'.[51]

The opposing forces of thought, however, began to find expression in the form of literature. *Shadows of the Clouds*, composed in 1846 and published under the pseudonym Zeta in early 1847, and *The Nemesis of Faith* in January 1849, have been accepted by Froude's three biographers as autobiographical accounts of this period. Froude's first biographer, Herbert Paul, acknowledging Froude's *Shadows* as 'a valuable piece of autobiography', wondered how Froude could publish 'whole narrative, changing only the names, and then feel genuine surprise that the other person concerned should be pained'.[52]

Waldo Hilary Dunn, who studied Froude for sixty years, stated that 'the narrative may be accepted as an authentic account of that part of Froude's life. A collation of it with his autobiography reveals its accuracy'.[53] Julia Markus is Froude's most recent biographer, and in 2005 found no grounds to disagree with her predecessors. Of *Shadows* she wrote: 'From a biographical point of view, the book is extraordinarily illuminating in that the upbringing of Ned Fowler (Froude's fictional name) differs from Anthony's lived life only in the characters' names'.[54]

Shadows of the Clouds is the heading under which is contained two stories, *The Spirit's Trials* and *The Lieutenant's Daughter*. *The Lieutenant's Daughter* describes Froude's dream experiences during his illness in Co Mayo. The tale opens with a philosophical look at the concept of time, to 'account for the incident I am going to tell'. The incident (dreams that accompanied his contraction of smallpox) occurred after he had been 'twice bled in the day, and [his] body was weak and exhausted'.[55]

Calling on God to show himself–and he came–begging for a clearer vision of 'him', Froude found that 'the more I had the light multiplied, the feebler became the shadow' until it melted away. But 'great dead heroes came up out of their graves for me to look at'. Froude also revealed how grief compounded his religious concerns when he wrote that not only dead heroes came up, but 'my own family, my father, mother, brothers, sisters'.[56]

The Lieutenant's Daughter is one of these countless visions. In its tale of a woman's act of suicide in a graveyard and of the circumstances that brought her to that act, it was a symbolic way of showing the extremes to which grief and psychological strain can lead. Set in the scene of Froude's own Devonshire countryside, it is perhaps of symbolic significance that the tale resolved in Ireland, where Froude

[50] Dunn (1961) p. 72. Froude later explained why he did not follow Newman: 'I believed that it was a siren's song, and that the shore from which it came had been strewn for centuries with the bones of the lost mariners', *Short Studies IV,* p. 339.
[51] Dunn (1961) p. 75.
[52] Herbert Paul, *The Life of Froude*, London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd, 1905, p. 37.
[53] Dunn (1961) p. 105.
[54] Markus (2005) p. 37.
[55] *Shadows*, p. p. 196-8.
[56] *Shadows*, p. p. 200-202.

> staggered to the open light of day, the cool breeze played upon my face, and woke me to life and reason. I had crawled to the open window of my bedroom, and my eyes were on the wide sheet of the Atlantic, and the peaks of Achill were purpling in the rising sun.[57]

The kindness Froude received from the Irish people during his illness in Co. Mayo may have given rise to the following revelatory paragraph

> To a heart which has for a long time been thrown in upon itself, and been forced by the hardness or unkindliness of the element into which it has been cast to live and feel for itself only, to a mind which since it has learnt to think has never known a friend, the first word of sympathy from without, is like the kiss which awoke the enchanted sleeper.[58]

Through the voice of his character in the first and longer tale, *The Spirit's Trials*, Froude focused on his own life, his intent clear at the outset, that he would write a thousand such tales if 'one could save a single soul'.[59] Working through his broken engagement of 1839, 'I cannot see why she did not wait, and hope and hope', it moved on a number of occasions to the issues of suicide and grief, grief for lost siblings to 'that feeder on youth and beauty, consumption' as 'one by one I saw them lowered down into the grave'. 'My pen runs off with me,' he wrote, as the narrative fell from him rapidly as a purgation of his emotions.[60]

In what is an overwhelmingly dark narrative, Froude's classical education added some light: 'The post held the letter, the fatal letter. It flew fire-winged, truer than rifle-ball to its mark ... fool, fool, can you not see the abyss into which you are plunging?' and, as he began to weave in his mixed feelings for Newman towards the end of his *Trials*, his perplexity became apparent: 'I must be allowed to learn of Newman, as I love, and honour, and learn of Carlyle'.[61] Logic was finding more ground than faith

> Fancy the French Revolution and modern Germany, the lawfully begotten children on the bodies of Martin Luther and the Alva persecutions. Fancy Sir Robert Peel round the neck of England, as tight as the old man of the sea round Synbad, within ten years of the Reform Bill ... I suppose my mind is set to its way of looking at things as others are set to Catholicising, and others to Protesting .... But for these lives I certainly do wonder Newman should have asked me to help him with them. Newman, with his profound knowledge of human nature, and who had so lately given me a proof how well he knew me....Perhaps he fancied it was an employment which would do me good, but he must have known that in my state of mind ... it was a most dangerous piece of proceeding to start with, to assume and to pretend so much of it. You will say this holds equally of all our young clergymen, or at least of far the greater part of them. I know it does, and few things sicken me more than to hear fellows spiritualizing away in the pulpit, and prating of heaven and hell and every holy mystery, whose single preparation has been a course of port wine and fornication….[62]

Froude's bewilderment at Newman's project invitation was mirrored by a contemporary at Oxford, Thomas Mozley: 'Then comes the question no man can answer. Why did Newman pick out from all the extraordinary lives of saints, the most extraordinary, and the most surpassing belief, for Anthony to shatter what was left of his

---

[57] *Shadows,* p. 287.
[58] *Shadows*, p. 263.
[59] *Shadows*, p. 500.
[60] Dunn (1961) p. 104.
[61] *Shadows*, p. 159.
[62] *Shadows*, p. p. 183-5.

convictions upon?'.[63]

The answer may be that Newman's mind during the early 1840s was equally perplexed. In 1848, he too published a novel, *Loss and Gain or The Story of a Convert*. In the same style of characterization as found in Froude's novel, it recounted his life at Oxford and the dawning recognition of a life incomplete. Concluding at the point of conversion, it spoke of the joy and peace gained from the decision; it can be read as a forerunner to the *Apologia*.

In *Shadows of the Clouds*, however, Froude had not reached the precipice of peace on which Newman then stood. In fact, Froude had reached his lowest ebb. Writing out his sorrows was helping him to come to terms with them, but he was still one book away from resolution. Distraught, gorged to the full with church history, Froude looked to where he had in recent years found kindness and a sense of peace. He wrote to his friend William Long in July 1848, 'I ran away from England'.[64]

Froude had returned once again to Ireland.

iii: Killarney: Crisis and Resolution

His life is an open book
Dunn

The autobiographical content of *Shadows* was such that Froude's father was said to have bought up as many copies as he could obtain to destroy them.[65] Though Froude wrote to a friend of his regret in writing it, particularly as it had caused the almost complete alienation of his father and other family members, the consequences did not prevent him from publishing again.

It was known in October 1847 that Froude was working on another novel. In January 1848 he had written to his friend Long that his manuscript was progressing. Following his arrival in Ireland in July 1848, this much was certain: 'Today I began seriously,' he wrote to Long, 'and wrote a few pages, which will do when I once catch the swing'.[66] Froude was writing from Killarney, Co. Kerry. Why he had chosen to flee to that particular county is not known, though it is likely to have impressed upon him sufficiently during his tour of 1841 to draw him back. He said at that time: 'At Killarney I found a great new hotel just opened on the bank of the lake and swarming with English tourists in search of the picturesque. I made the round of scenery with them, but my time was limited and I had other things to see'.[67]

Much had changed during those short intervening years; no longer were there swarms of English tourists in the town, but swarms of 'unfed hangers-on upon visitors' who gave Froude no peace since he was the 'only one' of the kind from England.[68] The Famine had separated his earlier visits, and as with his research project in the West of Ireland three years earlier, the social condition of Ireland distracted him from his immediate concerns. Of the Famine he wrote

[63] Dunn (1961) p. 82.
[64] Dunn (1961) p. 124.
[65] Dunn (1961) p. 105.
[66] Dunn (1961) p. 125.
[67] Dunn (1961) p. 69.
[68] Dunn (1961) p. 124.

> I hear horrid stories *in detail* about the famine. They are getting historical now, and the people can look back at them and tell them quietly. It is very lucky for us that we are let to get off for the most part with generalities, and the knowledge of details is left to those who suffer them. I think if it was not so we should all go mad or shoot ourselves.[69]

Committing first impressions of what was felt and discussed among the people in the year 1848 to print, to his friend Arthur Clough, he wrote: 'They hate Arnold's Lord Lansdowne. He has a large slice of Kerry, and above a thousand people were starved upon it. The crows are very fat and very plenty'.[70]

The Lansdowne estate in south Kerry, subject of a recently published study by Dr. Gerard Lyne, traces its history back to the time of William Petty and the English settlements of the sixteenth century. Though Froude did not know it then, the Lansdowne Estate was to feature later in his own life. The 'Arnold' Froude refers to is Matthew Arnold, a younger contemporary at Oxford, who would find fame as a poet. Matthew Arnold's mother had managed to secure her son a job as Lord Lansdowne's private secretary at Lansdowne House in London.[71] He had started work for Lord Lansdowne (Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, the third Marquess) in the spring of 1847. The Famine during this year was at its peak, and of it Lansdowne said he expected '1,000,000 of persons would die before it was over'.

It was common knowledge that Irish estate-owners wanted the government to reduce its famine-relief scheme and let the charitable societies feed the hungry. As an Irish estate-owner, Lansdowne adhered to such principles and believed in the efficacy of charity: 'Irish policy was trimmed to accommodate the views of Lansdowne (and Palmerston) in the cabinet'. Relief was sharply curtailed and a million citizens perished from hunger and related causes during the first twenty-four months of the Whig admin up to July 1848'.[72]

Matthew Arnold was alarmed by an employer who predicted new famine horrors while recommending little to avert them and in 1847, put his frustrations in a poem, *Horatian Echo*

> Mourn will we not your closing hour,
> Ye imbeciles in present power,
> Doomed, pompous, and absurd!
> And let us bear, that they debate
> Of all the engine-work of state,
> Of commerce, laws, and policy,
> The secrets of the world's machine,
> And what the rights of man may mean,
> With readier tongue than we.
> Only, that with no finer art
> They cloak the troubles of the heart
> With pleasant smile, let us take care.[73]

---

[69] Dunn (1961) p. 123. Some years later Froude wrote, 'we speak of famines and plagues … but the Irish famine, and the Irish plague of 1847, the last page of such horrors which has yet been turned over, is the most horrible of all', *Fraser's Magazine*, 'the Dissolution of the Monasteries', 1857 (see *Short Studies Vol I*).
[70] Dunn (1961) p. 123.
[71] Ian Hamilton, *A gift Imprisoned: the Poetic Life of Matthew Arnold*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1998, p. 83.
[72] Park Honan, *Matthew Arnold, A Life*, London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd, 1981, p. 116.
[73] Ibid.; Arnold's poetic alarm did not come to the notice of his employer and he continued in this job until 1851.

The fate of Lansdowne, and of the landed class he represented in Ireland, was sealed by the Famine. Froude wrote of the moment to Long, 'You cannot think how the landlords are hated–all of them almost without exception. Their names are never mentioned but with a muttered curse, and I cannot but think that in a way they deserve it'.[74] And to his friend Clough, 'There is the most genuine hatred of the Irish landlords everywhere through the country that I can remember to have heard expressed of person or thing'.[75]

In July 1848, however, Froude was seeking a landlord of his own. On arrival in the town, he had been staying in what he described as an 'unpleasant hotel', one of only three that then existed.[76] The town of Killarney has been an attractive destination for tourists for more than two centuries but only after the opening of its railway line in 1853 did its hotel development get underway.[77]

In the absence of finding suitable accommodation, Froude was on the verge of returning to England when a little fortune came his way, and he managed to persuade an old lady to take him into her family, 'a sort of lodge of Lord Kenmare's'.[78]

Froude had indeed struck lucky, for Lord Kenmare's 'sort of lodge' was the noble property of a large and influential Catholic landowner in the town. Killarney's history is dominated by this family (the Brownes) and that of a Protestant family named Herbert. Froude appeared to be very excited about his move. He wrote to Clough: : 'I am all day in the wood or on the lake ... next week I move across the lake to a sort of lodge of Lord Kenmare's.... It is a wild place enough with porridge and potatoes to eat, varied with what fish I may provide for myself and arbutus berries if it comes to starving.'[79]

Almost one week later, he wrote to Long: 'I am living here in the most beautiful place in the world, *en communiste*, with an Irish peasant family, consisting of man, wife, maid, four children, four cows, calves, etc, a dog, fowls, two cats, two dogs and a pony. We make a pattern happy family'. Of his location, he informed Long: 'It is supposed this to be altogether the loveliest spot about Killarney ... I have mountains, waterfalls, lakes, and shall have a boat, islands, woods, wild deer, and wood pigeons, and no one to bother me ... I have flung myself utterly upon myself to listen to my own music'.[80]

'I am flung utterly upon myself', echoed Froude, from the pages of *The Nemesis of Faith*, when it was published six months later in January 1849.[81] Evidently Froude, reasonably settled 'under a noble roof', had begun to put pen to paper from his room which contained a 'deal table and a few deal chairs' and his scarf which made a table cover. 'Tomorrow the mistress goes to Killarney and will bring me out a knife and fork, and then all that I shall want will be a pane of glass in my bedroom window, which at present is the night-thoroughfare of the cats.... else I am now as happy as I can be'.[82]

Nothing more is known of Froude's period in Killarney, but during the summer months spent there in 1848 Froude made a fundamental decision on his future as a cleric, that he would not take Priest's Orders, but would begin a new life.[83]

---

[74] Dunn (1961) p. 125.
[75] Dunn (1961) p. 123.
[76] The Halls recorded a fourth hotel in progress in 1850; *A Week at Killarney*, London: Virtue & Co, 1850, p. 113.
[77] A survey of early nineteenth century travelogues bears out the same few hotels and hoteliers, the most thorough accounts being those of Mr. and Mrs. Hall.
[78] Dunn (1961) p. 122.
[79] *ibid.*
[80] Dunn (1961) p. p. 124-5.
[81] *Nemesis*, p. 19.
[82] Dunn (1961) p. 125.
[83] Dunn (1961) p. 126.

'His life is an open book', wrote Dunn of Froude in the opening of his second volume of biography, and by turning to the open book, it is possible to add more detail to this period in Killarney and the circumstances that aided his decision-making.[84] By drawing on the text and his location, it becomes clear how cleverly Froude wove the two together.

'The noble lord has been away from his domain for some years,' Froude informed Clough that July, an absence that may be accounted for by the Famine.[85] Killarney was not a developed town in the 1840s and available maps of the period point to only one possibility of accommodation by the lake, at the townland of Glena, which bounds the upper and lower lakes of Killarney. Maps indicate two properties on the lake, one described as Lady Kenmare's Cottage and the other as Glena Cottage or Visitor's Cottage. As Froude informed Long, 'this place, which is a sort of forest lodge of Lord Kenmare's, rough and homely enough; but in a lovely place, and with two little unfurnished or half-furnished rooms where winter shooters stop now and then for a night'. 'I am going to have her ladyship's own boudoir to scribble in'.[86]

Froude was a lone visitor in 1848 as the country still struggled with the effects of the Famine. When he informed Long that he was the only English visitor in those parts, it is certain that Froude's presence would have been news in the locality. From his lakeshore enclave, he began work on what was to be published later as *The Nemesis of Faith.*

A lengthy review of the book by John Malcolm Ludlow in *Fraser's Magazine* of May 1849 described the book as 'careless' in its construction.[87] Of this there is no doubt; it reads as a hotchpotch of different items written at different times that Froude attempted to shape into a whole. The central item of text is entitled *Confessions of a Sceptic*, undoubtedly the text on which Froude was known to be working in 1847, around which he added a number of fragments and letters to build his book. In a series of ten letters from 'Mr. Sutherland' to 'Arthur' (the format he had used in *Shadows*), the first of which described his struggle to determine a career, Froude gave vent to the detail of the many issues that were and had been plaguing his thoughts for three long years.

Initially, his letters weighed up a life in the direction it was leading, into the church as a priest, reason once again in conflict with religious teaching: 'What am I to tell these poor millions of sufferers', he asked Arthur, 'who struggle on their wretched lives of want and misery, starved into sin, maddened into passion by the fiends of hunger and privation, in ignorance because they were never taught, and with but enough of knowledge to feel the deep injustice under which they are pining, am I to tell them, I say, that there is no hope for them here, and less than none hereafter?' No, he told Arthur, I can never teach this, 'I must have no hell terrors, none of these fear doctrines'.[88]

Addressing the history of the Bible, Froude sought an evidence of God to found his rational thought

> The Church proves the Bible, and the Bible proves the church–cloudy pillars rotating upon air–round and round the theory goes whirling like the summer wind-guests. It has been the sacred book

[84] Dunn (1963) p. xiii.
[85] A detailed account of the Kenmares' lengthy history in Killarney is yet to be written; indeed, the bulk of the Estate's documentation is held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.
[86] Dunn (1961) p. 122. Lady Kenmare entrusted the care of this cottage, a large fourteen-roomed lakeshore property which Queen Victoria visited in 1861, to Mrs. MacDowell and her family, the family that accommodated Froude during his initial weeks; see Mr. and Mrs. Hall, *Ireland its Scenery, Character &c*; London: How and Parsons, 1841, p. p. 213-214.
[87] Ludlow 1821-1911; lawyer, leader of Christian socialist movement of 1848-1854.
[88] *Nemesis*, p. 10.

> by which for so many centuries, so many human souls have lived, and prayed, and died. So have the Vedas, so has the Koran, so has the Zenda Vesta..... The evidence of religion–ah, I know where the true evidence lies, by the pleadings of my own heart against me….[89]

In letter four to Arthur, a sense of place began to emerge in Froude's writing.[90] As he became absorbed in the Killarney environment, so it began to reflect in his language. His state of mind is painfully apparent

> My feelings have begun to flow, he informed Arthur, and it is unsafe to check an opening wound ... I wander about by myself, and listen to what my heart is saying to me; and then in the evening I creep back and hide myself in my little room and write it all down for you. I wonder whether I am serious in wishing to die. I certainly am in wishing I had never been born; and at least it seems to me that if I was told I was to go with this summer's leaves, it would do more to make me happy for the weeks they have got to hang upon the trees, than any other news which could be brought to me.[91]

Muckross Abbey, a ruin that stands a few miles beyond the village of Cloghereen (known today as Muckross Village) in Killarney, was an apposite site for Froude's 'wound' to open. Its actuality triggered a discourse on religious history that began with paganism

> There is a village in the wood, two or three miles from here–there was an abbey there once. But there is nothing left of the abbey but its crumbling walls, and it serves only for a burying-ground and for sentimental picnic parties. I was there to-day; I sat there a long time, I do not know how long–I was not conscious of the place. I was listening to what it was saying to me.... It began to talk about paganism. 'Do you know what paganism means?' it said. Pagani, Pagans, the old country villagers. In all history there is no more touching word than that one of Pagan.[92]

Looking at succeeding eras through history, Froude found that historicizing faith and creed led him to examine the concept of change

> Change is strong, but habit is strong too; and you cannot change the old for new, like a garment. Far out in the country, in the woods, in the villages, for a few more centuries, the deposed gods still found a refuge in the simple minds of simple men, who were contented to walk in the ways of their fathers–to believe where they had believed, to pray where they had prayed. What was it to these, the pomp of the gorgeous worship the hierarchy of saints, the proud cathedral, and the thoughts which shook mankind? Did not the sky bend over them as of old in its calm beauty, the sun roll on the same old path, and give them light and warmth and happy sunny hearts? The star-gods still watched them as they slept–why should they turn away? Why seek for newer guardians?[93]

Confronting his thoughts, articulating them in word, Froude was beginning to find answers to the many questions that raged in his mind. In this sweeping, poetically-styled passage, composed at Muckross Abbey, he skillfully exhibited his understanding of history

---

[89] *Nemesis*, p. 14.
[90] In her study of novels of the eighteen-forties, Kathleen Tillotson discussed 'genius of place', a blend of geographical range, localization and regionalism incorporated into text without its ever being stated. She held up as example Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, 'though everyone thinks of *Jane Eyre* as a Yorkshire novel, no district is specified and the name Yorkshire never appears'; likewise, she claimed, the Oxford meadows preside in Newman's *Loss and Gain* as the beauty of the landscape does in the Scottish novels of Scott; see Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*, London: Oxford University Press, 1954, p. p. 90-91.
[91] *Nemesis*, p. 16.
[92] *ibid.*
[93] *Nemesis*, p. 17.

> And now look at me, the ruin said; centuries have rolled away, the young conqueror is decrepit now; dying, as the old faith died, in the scenes where that faith first died; and lingering where it lingered. The same sad sweet scene is acting over once again. I was the college of the priests, and they are gone, and I am but a dead ruin where the dead bury their dead. The village church is outliving me for a few more generations; there still ring, Sunday after Sunday, its old reverend bells, and there come still the simple peasants in their simple dresses–pastor and flock still with the old belief; there beneath its walls and ruins they still gather down into the dust, fathers and children sleeping there together, waiting for immortality; wives and husbands resting side by side in fond hope that they shall wake and link again the love-chain which death has broken; so simple, so reverend, so beautiful! Yet is not that, too, all passing away, away beyond recall? The old monks are dead. The hermit-saints and hallowed relics are dust and ashes now. The fairies dance no more around the charmed forest ring. They are gone, gone *even here*[94]. The creed still seems to stand; but the creed is dead in the thoughts of mankind. Its roots are cut away, down where alone it can gather strength for life, and other forms are rising there; and once again, and more and more, as day passes after day, the aged faith of aged centuries will be exiled as the old was to the simple inhabitants of these simple places. Once, once for all, if you would save your heart from breaking, learn this lesson–once for all you must cease, in this world, to believe in the eternity of any creed or form at all. Whatever grows in time is a child of time, and is born and lives, and dies at its appointed day like ourselves. To be born in pain and nursed in hardship, a bounding imaginative youth, a strong vigorous manhood, a decline which refuses to believe it is a decline, and still asserts its strength to be what it was, a decrepit old age, a hasty impatient heir, and a death-bed made beautiful by the abiding love of some few true-hearted friends; such is the round of fate through nature, through the seasons, through the life of each of us, through the life of families, of states, of forms of government, of creeds. It was so, it is so, it ever shall be so. Life is change, to cease to change is to cease to live; yet if you may shed a tear beside the death-bed of an old friend, let not your heart be silent on the dissolving of a faith.

Froude was in the process of making sense of change as it affected all things and reaching an understanding that religion was but a part of this; he was beginning to recognize the change he was witnessing in his own church, the 'church of his fathers'. Committing his pent-up emotions to text, alone in Killarney, was an experience he later confided to his friend Charles Kingsley as harrowing, 'I cut a hole in my heart and wrote with the blood'.[95] In his final plaintive cry to the necessarily unresponsive Arthur, in his solitary search for guidance, that hole had become apparent

> This is what the ruin said to me, Arthur. Arthur, did the ruin speak true?[96]

Letter five is short; Froude wondered what was wrong with him, for his siblings were all progressing in life. He examined himself; he was not idle: 'I never have a holiday ... I don't like hunting and shooting ... and for the party-going, one had better have a light heart to like parties'. His enjoyment of literature had lost its appeal: 'books nauseate me; I seem to have learnt all I can from them ... of all these modern writers there is not one who will come boldly up and meet the question which lies the nearest ... Carlyle! Carlyle only raises questions he cannot answer, and seems best contented if he can make the rest of us as discontented as himself.' Modern literature, he concluded, was no more than short-lived 'flashy cleverness'.[97]

---

[94] My italics.
[95] Dunn (1961) p. 131.
[96] *Nemesis*, p. p. 16-18.
[97] *Nemesis*, p. 19.

Markham's next two letters imagined a clerical life, one that was moving ever closer to Froude at Oxford, and further away from him in Killarney

> The men that write books, Carlyle says, are now the world's priests, the spiritual directors of mankind.... The minds of all of us, from highest lords to enlightened operatives, are formed in reading-rooms, in lecture-rooms, at the bar of public-houses, by all the shrewdest, and often most worthless, novel writers, or paper editors. Yet even this is better than nothing–better than that people should be left to their pulpit teachers, such as they are.[98]

Buried in the text however, was the seed of Froude's true vocation in its earliest stage of development

> Oh! how I wish I could write. I try sometimes; for I seem to feel myself overflowing with thoughts, and I cry out to be relieved of them. But it is so stiff and miserable when I get anything done. What seemed so clear and liquid, comes out so thick, stupid, and frostbitten, that I myself, who put the idea there, can hardly find it for shame, if I go look for it a few days after. Still, if there was a chance for me! To be an author–to make my thoughts the law of other minds!–to form a link, however humble, a real living link, in the electric chain which conducts the light of the ages! Oh! how my heart burns at the very hope. How gladly I would bear all the coldness, the abuse, the insults, the poverty, all the ill things which the world ever pays as the wages of authors who do their duty, if I could feel that I was indeed doing my duty so–being of any service so. I should have no difficulty about this living then, Arthur. I should know my work, and I would set about it with all my soul.[99]

At this point in the book, (letter eight) Froude made an interesting shift when he allowed his alter ego, Arthur, to begin to pick up the run of events. Taking a step from the purely subjective to the objective may have been Froude's method of checking his 'open wound' from without. It may also have been an attempt to distance himself from events of a sexual nature that remained to be told.

As Arthur took up the mantle, he informed us that Markham's letters began to arrive less frequently, though he knew his wound was far from healed. 'No censure shall be passed upon his conduct here and the casting of stones shall be left to those who are happy in a purer conscience than I can boast of', forewarned Arthur. [100]

Just two more letters followed, which concerned the parish dinner party, dealt with earlier, and its consequence–his resignation as priest. As Froude contemplated the outcome of this action, an action he had by now decided on, he wrote, 'All I really grieve for is my father. He, they, all of them, will never forgive me.'[101]

This is the last we hear directly from Markham. For the remainder of the book, Froude had transferred his thoughts to Arthur. It is left to Arthur to tell of Markham's alienation from his family: 'He was quite right in his anticipation of the way in which this last breakdown would be received ... and he lay outside the circle which was complete.'[102]

Froude's alienation from his family, which occurred on publication of his previous book, *Shadows*, continued for almost six years. In Killarney, his confidence was evidently

---

[98] *Nemesis*, p. 23.
[99] *ibid.*; Froude predicted well; he more than any author of the Victorian age was to bear insult, abuse and coldness throughout his writing career. 'Few men have been so variously judged', wrote his biographer Dunn, 'and for the most part wrongly judged'. (1961) p. 2.
[100] *Nemesis*, p. 28.
[101] *Nemesis*, p. 41.
[102] *Nemesis*, p. 44.

growing as he came to terms with this family split. Acknowledging his love for his family, he found wisdom in maintaining a distance from them for 'his mind was wider than theirs, little as they thought it was'.[103]

It was left to Arthur to relate that Markham had gone away for one year on a philosophical pilgrimage, and to Arthur to provide fragments of the thoughts Markham left behind. Eight fragments presented to the reader, ranging from one sentence to four pages, appear to be Froude's earlier attempts to cast his work into a philosophical format. He recognized his own limitations in such work, however, 'It could not last with Markham, this philosophizing. I knew it could not.... one day I had a letter from him of the old sort, of which his heart, not his head, had had the making'.[104]

This letter from the heart informed Arthur that Markham was again going away alone for the comfort of his soul and body. He was going to the Italian lakes. At this point Froude, in a clumsily written paragraph, explained the book's construction, how he intended it to be read, and what he was trying to achieve: 'What follows', he began, introducing the reader to a broken retrospective sketch written at the Italian lakes, 'wilt complete it from its beginning'.[105] The broken sketch, the reader is informed, 'is carried down to a point, when we can link it on with no too serious aposiopesis to those first letters'.[106]

And so the reader is presented with *Confessions of a Sceptic*. It was this particular section, 'numbering many pages so beautiful', that caused reviewer Ludlow to 'shrink from the dissecting' task.[107] *Confessions*, which moved through Froude's childhood, education, and on to Newman, was a continued response to the religious oppression he was experiencing. Of Newman, he wrote

> We began to follow him along the subtle reasonings with which he drew away from under us the supports upon which Protestant Christianity had been content to rest its weight; we allowed ourselves to see its contradictions, to recognize the logical strength of the arguments of Hume, to acknowledge that the old answers of Campbell, the evidences of Paley, were futile as the finger of a child on the spoke of an engine's driving-wheel; more, to examine the logic of unbelief with a kind of pleasure.... we were defrauded ... [by] gentle softening of the more consistent theology of the fathers, which flung infants, dying unbaptised, into the everlasting fire-lake.[108]

Froude's anger at the church and anger at himself for being misled is revealed in the force of his language, which on occasions rages, and challenges

> What, gentlemen, do you suppose that I am to make friends with Socrates and Phocion, and believe that human nature is full of the devil, and that only baptism can give chance for a holy life? That I will hand Plato into destruction; that Sophocles, and Phidias, and Pindar, and Germanicus, and Tacitus, and Aurelius, and Trajan were no better than poor unenlightened Pagans, and that, where you not only permit me to make acquaintance with them, but compel me to it as a condition, forsooth, under which I may become a minister of the Christian faith! You think, perhaps, that I shall draw healthy comparisons, and see what heathenism could not make of man. That I will place David above Leonidas, Eusebius above Tacitus, Jerome over Plato, Aquinas over Aristotle, and yourselves over ... ah Heaven! where shall I find an antitype of you? You shall let me see and love

[103] *ibid.*
[104] *Nemesis*, p. p. 52-3.
[105] *op. cit.*
[106] *op. cit.*
[107] *Fraser's Magazine,* May 1849, *Froude's Nemesis of Faith*, p. p. 545-560.
[108] *Nemesis*, p. 68.

> whole generations of men who would live long lives of self-denial and heroic daring, for the love of God, and virtue, and humanity; asking no reward but in the consciousness that they were doing God's will; and persevering still, even with the grave as the limit of their horizon, because they loved good and hated evil; and you point me out in contrast the noble army of martyrs–men who knew how to die in the strength of the faith, that death was the gate of eternal Paradise; and which is the noblest, and which is the hardest task, I wonder? No, the world is mystery enough, no doubt of that, and your Catholic Christianity may be true; but, if you think so, you, who are our soul's shepherds, at your peril be it, close up the literature of the world; like that deeply believing Caliph, close, close our eyes in seven-fold blindness against all history except the Bible history, and mark out the paths of Christian teaching in which you will have us walk within walls hard and thick as the adamant round Paradise.[109]

Writing out his anger, clawing apart his meditations, Froude had begun to combat the 'wretched thoughts' that clung about him like 'evil spirits'.[110] The career that loomed ahead as historian was beginning to surface, as he rose to defend his country's past against the influence of Catholicism

> England, unquestionably the strongest country in the world, we had taken as a Protestant country. The tendency of Catholicism we saw to be to depress the external character of man; that, the deeper he believed it, the more completely he became subdued. Protestantism, on the contrary, cultivated man outwards on every side, insisted on self-reliance, taught every one to stand alone, and depend himself on his own energies. Now, then, came the question of the Church of England–was it Catholic, was it Protestant?[111]

In answer to his question, Froude looked to history, to 'the dazzling burst of the Elizabethan era ... the springing out in bounding joyous freedom'.[112] Through the religious maze he was finding a historical footing on a path he was destined to follow. Evidently, he had had his fill of Newman's rhetoric. 'Newman talked much to us of the surrender of reason,' he stated, 'what did it mean? Reason could only be surrendered by an act of reason'.[113]

Ultimately, he gave forth his explanation of loss of faith in Newman, when one of Newman's sermons brought science into revelation. Just one sentence was enough for Froude's faith to be crushed: 'Scripture says the earth is stationary and the sun moves'.[114] Scripture and science until that moment had been as oil and water. If scripture could comment on science, could not science do the same?[115]

Froude concluded *Confessions* in a very grounded and humane manner: 'For me this world was neither so high nor so low as the church would have it', he wrote, and after deliberation, reached his own verdict, that he could love the world, and those in it, not as 'God's children' or 'the Devil's children', but simply as the 'children of men'.[116]

In the scientifically progressive era of the 1840s, science and logic had, for Froude, triumphed over faith. He had been veering towards this verdict in the long months and years before his departure for Killarney. A total absence of any sense of place renders

---

[109] *Nemesis*, p. p. 70-71.
[110] *Nemesis*, p. 19.
[111] *Nemesis*, p. 81.
[112] *Nemesis*, p. 82.
[113] *Nemesis*, p. 85.
[114] *ibid.*
[115] As Richard D. Altick puts it in *Victorian People and Ideas*, 'the Old Testament's credibility as cosmic history could not be reconciled with the account the geologists derived from the rocks'. London: J M Dent & Sons Ltd, 1974, p. 225.
[116] *Nemesis*, p. 88.

Confessions an earlier work, perhaps that which compelled him to run away when he did. It was the implications of a life outside the church, his drastically reduced career prospects, the fallout from family and other personal relationships, reaction of colleagues in his church and university that caused Froude to flee from England. And once again Ireland was providing opportunity for refuge and reflection.

Froude's *Nemesis of Faith* has been categorized as a religious novel, or a purpose-novel. His book was not the first of this genre, no more than was Newman's *Loss and Gain*. Almost six months before *Nemesis* was published in January 1849, an article appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* on the subject of religious stories.[117] Surveying a number of current titles, it offered a contemporary view of a type that was in full swing, and had perhaps peaked. The article incorporated books from the distance of about a decade, citing the names of Gresley and Paget as the fathers of this literature. The article identified its inception as a desire from the public to understand the meaning of 'Puseyism' without the labour of reading grave works of theology. As the author put it, 'the press was about to provide abundant instruction in the shape of novels and story-books illustrating the doctrines and the practices of the newly-risen 'ism'.'

'A very extensive literature of this kind has grown up among us,' began the unnamed author, before surveying its recent history; 'book after little book came forth … each intended to set forth some particular doctrine necessary for the times, or to maintain in general what the writer conceived to be the true position of the English church'.

Proceeding to review (and dismiss) a number of authors, he included a writer named Sewell whose hand in this genre (*Hawkstone*) was intended to implement his idea of English churchmanship as it ought to be. It is interesting to note that Sewell was the man responsible for snatching from a student and publicly burning a copy of *The Nemesis of Faith* in the college hall of Oxford in 1849.[118] As it was, Sewell's book received the reviewer's scorn in this article: 'distressingly overdone … if Mr. Sewell would but condescend to admit the idea that his readers and even the persons he opposes may … be creatures of the same species with himself'.

What the reviewer described as the 'gradual progress of opinions' was reflected in this literature. On the subject of conversion to Catholicism, he wrote that in the 'early days of Gresley and Paget it was treated as a ridiculous impossibility' but that 'when secessions began to be undeniable and frequent', so it was reflected in these publications.

A further aspect touched on by the review was the 'curiously feminine style of sentimental writing, apparently derived from some French model', before discussing Newman's *Loss and Gain*, published just months before the article. Placing Newman's tale in the same category, he described it as 'a book of jokes and gossip … and most probably personalities … a somewhat undignified vehicle for the opinions of one who has long been revered as a prophet'. Summing it up as 'mingled fanaticism and scepticism', the author opined it 'impossible to deal with such a reasoner as the author…. The argumentative skill for which Mr. Newman was once distinguished has actually become a disease…. There is nothing it will not defend'. Echoing Froude's comments on Newman's rhetoric, he added that Newman was 'pleased to conclude in favour of Romanism, but … could conclude equally well for infidelity. As an instrument for the discovery of truth, such reasoning is utterly useless'.

---

[117] *Fraser's Magazine*, 'Religious Stories', August 1848 p. p. 150-166.
[118] Markus (2005) p. 288.

In discussing an 1846 title, *Steepleton*, of method the reviewer was unequivocal: 'this book is a story of actual life … it is unquestionably intended to pass as a real autobiography'. A 'warning' was his description of another, written by a forsaker of the English church, its object 'to warn others against a similar course'. We have confined ourselves to a survey, ended the unknown contributor to *Fraser's*, 'without considering the merits of the class to which they belong'.

It was to be more than one hundred years before such consideration was given by Kathleen Tillotson, in her *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*, first published in 1954. It described Froude's first books as revolutionary and audacious. By that time, however, *Nemesis* had long gathered dust, its author in his grave for more than half a century.

But in 1848 Killarney, the author with 'a hole in his heart' was in the prime of his life. Just a few months into his thirtieth year, the handsome young Froude, unattached, with eyes like that of a 'wild but gentle animal', had not quite concluded his story; there remained one more tale to unfold in *Nemesis*.[119]

It was tucked away at the back of the book behind the cloak of *Confessions*, tucked in the same way you might slip a postcard between the pages of a favourite novel for safekeeping. It sat ill at ease with the rest of the text, its relationship to former pages not apparent. Its purpose was interpreted by reviewers and explained by Froude as the evils that awaited those who ventured off the straight road in life.

In 1849, Froude's readers would have identified with his religious outpourings but would not have been able to relate to the book's sense of place. Only his closest friends knew his actual whereabouts; read out of context, the book's content could not have provided readers with the same satisfaction that comes with fusion of the two.

Read today in the knowledge of Froude's location at the time of composition and his fragile state of mind, the story is more comprehensible.

'I have mountains, waterfalls, lakes,' wrote Froude to Long, 'in the most beautiful place in the world'.[120] The 'Italian lakes' of Froude's summer and autumn Irish refuge is a large lake which separates itself naturally into three. Dotted with islands, one (*Inisfallen*) houses the ruins of an abbey, where mass is still celebrated annually to this day.

We now return to Arthur to guide us through Markham's fate in Killarney. Arthur had presented *Confessions of a Sceptic*, while informing us that Markham had gone away for the comfort of his body and soul to the Italian lakes. Learning immediately that Markham had been beginning to find a happiness with his books and his pen, for 'he was making a kind of employment for himself', Arthur's tone is heavy[121]

> If he could only have been permitted some few months or years of further silent communing with himself, the reeling rocking body might have steadied into a more constant motion. But unhappily the trials of life will not wait for us. They come at their own time, not caring much to inquire how ready we may be to meet them.[122]

Markham was spending his time rambling, and passing the hours away in a small cottage close to the water. He had made himself a little skiff and 'the fair shores of the lovely lake unfolded all their treasures to him, and reproached him into peace'. Markham

[119] Markus (2005) p. 156.
[120] Dunn (1961) p. 125.
[121] *Nemesis*, p. 88.
[122] *ibid.*

was finding it 'no sign of ill health of mind, this power of self-surrender to the emotions which nature breathes upon us', as he submitted his senses to the enjoyment of music, for the flute 'obeyed him as its master. Many an evening the peasants wandering homewards along the shore had stood still to listen to sounds rising from the water which they little thought were caused by English breath'.[123]

One evening while 'drifting languidly down the little bay which lay before his window', relaxing and playing his flute, he found time had slipped away while he had been watching the 'gold and crimson fading from off the sky'. Springing out of his boat in its drift against the shore, he drew it up beyond the danger of the waves and noticed for the first time he had a listener. 'A lady was sitting on the grass bank immediately behind where he was standing. It was too dark to let him see her face; but, as she rose hastily, he perceived that she was young and her figure very elegant; and it struck him that there was something English about it'.[124] The following evening Markham received a card from the husband of the lady; she wanted to 'make the acquaintance of a countryman whom she had recognized by the old English airs'. The music had told her 'he was not a common Englishman'. They had inquired who he was, and were told ‘he was an Englishman, and out of health'.[125]

And so it transpired that they met. Describing the circumstances of the marriage of Markham's new acquaintances, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard, Arthur revealed that Mrs. Leonard (to whom Froude affixed the name of Helen) had married young, while 'her heart was still in its chrysalis, and she had never experienced another'. The new friends quickly became intimate, they found out a number of common acquaintances at home which in 'Italy' made them seem almost to have claims upon one another; such was this new-found friendship, ‘they had begged him to leave his lodgings and make their house his home.'[126]

This arrangement, Arthur told us, suited Mr. Leonard for he had to go away; 'a nice pleasant fellow who played the flute and talked poetry would far more than supply his absence; and, with the honest English confidence which is almost stupidity, he rejoiced for his lady's sake at the friend which had been found for her'.[127]

'Women's eyes are rapid in detecting a heart which is ill at ease with itself', remarked the knowing Arthur, 'with them to be unhappy is at once to be interesting'. And he warned: 'I think no more dangerous a person than Markham could have been thrown in the way of Mrs. Leonard. His conversation was so unlike any she had ever heard before; his manner was so gentle; his disinterestedness in sacrificing his home, his friends, his fortune, as it seemed to her, was so truly heroic'.[128]

'If the idea of the possibility of his loving a married woman, as husbands love, had been suggested to Markham, he would have driven it from him with horror'. But 'all the day long they were together: living as they did, they could not help it being so; only parting at night for a few short hours to dream over the happy past day, and to meet again

---

[123] *Nemesis*, p. 89. It is not known if Froude played a musical instrument, though Newman mentions fiddle playing and a music room at Oxford in *Loss and Gain* 'there was once a sprouting club ... before it was the music room' p. p. 18-22.
[124] *Nemesis*, p. 89.
[125] *Nemesis*, p. 91.
[126] *op. cit.*
[127] *op. cit.* Not necessarily an English ‘stupidity’; compare with Abelard’s *Historia Calamitatum* (c1136 and translated by Henry Adams Bellows), ‘He [Fulbert] entrusted her wholly to my guidance, begging me to give her instruction whensoever I might be free from the duties of my school, no matter whether by day or by night, and to punish her sternly if ever I should find her negligent of her tasks. In all this the man's simplicity was nothing short of astounding to me; I should not have been more smitten with wonder if he had entrusted a tender lamb to the care of a ravenous wolf’.
[128] *op. cit.*

the next morning, the happier for their brief separation'.[129]

It seemed to Markham that she had been 'sent down from heaven ... for the first time he found himself loved for himself ... singled out by a fascinating woman who made no secret of the pleasure his friendship gave her'.[130]

The friendship was complemented by Markham's delight in Mrs. Leonard's little girl. 'Through the heat of the day they stayed in the cool drawing-room ... she would draw ... Markham would read' but also they would talk. Markham had never known such a willing listener with such intense interest to whom he could 'pour out the long pent-up stream of his own thoughts and feelings'. And as the heat of the day passed, in 'the evenings they would saunter down to the boat-house, and go out upon the lake. They seldom took a servant to row them; it was more pleasant to be alone: they felt it was, though they had not told themselves why it was; ah! how near are two hearts together when they understand each other without expression'.[131]

Slumbering foolishly before the 'wide-eyed neighbour's scorn', wrote Arthur, both meeting in the mornings to plan for their day, were 'two metals melting fast in the warm love fire'. A month passed, and their friendship had grown, 'the altered tone of their voices showed it; the hesitating tenderness of their glances showed it; the hand lingering in the hand when it had far more than said its morning greeting or its evening parting' showed it.[132]

One afternoon, during a spell of ill-health resulting from a late excursion on the lake, Markham was resting on the sofa. Mrs. Leonard, who had been upstairs with her little daughter, came into the room and, finding him sleeping, sat noiselessly beside him. Arthur described what happened next

> Some few intense enjoyments are given us in life; among them all, perhaps, there is none with so deep a charm as to sit by the side of those we love, and watch them sleeping. Sleep is so innocent, so peaceful in its mystery and helplessness; and sitting there we can fancy ourselves the guardian angels holding off the thousand evils.... What thoughts, in that long half-hour, passed through the lady's mind, I cannot tell. Markham felt that she was close to him; he was sleeping so lightly, that it was rather he would not than he could not rouse himself; to wake and break so sweet a charm. She was bending over him; he felt her breath tremble down upon his lips; her long ringlets were playing on his cheek with their strange electric touches.... He opened his eyes, and they met hers full and clear. She did not turn away; no confusion shook into her features. She was but feeling how dear, how intensely dear he was to her; and there was no room for any other thought ... he caught the hand which lay beside him, and pressed it to his lips; and, as it lay upon them, he felt it was not only his own which held it there. Dear, dear Mrs. Leonard, was all he could say ... not long volumes of love poetry and wildest passion could bear more of tenderness to the ear which could catch their intonation than these few words. Their lips formed no sound, only they trembled convulsively. They wished, and knew not what they wished.[133]

When they met again, 'all was not as it had been'; both had had time to reflect. ‘For a few days, they left off saying “we”, but their eyes said it with deeper tenderness than ever their lips had done’. Markham, Arthur informed us, 'had long left off writing, even thinking; that was over when he had ceased to be alone'. Both contemplated the future,

---

[129] *Nemesis,* p. 92.
[130] *ibid.*
[131] *Nemesis,* p. 93.
[132] *ibid.*
[133] *Nemesis*, p. 94.

Mr. Leonard's return, both looked at ways of denying what was happening but to no avail; 'weeks of intoxicating delirium followed' as Markham 'loved her as he should not love'.[134] With this love came reflection

> It is strange, when something rises before us as a possibility which we have hitherto believed to be very dreadful, we fancy it is a great crisis.... Yet, when the thing, whether good or evil, is done, we find we were mistaken; we are seemingly much the same.[135]

Summer passed; 'how could anything so beautiful be less than good?' but the pendulum of time was falling, and autumn was upon them. 'It grew clear that some change must come, something must happen soon'. The 'something' came during an afternoon they spent together at 'a distant island up the lake' where, along with Mrs. Leonard's child and a picnic basket, they had determined to spend time 'making sketches of an old ruined chapel, which on certain holidays was still a place of pious pilgrimage.'[136]

Once again in each other's company, time had run off with them, and there was but an hour of daylight left when they re-embarked the skiff and turned towards home. 'A painful unexplained uneasiness was hanging over both of them.... like birds before a storm, conscious of the coming change'.[137] And so at last they began to discuss the future, neither of them conscious of their younger passenger who had stirred from her slumber.

In what Arthur related next, Ludlow's review of it stated: 'The English language contains nothing more beautiful than what follows',[138] alluding to Froude's description of the unnoticed child finding amusement in looking over the boat's side, of how the wind freshened, and the child became wet. This event led to a night of fever, and ultimately, the child's death: 'punishment for loving him, and for having allowed him to love her'.[139]

Arthur continued with what happened next. Markham had hurried to his room, 'double-locked' his door, and sunk into unconsciousness before waking, stealing down the stairs and out of the outer-door along 'the walk that led down to the lake'. 'It is not so easy a business this turning back out of the wrong way'. Wandering along the shore, he looked at 'the little bay where he had first met her' and 'the trees which hid the house where Helen was now lying'. Arthur asked, 'what should he do?'[140]

iv: The Reception of *Nemesis*

> It is not easy to tolerate lies which
> strut about in the name of religion
> *Short Studies II*

Froude returned to England in a wholly different frame of mind to that which had found him in Ireland in July 1848. Not till Froude's journey to Ireland did he 'hear that tremendous call to be up and doing', wrote Marshall Kelly, 'in the next six to twelve months something of sudden radiance' sparkled through his 'drenched misery'. [141] Froude

---

[134] *Nemesis,* p. p. 96-98.
[135] *ibid.*
[136] *Nemesis,* p. 100.
[137] *Nemesis,* p. 101.
[138] *Fraser's* (1849) p. 550.
[139] *Nemesis,* p. 101.
[140] *Nemesis,* p.p. 109-116.
[141] Kelly (1907) p. p. 61-2.

returned to Oxford with a mind more focused: he published his second book under his own name, resigned from Oxford University, and found himself out in the cold. No job prospects, no income, no security; but he was free.[142]

In the late eighteen-forties the novel was in the process of becoming the dominant form, a form of expression suited to the Industrial age–the vital offspring of modern wants and tendencies, replacing the epic, which was going out of fashion. And in line with the strengthening of this form came the beginnings of serious criticism of novels, as can be found in *Blackwood's*, and in *Fraser's magazine* (which Froude was to edit for fourteen years from 1861).

However, little progress was made in establishing critical standards, for 'they had very little tradition to guide them'. William Makepeace Thackeray, novelist and journalist, who also visited and wrote on Killarney, described novels as 'sweets ... all people with healthy literary appetites love them'. 'This pleasure', observed Tillotson, 'this indulgence in sweets ... which starts as an obstacle to serious criticism is perhaps itself the main critical principle [for] criticism begins when interest is subjected to cool examination'.[143]

The commonest form in which a reader in the 1840s met with a new novel was in three small volumes, rarely purchased, but accessed by the dominant circulating library. In many of the novels of this time the structural divisions were ordered like the acts of a play, designed to be received by the public with suspense akin to a cliff-hanging episode of such soap operas as *Eastenders*. Less common were novels in two volumes, and the one-volume form, as in the case of Froude's two books, was used for certain 'special types of novel' such as the religious novel.[144]

It was in line with the novel's development that attitudes and manners began to reveal themselves with the formation of rules and a developing censorship. Four years after the publication of *Nemesis* a general outcry was made against a novel on grounds of propriety, and more than a decade after that a magazine editor begged his contributor Thomas Hardy to treat seduction gingerly, remembering 'the country parson's daughters'.[145]

'At all periods,' wrote Tillotson, 'novelists have known some limitations, but in the eighteen-forties they were not severe ... there was no fatal discrepancy between what the writer wished to say and what his public was willing to let him say'. Had *Jane Eyre* been written twenty or thirty years later, she argued, it would have met with far more opposition.[146] So too, perhaps, might Froude's *Nemesis*. Certainly by 1850, reviewers were complaining of the 'problem' or 'purpose-novel', the growing practice of writing 'social dissertations in the disguise of novels'.[147]

Tillotson described Froude's work as 'revolutionary' in that he dealt with topics of the day rather than setting his work in a period twenty to sixty years before. And though the work of the novelist who handled current affairs may fade as the topics fade, 'a very little effort will disperse the dust that lies on *The Nemesis of Faith*' she believed, simply because 'some novelists are better shod than others'.[148]

The thinking aloud of religious novels, the 'making something of new raw material',

[142] He said so himself, 'writing the book was an extraordinary relief. I had thrown off the weight under which I had been staggering. I was free'. Dunn (1961) p. 126.
[143] Tillotson (1954) p. p. 19-20.
[144] Tillotson (1954) p. 24.
[145] Tillotson (1954) p. 56.
[146] Tillotson (1954) p. 64.
[147] Tillotson (1954) p. 117.
[148] Tillotson (1954) p. 118.

Tillotson felt enforced and 'perhaps even initiated the growing tendency to introspection in the novel', adding that as documents in the history of thought, the contribution of *Nemesis* is considerable, offering as it does a self-analysis of mind.[149]

As a genre, the religious novel compares to the tendency today towards the self-help book–the confessional works that fill modern shelves. Yet Froude's 'self-help' came not from reading, but from writing one.

In the 1840s, reviewers appeared to be far more accommodating than Herbert Paul, Froude's first biographer, who published in 1905. *Nemesis* was 'quite unworthy' of Froude', its effect 'disastrous', its content 'undoubtedly heretical'. If it were read at all nowadays, 'as it is not', he barked, it would be for the sketches of Newman and Carlyle.[150]

Paul did concede that it was 'an epoch of critical importance', as he struggled to classify Froude's work by stating what it was not: 'It is not a novel, it is not a treatise, it is not poetry, it is not romance. It is the delineation of a mood'.[151]

Discussing the reception of Froude's book at Oxford, and its burning by Sewell (which only served to advertise the book), Paul remarked on the subsequent change in the religious climate. Had it been written twenty years later, he said, its religious content would not have raised so much as an eyebrow, 'nobody would have read it if atheism had been its only recommendation'. And as something of a pardon to Sewell and Froude's other opponents at the university, Paul concluded, 'it is unreasonable to blame men for not being in advance of their age'.[152]

So it is too perhaps with Dunn, Froude's second biographer. Born in 1882, the same year that another influence on Froude's early life, Ralph Waldo Emerson passed away, Dr. Waldo Hilary Dunn was, when he published his biography in the early 1960s, then an octogenarian. He had been retired for more than a decade from professorships of English he had held at the College of Wooster, Ohio and Scripps College, California.[153] He had studied Froude for more than sixty years, and described in his preface how he had built a relationship with Froude's eldest daughter Margaret between the years 1925 and 1933. It was in this later year that Margaret entrusted most of the materials in her possession to Dunn, just two years before she passed away.[154]

Dunn was a highly accomplished scholar, an educator, book reviewer, essayist and specialist in biography, whose biographical works in addition to Froude included Carlyle, R. D. Blackmore, Donald G. Mitchell, Washington, Sir Robert Stout. Detailing the mixed reception of *The Nemesis* in the press and in journal reviews, he wrote[155]

> The writing of *The Nemesis of Faith* marked indeed a crisis, perhaps the chief crisis, in Froude's moral, intellectual, and spiritual development. Sutherland's problem was Froude's problem. Sutherland's temptation was Froude's temptation. It is inspiriting to discover that Froude, unlike Sutherland, refused to surrender his intellectual and spiritual integrity.[156]

Of his moral integrity, Dunn remained silent.

'Theology makes bad lovers', wrote Froude in *Shadows*, reflecting how his mind was

[149] Tillotson (1954) p. 131.
[150] Paul (1905) p. p. 45-47.
[151] *ibid.*
[152] Paul (1905) p. 49.
[153] *The New York Times*, 'Dr Waldo Dunn, Wooster Ex-Dean Educator and Author Dies', 7 May 1969.
[154] Dunn (1961) p. viii.
[155] Dunn (1961) p. 141 and p. p. 233-4.
[156] Dunn (1961) p. 141.

then penetrating every aspect of the religious question.[157] Froude was a young man. He had a fascination for women throughout his life, wrote Paul, that showed itself almost before he was out of his teens.[158] This aspect of Froude has not been adequately addressed; the public and professional life is well documented but the man behind the books only surfaces occasionally within them. In *Nemesis* he asks, 'how can we help loving best those who first give us possession of ourselves?' Even if they happen to be married. The scenes of love described by Froude in *Nemesis,* beautiful though they are, formed part of an immoral relationship. It would still be viewed as such today. Froude, in deacon's orders, was simply not in a position to write in this way.

To get over this, he constructed an end to his story, disjointed as it was rushed, that allowed God's hand a show in the matter. The early scenes of love that read so true are followed by ones of consequential fiction. Markham wrote to Helen, 'Forgive me and forget me; I never deserved your love' before wandering off and finding himself at a holy place where he sat in contemplation of suicide.[159] Saved by a priest at the crucial moment, he confessed his sins and was absolved before retiring into a monastery. Helen confessed too, but to her husband, before retiring to a convent and dying two years later, refusing to the last to deny her love for Markham.

Froude's confusingly ill-fitting and unedifying conclusion could not detract from the main thrust of the tale, that of a quintessential love affair of the Biblical, forbidden kind. Nor could it detract from the power and reality of his prose in the love scenes, which failed to bathe an immoral situation in an unrighteous light. Such was the interpretation, and unfortunately for Froude, 1849 was a bad time for a suggestion of 'high moral sentiment' in an extra-marital relationship.[160]

Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot), quite taken with Froude's work since reading *Shadows*, wrote a notice of the book in the *Coventry Herald and Examiner* in March 1849. 'Much there is in the book of a questionable character', she wrote, but 'the necessity of re-casting the currency of our religion and virtue' was one of the many merits of a work she described as a 'product of genius'.[161]

'The book is a collection of fragments', wrote an opposing *Morning Herald*, 'a manual of infidelity'. A more balanced look at Froude's book came from the in-depth review by Ludlow in *Fraser's*, which ran to sixteen pages. The reviewer was familiar with Froude's earlier book, and made it clear they were connected. Giving his first six pages over to an analysis of *Nemesis*, he noted that 'school-life is stepped over lightly–the blank to be supplied, we strongly suspect, from the author's former work, the *Shadows of the Clouds*'.[162] Entering upon the section of love by the lakes, he stated, 'Here begins the, strictly speaking, imaginative part of the work'.[163]

After dealing with the book's content, Ludlow began his 'dissecting-room task' on 'a remarkable work' which has 'blighted the life prospects of its author' and 'caused the whole cauldron of party feeling and sectarian bigotry to boil over'.[164]

It is not 'a real book' he wrote, for the same spirit runs through all the work and the

---

[157] *Shadows*, p. 90.
[158] Paul (1905) p. 37.
[159] *Nemesis*, p. 115.
[160] Dunn (1961) p. 143.
[161] Dunn (1961) p. 236.
[162] *Fraser's* (1849) p. p. 548-9.
[163] *ibid.*
[164] *Fraser's* (1849) p.551.

reader is unable to distinguish one character from the other. As such Ludlow allowed that the author was arguing with himself through his characters, believing that 'the very process of laying bare the whole of his spiritual perplexities, of shewing his doubts in their nakedness, should have had a healing influence upon him'. But for the reader, he determined, the book was hopeless, for not only was it wholly negative but it also withheld an antidote for 'soul-murder'. Why, he asked, go and blab to the world of an anguish so hopeless? Nevertheless it contained a quantity of lessons, he wrote, lessons to parents against trifling with choice; lessons to mothers against teaching girls to marry well; lessons to women against marrying under such circumstances; lessons to husbands against imagining marriage as only about body and not spirit, lessons to charity-mongers that human beings have hearts; lessons to every one of us against selfishness, or in Ludlow's words against exchanging 'faith in God' for 'faith in the belly'.[165]

Despite the 'harsh truths' of the book, Ludlow regretted for Froude's sake that it was ever published. 'Its publication is a sin ... to be repented of'. This conclusion was formed by his belief that the book could not serve to comfort the weak-hearted but would weigh on them like lead for its dreary conclusion that Romanism or suicide were the only issues for doubt, and that Markham Sutherland at least found no peace in choosing the former.

It seemed, however, that Ludlow could no more make up his mind than Markham, for having condemned its publication, he saw 'good reasons for rejoicing that God has so allowed it. For with this doubter, this denier, this despairer, we soon found that we had depths of common sympathy'. The whole book, he exclaimed, bore with it this teaching: 'I doubt, and therefore I am wretched,' yet 'mechanical belief and obedience cannot make me happy'. It is this confession, he wrote, that is worth 'a thousand volumes of apologies' and which lifts the book 'miles above the level of ordinary books'.[166]

Hitting on the very pulse of contemporary thought, he added

> In this year 1849–in this Queen Lords and Commons every-day reality of ours–in this speech-making, cotton-spinning, engine-driving England of ours–the one thing upon which turn the life and the death of man is not the price of stocks, or shares, or produce, nor Jenny Lind's withdrawal from the stage, nor Lord John Russell's last measure, nor Peel's last speech, nor Ireland's last famine, but how *the* man stands as towards God? and thereby as towards his fellow-men? Whether there be a good and an evil? a hope and a curse? a life in death, or a death in Life?' These, he says, 'are the issues raised by Mr Froude's book and he is to be thanked heartily for having raised them, 'such is the struggle of the nineteenth century' when 'many truths of the past are fast becoming lies to it, for want of comprehension.[167]

Of Froude's writing on Newman, Ludlow found most hope for the future, for here he felt Froude highlighted the heart of the issue, that believing *that* which is taught differed to believing *in*. 'It never seems to have occurred to Froude', he observed, 'that Mr Newman might not be an infallible interpreter of Scripture, or of science'. On Tractarianism, he commented, 'Mr Froude is one of those who have partly seen through its juggleries, partly discerned its emptiness'; and on faith, with which Froude was still struggling, he drew comparison with the reasoning ground of Luther: 'Well had the eagle eye of Luther seen this from the time of his Ninety-nine Disputations in 1517 ... we should *know* the article of

[165] *Fraser's* (1849) p. p. 552-3.
[166] *Op. cit.*
[167] *Fraser's* (1849) p. 554.

the Trinity, and not *believe* it'. Ludlow could not resist passing a subtle note that in his view Luther struggled *silently*.[168]

Drawing his review to a close, Ludlow praised Froude's genius while lamenting the 'many pages unsurpassed we believe in the English language' which could not be included, and offered Froude guidance on its content and careless construction. 'If he can succeed in curbing, not checking, a certain tendency to prolix sweetness of description on the one hand, to over-refined subtlety of reasoning on the other, we see no prose-writer of the present day who can equal him in point of style'.[169]

Praising too its dramatic power, he turned lastly to the book's love scenes. 'It is strange indeed to note how, from the moment that Markham Sutherland, who is scarcely more than a voice in the earlier half of the work, acquires real objective personality on the shores of the Lake of Como, *the whole tone of the book becomes itself more real*.'[170]

Ludlow clearly discerned more than he was able to enlarge on, for he commented: 'We could almost believe that the shock of Helen's sincerity of love ... came almost as unexpectedly upon the writer as upon Markham himself'.[171]

It has been shown that Froude styled his early works on events directly related to his own life and as such there are grounds to suppose that Froude's summer months in the vicinity of 1848 Killarney were not all spent at work at his writing table. We know from his earlier visits to Ireland that Froude had been entertained by the Protestant gentry, and the Protestant community of 1848 was small. Max Weremchuk, in his research on the work of protestant ministers of this period, has been confounded by interconnections he describes as ‘a family affair’. Froude said as much in *Nemesis*, on first meeting Helen and Leonard, and their discussion of common acquaintances at home, which 'in Italy made them seem almost to have claims upon one another'.

Muckross Abbey Mansion, situated on the shore of the Killarney lake, was in 1848 the family home of Henry Arthur Herbert, his wife Mary Balfour and their young children. Completed in 1843, this four-storey 70-plus roomed mansion (that functions today as Muckross House Museum) overlooks Killarney’s middle lake.

Froude provided a description of this view from the mansion, 'There lay the deep, dark mountains, and the silver lake, the blue cloudless sky bending over them in unutterable beauty ... had human eyes yet gazed upon a lovelier earthly scene than that which now lay out below the window where Markham was standing.[172]

If Tillotson's 'genius of place' can be used as a measure in reading *The Nemesis of Faith*, there is no question that Froude spent part of the summer of 1848 at Muckross Abbey Mansion. It is inconceivable that as part of a Protestant community in Ireland, one almost with ‘claims upon one another', he should not have met such a prominent family. Mary Herbert was certainly there. And in the summer of 1848 famine-stricken Ireland, a curious year for any English person to travel to Ireland, Mary was there without her

[168] *Fraser’s* (1849) p. 560.
[169] *Fraser’s* (1849) p. 559.
[170] My italics.
[171] *Fraser’s* (1849) p. 559. Marshall Kelly, in his account of Froude’s life written fifty years later, observed ‘the sudden radiance’ that came upon Froude following his retreat in Ireland. Of Froude’s publication he had little knowledge, entitling it The *Nemesis of Fate* and consigning it to a curious, question-marked footnote that it was never republished. (It was not in Froude’s lifetime–he forbade it.)
[172] *Nemesis*, p106.

husband.[173] It was the norm for women of her standing to travel at home or abroad with or without their husbands and children.[174]

Henry Arthur Herbert had been elected Conservative Member of Parliament for the Kerry constituency in August 1847. His new role kept him away from Muckross during the summer of 1848, as he notified his tenants through the local press in February of that year: 'I have been obliged to return to London to attend my parliamentary duties'.[175] Just two months later those parliamentary duties took on a dramatic note when a savings bank fraud was exposed in the county, a case of embezzlement highlighting defects in the law that saw investors with no redress for their losses. Stories of the Tralee and Killarney Savings Banks scandal dominated the local press in the months that followed. Details unfolded, and Henry Herbert sought change in the law that allowed the fraud to occur. 'I will not leave London,' he wrote to the *Tralee Chronicle*, 'while there is the slightest chance of my being of any service'.[176]

That year, due to the 'state of Ireland', parliament was not prorogued and in August in the House of Commons, Henry Herbert presented a petition from the Kerry Grand Jury urging a course of remedial measures.[177] In the same month, from his Belgrave Square London address, he printed *A Few Observations upon the Defects of the Savings Banks System as illustrated by the frauds committed by the Actuaries of the County Kerry Banks*.[178] It appears this was never published, though a speech he delivered on the subject in the House of Commons in April 1849 was.[179]

Henry made a brief return to Muckross on 12 September to assure his electors of his commitment to their cause in Parliament. His hard work was appreciated by the locality, for a resolution was subsequently passed to form a committee to thank him.[180] An address was duly conducted in October on his return to the county, the same month that his wife departed from Muckross.[181] She was detained in London en route to Scotland where her children were staying after contracting typhus fever.

Almost twenty years later, in 1867, Mary Herbert left Muckross. This followed the death in the previous year of her husband, and the marriage of Henry's successor, their eldest son Henry. That Froude was acquainted with this family is evident from a photograph of him with a party of friends, Henry Herbert junior included, in the late eighteen-sixties at his newly leased summer home in Kenmare, Co Kerry.[182]

Mary Herbert continued to hold dear what was now her newly-wedded son's home.

---

[173] Mary Herbert was an accomplished water-colourist. Her art-work is exhibited at Muckross House, and has received favourable comment from a number of professional art bodies (see *Muckross Newsletter,* issue 7, 1999). Mary Herbert had been touring Italy during 1846-7, a number of her paintings depict the Italian scenery of her tour, including (undated) depictions of the route between Thusis and Lake Como (*Mary Herbert of Muckross House*, p. 32). In later life, she rented a property in Bellagio, on the shore of Lake Como, where much of her time was spent painting (see *Muckross Newsletter,* issue 6, 1998).

[174] *Mary Herbert of Muckross House 1817-1893*, Killarney: The Trustees of Muckross House (Killarney) Ltd, 1999, p. 20. Unpublished research into Mary Herbert's life at Muckross House suggests she may have been accompanied on this trip by one of her daughters. It also indicates that she lost a daughter to consumption (as well as four siblings, a state of affairs paralled in Froude's life).

[175] *The Kerry Evening Post,* 23 February 1848.

[176] *The Tralee Chronicle*, 22 July 1848.

[177] *The Tralee Chronicle*, 12 August 1848.

[178] Copy held at Special Collections & University Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

[179] H. A. Herbert, *Savings' Banks Speech Delivered in The House of Commons on Thursday, April 29, 1849,* London: James Ridgway, 1849.

[180] *The Tralee Chronicle*, 16 September 1848.

[181] *The Tralee Chronicle*, 21 October 1848.

[182] Gerard J. Lyne, *The Lansdowne Estate in Kerry under the Agency of William Steuart Trench 1849-72*, Dublin: Geography Publications, 2001 p. 397.

She carried mementoes with her always, and claimed that she 'only had to close her eyes to be in Muckross'.[183]

The question remains why Froude attached to *Nemesis* a tale of love on the Italian lakes, one that sits so awkwardly and unnecessarily with the central concerns of the book. I suggest that Froude, the budding historian, the poet, artist and lover of truth, could not allow his Irish experience to pass without record. As we will see in the unfolding of his future works, it simply went against his very nature. [184]

James Anthony Froude returned to England in the autumn of 1848 resolved in mind and refreshed in body. While preparing his book for publication, his friend Clough had published a book of poetry which included his first major poem, *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuoliche*, a revolutionary poem about love. In a letter that formed a critique of the poem, Froude wrote to Clough, 'Love is an idle sort of a god, and comes in other hours than the working ones'.[185] Of his own book, which was published shortly afterwards in January 1849, he had not made up his mind what it actually was, describing it invariably as 'a cry of pain', 'a mood, not a treatise', 'utterly subjective' and also as 'pure fiction'.[186]

This last comment came immediately after publication, when reaction and attention to his work evidently took Froude by surprise (though it should be understood that that reaction was little more than a storm in a tea-cup, confined largely to the university[187]). It was reprinted only once in Froude's life-time, a second edition appearing a few months after the first in June 1849, to which Froude felt compelled to add a fifteen page preface. In this Froude sought to explain 'what I meant by the concluding portion of my story' in an effort to beat off perhaps the seed of today's media.[188] He had much to learn of the manner in which to tackle criticism. He boldly stated, 'I have been told by my friends that I ought to notice a report that my story is autobiographical'. Trying to gather the language to disguise a direct answer, he succeeded in doing so when he wrote that the report was 'as far as I can myself judge about it, wholly and entirely false'.[189]

Carlyle, though he and Froude had not yet met, was not impressed with Froude's first literary offerings, dismissing both works as belly-aching, 'What on earth is the use of a wretched mortal's vomiting up all his interior crudities?'[190] And when the two did first meet in June 1849, just one month before Carlyle embarked on his second visit to Ireland, his opinion had not altered; he advised Froude to stop whinging in public.[191]

Yet despite such harsh comment, taken together, there is an importance to *Shadows of the Clouds* and *The Nemesis of Faith* representative of this fundamental turning point in

---

[183] *Muckross Newsletter* issue 6, 'The Life and Works of Mary Herbert'.

[184] Those who desire to read Froude's tale in context can do so in *Muckross, a True Story of Love on the Lakes during the Famine*, published at www.lulu.com. It is known that Froude published poetry; '*Together*', composed to his second wife Henrietta, appeared unsigned in *Fraser's* May 1862 (Markus p. 309); another, bearing his initials and entitled *Romsdal Fiord*, was published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in April 1883. Poetry is an un-researched aspect of Froude's writing. Froude 'delighted in pencil-sketching and water-colour drawing', Dunn (1961) p. 220 note 90. See also his sketches in *The English in the West Indies* and *Oceana*. An unidentified mid-nineteenth century watercolour initialed 'F' hangs in the boudoir of Muckross House. Scrutinised by Kerry artist John Reidy and compared with Froude's artwork in the above, an artistic flourish was observed as suggestive of the same hand.

[185] Paul (1905) p. 40.

[186] Dunn (1961) p. p. 148-9, p. 131 & p. 233.

[187] Dunn (1961) p. 135.

[188] J. A. Froude, *The Nemesis of Faith,* Second Edition, London: John Chapman, 1849, p. viii.

[189] As above, p. xv and p. xvi.

[190] Markus (2005) p. 59.

[191] Dunn (1961) p. 145. At this first meeting, when the two talked of Ireland generally, Carlyle, disturbed by tales of the Famine he had heard from Gavan Duffy, was researching the country for a proposed book. He was reading, ironically, an edition of St. Patrick, 'as much a biography of a real man as the story of Jack and the Giant Killer', John Clubbe, *Froude's Life of Carlyle*, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1979, p. 473.

Froude's life. In *Shadows,* Froude saved a child from drowning; in *Nemesis,* he allowed the child to die.[192] In a symbolic sense, he had released the child within, he had let go. Now, Froude was a man. And in Ireland, and only in Ireland, was he given the space and, perhaps, the opportunity, to become one.

There was also an important lesson learned from publication of both early books. Froude's direct approach to subjects seen as taboo had caught some public attention. His writings had provoked. People had noticed his work, and by extension, him. It appealed to his dramatic nature, a dramatic instinct that was described by Paul as 'uncontrollable' and demanding expression.[193]

This latent style, perhaps at times adopted, was of consequence in almost all that Froude ever raised his pen to during a lifetime career as a writer. He had already predicted the shortfalls of a writing career, a prediction that time would prove right: 'how gladly I would bear all the coldness, the abuse, the insults, the poverty, all the ill things which the world ever pays as the wages of authors who do their duty'; he could not have predicted however, that his own life would provide more drama than just about anything he could ever hope to put on paper.

And Ireland, inspiration behind his first works, his last, and much in between, would have a lion share in that drama.

[192] *Shadows*, 'I saw a little boy in the water…. nothing would satisfy me but I must forget all about my cough, and jump in after him…. we were soon out again, neither of us at the time feeling any harm from it, except the drenching', p. p. 124-5. *Nemesis*, 'He saw all was over, and he hid his face in his hands', p. 107.
[193] Paul (1905) p. 37.

Chapter Two
A Victorian Resident

Chapter Two: A Victorian Resident

i: Froude Makes a Home in Ireland

When the people complain,
the people are always right
Short Studies III

Charlotte Grenfell, Froude's first wife, passed away in April 1860, leaving Froude with three young children. Froude in his grief turned once more to Ireland. **A**ccompanied by his brother-in-law Charles Kingsley, Froude went to Markree Castle in Co Sligo, 'broken down' in his grief. Kingsley was haunted by this journey through Ireland of July 1860; 'human chimpanzees' was his description of those he observed during '100 miles of horrible country'[194]

> The country which I have come through moves me even to tears. It is a land of ruins and of the dead. You cannot conceive to English eyes the first shock of ruined cottages; and when it goes on to whole hamlets, the effect is most depressing. I suppose it had to be done, with poor-rates twenty shillings in the pound, and the people dying of starvation, and the cottier system had to be stopped; but what an amount of human misery each of those unroofed hamlets stands for….[195]

Kingsley had been alone in offering Froude refuge on publication of *Nemesis of Faith*. The two men had first met when Kingsley was visiting a friend at Oxford and the offer of shelter came despite them initially not taking to each other.[196] It was at Kingsley's home in Lynmouth in 1849 that Froude had met Charlotte.

The decade between leaving Oxford and Charlotte's death had seen Froude settle into married life in Wales and establish himself as a writer and historian of growing controversial status. His income from this source had begun in the form of contributions to journals; by 1860 he had published the first six volumes of a twelve-volume history of England (completed in 1870). The scars of his Oxford years were visible in the work's preface when he described his task as

> an involuntary leisure forced upon me by my inability to pursue the profession which I had entered, but which I was forbidden by the law to exchange for another….[197]

Religion no longer commanded his energies; in a lecture given in 1864, he said, 'the time will come when the belief in God will be as the tales with which old women frighten children'.[198]

Froude's unanticipated return to Ireland in July 1860 heralded a decade of close association with the country. From 1863, he spent three to four months at a time in the

---

[1] Susan Chitty, *The Beast and the Monk, A life of Charles Kingsley*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974, p. 209. Kingsley used a friendship made with a gamekeeper during this visit in his book *The Water-Babies.*

[195] Frances Eliza Grenfell Kingsley, *Charles Kingsley: his Letters and Memories of his Life*, Vol II, Edited by his wife in two volumes, London: MacMillan and Co Ltd, 1910, p. 112.

[196] Chitty (1974) p. 121. Nor was Kingsley taken with Carlyle, who he met through Froude, 'I never heard a more foolish outpouring of Devil's doctrines, raving cynicism which made me sick. I kept my temper with him but … I was never so shocked in all my life', *ibid.,* p. 186.

[197] He gave as a second reason a dislike to 'the attitude towards the Revolution of the sixteenth century which had been assumed by many influential thinkers in England'. Dunn (1963) p. 312.

[198] *Short Studies on Great Subjects,* Vol I, 'The Science of History', p. 37.

vicinities of Killarney and Kenmare in Co. Kerry. Accompanying him on these visits was Henrietta Warre, who had in 1861 become his second wife (and with whom more children would follow). Certainly by the late eighteen-sixties Froude felt sufficiently at home in this pocket of Ireland to view himself as part of the community: 'the (boat)men tauntingly hailed us', he wrote of his car journey from Kenmare to Derreen in 1869.[199]

When he later edited this account for re-publication in *Short Studies*, he was careful to distance himself from events when he amended *us* to *my driver*.

Derreen, a townland in the vicinity of the village of Lauragh, is also the name given to the grand, secluded house set in woodland there which Froude rented in 1867. Situated on the harbour of Kilmakilloge on the south bank of the Kenmare river, it formed part of the Lansdowne Estate. 'Arnold's Lansdowne', the third Marquess, had died in 1863, so too had the fourth Marquess, in 1866. As the fifth marquess was young, it was decided to let the property for several years, Froude taking up the tenancy in 1868.[200]

Little is known of this period in Froude's life in Ireland outside of a two-part essay he published in *Fraser's Magazine* in April 1870 and January 1871. It related largely to the summer of 1869 and part of the summer of 1870, following which he had been evicted from Derreen by Lansdowne. A more detailed look at the essay and the response to it serves not only Froude's historical and contemporary portraits of Ireland during his tenancy but also aids a rough sketch of his lifestyle and close social circle in this remote area.

Entitled *A Fortnight in Kerry,* the essay was rich in local history and custom, and drew largely on anecdotal accounts gathered by Froude during the course of his years there, accounts which had been handed down in accordance with the oral tradition of the country. An oral tradition that was not limited by race or religion.

When Froude noted the 'wide-eyed neighbour' during his sojourn in Killarney almost two decades previously, he would not have foreseen that his conduct then had formed part of the very lore that he so dramatically transcribed in *Fortnight* (one that would also find itself in verse and ultimately, almost four decades after his own life, in print).

The 'wide-eyed neighbour' surfaced in the columns of the local press. Its occasion introduces the first of Froude's acquaintances in this neighbourhood in Co Kerry.

Directly across the river from Derreen lie a number of scattered islands, Garinish and Rossmore among the larger of them.[201] Behind on the mainland lies Parknasilla, a grand property which in the early 1860s was the summer palace of the Very Rev. Charles Graves, Dean of Clonfert and (in 1866) Bishop of the Church of Ireland diocese of Limerick.[202] The arrival of the Graves family in the early 1860s reinforced the number of Anglo-Irish gentry in the area.

Recalling how the Froudes and the Graves saw much of each other during these years, Froude often with visiting friends like Charles Kingsley and his daughter Rose, Bishop Graves' son Alfred Perceval wrote

---

[199] *Fraser's Magazine*, April 1870, 'A Fortnight in Kerry', p. 515.
[200] Nigel Everett, *A landlord's Garden*, Bantry: Hafod Press, 2005, p. 42.
[201] Garinish then home of Lord Dunraven (Wyndham-Quin), Irish Antiquarian and close friend of Bishop Graves and Petrie; on his death in 1871 and Froude's eviction from Derreen, Froude was interested in re-locating his summer residence there (*Table-Talk* p. 150); the tradition of summer vacationing in this area continues; Michael Flatley in 2008 applied for planning for a holiday home on a 56-acre site on Rossmore Island.
[202] Rev. Graves, Nov 6 1812-July 17 1899.

> [Froude] was then a fine figure of a man, tall and well proportioned and fine-featured, with dreamy grey-blue eyes…. the upper part of his face was strong, the mouth sensitive. He was a delightful talker…. full of stories of the O'Sullivan country.[203]

And with a criticism that was becoming an increasing feature of Froude's professional life, he added

> Though I was but a boy when I knew him I realized that he was far too ready to generalize on insufficient data–a criticism often justly applied to his historical conclusions.[204]

In June 1867, however, criticism was being directed at Froude's friend Charles Graves through the columns of *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo*.[205] It attacked an account of the new bishop's Kerry Visitation that had appeared in 'the Protestant organ of the county' (*The Kerry Evening Post*) for inadequate editorial coverage of the event.

Taking up the task, the *Chronicle* set about an attack on the Protestant Church in Kerry with relish. Casting back to the period of 1845 and the converting Brethren, who aimed to 'pull down the crumbling fabric of Rome', the paper produced statistics: 'There are 5,473 Catholics to 309 Protestants altogether in the six western parishes … what progress'.

Questioning how the Protestant religion could be applied to this majority, the writer asked, 'But what of the Plymouth Brethren? Who are they? Where in Kerry are they? Who converted them? Who are accountable for their perversion?'

Alluding to Froude, the author exampled, with a tone of triumph, the workings of folk memory

> We read some summers since … of a Kerry 'Protestant' gentleman trying on a small revival movement–a dead failure too–in connection with a boating excursion in Italy! Was he a Plymouth Brother? We read again of another Kerry 'Protestant' gentleman doing a little of the same thing, with a vengeance! On a Highland tour. Was he of the Brethren? If these be the 'types' of the order, we should think Kerry Plymouth Brethrenism not likely to flourish much out of its present bounds….[206]

The following summer of 1868, Froude found himself once more in the local press, on this occasion in a highly favourable light. With his wife and family Froude had organized an afternoon of outdoor activities for schoolchildren of the nearby national schools. In July of that year, four hours of festivities were laid on for the children who arrived in procession with evergreen arches and six flags depicting a mix of 'God Save the Queen' and '*Erin go Bragh'*. Froude and his family presided over the entire event, and on being

---

[203] Alfred Perceval Graves, *To Return to All That,* London: Jonathan Cape, 1930, p. 75.

[204] Undated newspaper article, *Reminiscences of The Sixties with Froude in Kerry* by Alfred Perceval Graves, Muckross Research Library ref: 60.499. In this same article Graves offers a colourful sketch of Froude fishing in a river in flood, how he had removed his trousers and thrown them over his shoulder, and how he had slipped and lost them to the current. He had fished away until evening came on before he was able to creep back under cover of dusk and shrubbery to his accommodation (where many ladies were present) and make a dash for the open back door.

[205] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo*, 25 June1867.

[206] Curiously, Froude's observation of the marriage of Thomas Carlyle, who stayed in Kerry in 1849, made specific reference to his highland tour with Lady Ashburton in the summer of 1856 (Clubbe p. 534). An account of Carlyle's affair with Lady Ashburton can be found in Iris Origo, *A Measure of Love*, 'The Carlyles and the Ashburtons A Victorian Friendship', London: Jonathan Cape, 1957, p. p. 117-185.

thanked by the teachers for the occasion, Froude 'in gentle words suggested a hope this reunion would not be the last'.[207]

Froude played host to another guest later that summer when his landlord paid his first visit to his Kerry estates since his succession.[208] It was resolved by some that Lansdowne should be given 'a right royal reception' in the name of duty because '30 or 40 years ago Kenmare consisted of thatched cabins', its main square no more than 'a swamp on which scarcely a snipe could stand'. And during the 1846 Famine, when 'all through this district people–men, women and children–were to be found dead and dying along the roads and beside the ditches', the Marquis had kindly requested Mr. William Steuart Trench to take charge of his Kerry estate. He had given Trench a cheque for £10,000 with which Trench emigrated three thousand, undertook a building programme and established trade in the town.

Kenmare in 1868 was much improved. W. S. Trench was succeeded in the management of the estate by his son John Townsend, who with Mr. Richard Mahony of Dromore Castle, had established a butter market; the town also had a branch of the Munster bank, a Turkish bath at which 'rich and poor could enjoy the luxury of a bath'–all evidences that 'it would be hard to find better agents or a better landlord'.

A description in the local press of the paraphernalia that grew with the occasion of Lansdowne's visit helps to put in perspective this era in Ireland. Décor included centaur-shaped evergreen triumphal arches erected around the town, lines of bunting stretched across the streets, houses decorated with flags and candles, poles with red banners; sound was provided by cheering and Lady Castlerosse's marching band from Killarney, and in the evening, celebratory light came from the chapel spire illuminated with magnesium light and bonfires, candles and fireworks; 'for miles around the houses of the gentry [were] all ablaze with light'.[209]

Driving rain and wind arrived with the Marquis, and in the speeches that marked the occasion, it can be seen that the picture was not as colourful as presented. Parish priest Archdeacon O'Sullivan had no address to present, for his parishioners 'had so many subjects to treat of, that they could not bring them within the bounds of an address'. It was left to the Protestant tenantry to formally welcome Lord Lansdowne

> Circumstances on which we will not here further dwell have compelled us most reluctantly to appear divided from others in our manifestations of welcome….[210]

Lord Lansdowne expressed his regret that a rift had occurred before going on to enjoy celebratory dinners and a public banquet with his companion the Hon. Mr. Howard (Lord Carlisle) and the local gentry (Killarney's Herberts among them). Speaking at a dinner at the new butter exchange, the first he had ever addressed to the working classes, Lansdowne acknowledged that the power of the people was now recognized 'by the whole empire'.[211]

---

[207] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo*, 28 July 1868. Froude did indeed continue what has since become a tradition of entertaining the local schoolchildren at Derreen. David Bigham, a descendent of Lansdowne, whose son Charles is the current owner, confirmed this to me by letter in 2008.
[208] He had been there before as a boy; see *Kerry Evening Post*, 7 October 1868.
[209] The centaur is the Lansdowne family crest; *The Kerry Evening Post,* 7 and 10 October 1868.
[210] *The Kerry Evening Post,* 7 October 1868.
[211] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo*, October 16 1868.

During his visit Lansdowne lunched at Dromore Castle, visited Lord Dunraven's Garinish Island, and enjoyed a sumptuous dinner with Froude and his family and guests at Derreen (soon to become his own summer residence), all conducted with a pomp and ceremony that followed his every move.[212]

Unrest among the tenantry, however, had begun to surface behind the façade of occasion, an unrest that Froude was about to address in *Fortnight*. Voice was being gained in the press: 'Unpleasant truths are generally kept out of sight,' reported the *Cork Examiner* of Mr Timothy Lyne, a tenant who had ventured to tell the landlord 'a wholesome truth'. The tenantry 'longed for something better than paternal despotism. They demanded independence rather than generosity' and their principal grievance was want of fixity of tenure, 'this is the true expression of the feeling of the people'.[213]

Under this foreboding climate Froude returned to England in November 1868, his wife and daughters visiting the local schools before their departure when the two-year-old baby Froude 'handed to a little girl a piece of cloth for a dress'. 'Hail the return of this good family to Derreen', remarked the school-teacher.[214]

Also returned to England was another of Froude's guests at Derreen that summer. Longman, his publisher, along with family, had sojourned with Froude in July. In December of that year, Longman published a book by William Steuart Trench, who with his son John Townsend Trench, numbered among Froude's Kerry acquaintances.

The book, entitled *Realities of Irish Life*, and illustrated by John Townsend, was addressed to and written at the suggestion of Lord Dunraven of Garinish Island. It was received by the majority of English reviewers with accepted praise for its honest and factual content.[215] A small number protested at its timing and against the acceptation of it as 'conveying anything like a fair representation of existing facts'.[216] *The Examiner* put it bluntly, 'a bad book, written in a bad spirit, and calculated to have nothing but a bad tendency'.[217]

When Froude returned to Derreen in the summer of 1869, it was to be his last stay of relative peace there (the first instalment of his essay *Fortnight in Kerry,* with accompanying controversy, would appear before his next summer vacation). How Froude spent that summer can be gleaned from his essay.

Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, a judge of the High Court of justice, had at Froude's suggestion taken for the summer a house at Dromquinna, property of Sir John Charles Ready Colomb, on the north bank of the Kenmare river.[218] Excursions were made by the

---

[212] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo*, 20 October 1868; Richard Mahony of Dromore Castle numbered among Froude's friends in the area. A photograph of Froude and one of Kingsley number among the 1860s portraits in the Mahony family album, along with images of local gentry–Bishop Graves included. See *Richard John Mahony of Dromore, a Nineteenth Century Gentleman* at www.lulu.com for more on him and John Townsend Trench.

[213] Article from *Cork Examiner* published in *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo*, 13 October 1868.

[214] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo,* 24 November 1868; letter from national school-teacher Helen O'Sullivan. Lyne (2001) suggests this letter's intonation implies a public charity as destructive as beneficial.

[215] The book is a dramatic sketch of Trench's experiences as a landlord's agent in Ireland which included conspiracies and death threats.

[216] 'Public consideration of Irish affairs, both inside and outside the House of Commons, has assumed a serious and practical aspect' (*Spectator* 30 January 1869)–an allusion to the land issue being debated in parliament.

[217] Review in W. Steuart Trench, *Realities of Irish Life*, London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1870, p. 411. Froude wrote in *Fortnight* how chimaeras brought about by his reading of this book affected him at Derreen, when a dozen young men appeared on his lawn one afternoon while he was alone in the house, his staff at 'the dance'. Informing them the grounds were private, he suspected something sinister in their response, and feared they would make him 'understand practically' that he was 'not in England'. Discovering later they were boys from beyond the mountains with plans to picnic in the woods, he realized his alarm was utterly groundless, 'so active is fancy in the uneasy atmosphere of Ireland'. J A Froude, *Fraser's Magazine,* 'A Fortnight In Kerry II, January 1871, p. p. 29-30.

[218] Froude had taken this house himself. An undated letter from Froude addressed to C W Mason advises him to forward a manuscript 'at once as I start for Ireland for the summer on Wednesday morning'. Alternatively he asks for it to be sent to him at 'Dromquinna,

two friends along the fifteen-mile distance that separated their summer homes, either by boat or Froude's yacht. An account of their friendship is found in a biography of James by his brother, Sir Leslie Stephen

> At what time he [Froude] became acquainted with Fitzjames I am unable to say; but the acquaintanceship ripened into one of his closest friendships. They had certain intellectual sympathies; and it would be hard to say which of them had the most unequivocal hatred of popery….

Remarking on their contrast in temperament, Stephen wrote a little on Froude's nature

> No one could be blind to Froude's great personal charm whenever he chose to exert it; but many people had the feeling that it was not easy to be on such terms as to know the real man. There were certain outworks of reserve and shyness to be surmounted….[219]

In 1869 Stephen enjoyed life in Co. Kerry to such an extent that he considered building a house on the Kenmare river and spent the summers of 1873 and 1874 at 'the Bishop of Limerick's house, Parknasilla, just opposite Derreen'.[220] By 1873, however, there would be no more excursions along the river with Froude, for he was no longer a neighbour. He had vacated this property at the request of his landlord.

ii: *Fortnight in Kerry* Part I and its Reception

Froude's purpose in composing *A Fortnight in Kerry* was political. He outlined this in the opening paragraph of its second instalment. The Irish Land Bill under discussion in the House of Commons, Froude wished to ward against English prejudice and English ignorance by contributing towards setting Ireland's condition in a truer light. To this end he composed the essay with an alternate mix of history and anecdote and used the occasion of two sporting trips, sailing and salmon fishing, to guide him through the first instalment.

He opened in historical mode, acknowledging 'waves of convulsion' which the country had endured for centuries, drawing forward to the Famine and subsequent evictions 'of which Fenianism is the fruit and the expression'. This he said would pass away 'when the Administration recovers courage to combine firmness with justice'.

Froude proceeded to identify place, describing his journey to Ireland for a fortnight's holiday 'in the Kerry mountains', a journey he compared to the one he had made thirty years earlier, and noted the changes. The O'Connells and O'Sullivans, 'the old fire-eaters' from the days of the duel, he observed, were gone, 'extinct like the dodo'.[221] Bringing the area's history into focus, before and since the 'havoc' of William Petty who was assigned the principality of Kerry 'on terms as easy as those on which the Colonial

---

Kenmare, Kerry'. Letter auctioned by Richard M. Ford Ltd, Antiquarian Bookseller, London; http://richardfordmanuscripts.co.uk August 2010 in my possession; copy attached.

[219] Sir Leslie Stephen, *The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen*, London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1895, p. 200 and p. p. 405-6.

[220] *op. cit.* Stephen had a straightforward, unreserved manner of expression which Froude admired and in later years Stephen regularly accompanied Froude and Carlyle on their walks. He often stayed with Froude in Ireland and Devonshire, and it is to be lamented that Sir Leslie Stephen's request for Froude's recollection of this friendship was dissolved by Froude's death in 1894.

[221] In illustration of the 'duelling' age, during the 1835 election in England, Daniel O'Connell took offence at comments made by Disraeli during campaigning and his response resulted in Disraeli challenging him to a duel; police intervened however before blood was spilled, *Irish Daily Mail*, 28 February 2008.

office squandered millions of best acres in Canada', he described Derreen, its historical resident 'Morty', and the smuggling line that went on there.

A description of an early morning swim with his son and a seal, the latter an object of superstition, provided Froude with material to converse on this topic, one that was 'yielding to education'. From here began the first of Froude's two journeys, a sailing expedition to Scarriff island, which enabled Froude to portray his historical knowledge along the route taken, comparing the accepted history of a place with its likely history. A dramatic sketch of the floundering of John Arundel on the rocks of Scarriff with his debauched crew demonstrated how the Kerry environment complemented this aspect of Froude's writing.

Derrynane Abbey caught Froude's attention on the route back to Derreen, the ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell. 'Dan the First, the Liberator's father, had laid the foundations of the fortune of the family by a handsome smuggling trade,' wrote Froude

> but Ireland has ceased to care for him. His fame blazed like a straw bonfire, and has left behind it scarce a shovelful of ashes. Never any public man had it in his power to do so much real good for his country, nor was there ever one who accomplished so little.[222]

A river walk followed next in pursuit of salmon. 'I must introduce my readers to my keeper,' continued Froude, describing Protestant Jack Harper, an occasion that allowed Froude to address the subject of religion. According to Jack the Catholic priest was 'worth a dozen watchers to him…. the curses of the Church at his service'. From this comment Froude observed, 'religion down here means right and wrong, and materially, perhaps, not much besides'.

Froude chose to voice no opinion on a field behind a rath that he passed by, the 'burying-place of the babies that die unbaptized unconsecrated by the church, but hallowed by sentiment'.

A rest by Glanmore lake, one that held an island with ruined house, brought forth a tale of the seduction of a local farm girl by a cash-strapped major on the run, 'you may break the English laws as you please in Ireland, but there are some laws you may not break'. Giving all but the major's name, Froude noted that the legend was 'as true, perhaps, as much that passes by the name of history'.[223]

'My space has run out', concluded Froude, 'my tale is still half told'. Summarizing what would follow, Froude had clearly outlined if not completed his account of Irish life for the edification of his English readers.

Its publication in *Fraser's Magazine* in April 1870 was reported immediately in *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo* on 5 April. Described as an 'extremely graphic and interesting sketch', the newspaper published Froude's account in full in its next edition of 8 April.

'This bigoted saxon thinks we Kerrymen are donkeys,' was among the first cries of protest in defence of O'Connell, describing Froude's account a lie, the same as his slander

---

[222] Froude was not alone in this opinion. As early as 1848 a newspaper report on the newly appointed MP Henry Arthur Herbert stated: 'Mr. Herbert attended the meeting of the Tralee Guardian yesterday and held long conversations with the most practical men in the room on the state and prospects of the country. This day he proceeded to Dingle to inquire into the peculiar circumstances of the case. Here is an example for the guidance of the Messrs. O'Connell. It would be well if they took similar steps to make themselves practically acquainted with the condition of the country instead of sporting at Conciliation Hall or idling in London', *Kerry Evening Post,* 12 January 1848.

[223] Local tradition suggests Major Knox or Major Harrington, (information Dr. Gerard Lyne).

on Mary Queen of Scots 'for which even the English Protestants have awarded him a first rate cutting up'.[224]

A sustained rebuttal came from local parish priest Callaghan McCarthy through the columns of the same paper on Friday, 13 May: 'No fouler calumny was ever cast upon the memory of any man,' he fumed, than that which Froude's 'bile' had passed on the descendants of Morty O'Sullivan. And of O'Connell, 'the smuggler's son', McCarthy failed to comprehend how Froude had not foreseen that he would provoke 'the resentment of some surviving relative, who may not be easily restrained from requiring satisfaction for such ungenerous and unwarrantable observations'.

Explaining how he had enjoyed Froude's acquaintance over the years, McCarthy had now changed his mind, and condemned Froude as anti-Irish, and 'no friend to our country'.

Froude's transcription of Jack Harper's religious opinion, and his comment thereon, was taken by McCarthy as a slur, an ignorance of the Catholic religion too far. Cursing or denunciation, he wrote, 'is never resorted to, except in the case of great scandal'.

'We had been censured, if not denounced, at a neighbouring Catholic chapel', wrote Froude of his return to Kerry that summer, which had followed a warning that he should be a brave man if he again ventured into the county.[225]

Yet venture Froude did, describing his reception and the outcome of the upset in the introduction to the concluding part of his *Fortnight*. He was careful on this occasion however, to delay publication until after his summer vacation and his safe return to England in November. The summer appeared to have passed without incident for that month, the local school-teacher once again bade the Froude family farewell through the pages of the local press, amid 'hopes of seeing them among us again and again'.[226]

Between that sentiment and the following season, however, the second instalment of *Fortnight* would be published.

iii: *Fortnight in Kerry* Part II and its Reception

John Skelton, 'Shirley', had joined Froude for one week that September. He left a short account of the trip, recalling that those years at Derreen, despite the bad press, were the happiest of Froude's summers

> Those who knew [Froude] only in London drawing-rooms may like to see him in his shooting-jacket among the Paddies, for whom, in spite of all political heartburnings, he retained a warm liking to the last….[227]

Skelton, who had befriended Froude in 1860 through the medium of *Fraser's*, and who had retained a thirty-five year friendship with him, recalled the neighbourhood that had become so familiar to his close friend[228]

---

[224] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo,* 19 April 1870

[225] Denunciation extended across the Atlantic to America where Froude was held an enemy of Ireland in the *Irish Republic (Fortnight II p.29).*

[226] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo,* 9 December 1870.

[227] John Skelton, *The Table-Talk of Shirley*, London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1895, p. 145

[228] Their friendship was indeed close, a 'real' friendship as Froude described it, Skelton alone of all his friends able to differ from him 'without flying into a passion'. Skelton published their correspondence with the hope that the extracts would convince those 'not incurably prejudiced' that the much-maligned Froude was not such a Timon after all, *ibid.,* p .167.

> Dromore, the residence of the last representative of a great old Irish house; Parknacilla, where the most genial, tolerant, and learned member of the Irish hierarchy enjoys his summer holiday; and Garinish, which the taste of munificence of a Catholic peer have transformed from a desolate rocky island into a veritable piece of fairyland….

'Of that pleasant visit, much might be written', recalled Skelton

> How, in our host's yacht, we beat up and down the wide estuary from one point of vantage to another; how we visited the old churchyard where 'The last remains of MacFinnan Dhu, Pater Patriae' are deposited; how we were lost in the mist among the mountains; how, aided by the most charming of antiquaries (since Monkbarns), we opened a rath … and how, on hands and feet, the great historian disappeared from our gaze into the bowels of the earth … if all the mud that the *Saturday Review* has cast at him had *stuck*, he could not have presented a more appalling spectacle; how we ascended Knockatee … how we walked and rowed and sketched….

All might be known hereafter continued Skelton, when Froude's private diary is published by Mr. Blackwood.[229]

The month previous to Skelton's visit, Froude had hosted festivities for the schoolchildren for the third year running at Derreen, despite it having been rumoured that the children were forbidden to attend.[230] A letter published in *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo* on 26 August of ill-disguised cynicism suggested the event had not been received by some of the local adult populace with the same level of excitement as it had by the children.

'The multiplication table was freely used in reciprocal numbers of three times three cheers for each of the speakers', wrote the correspondent, Patrick O'Sullivan, of 'this gentle family … loved and respected'.

'Let us wish this family, this very kind family, happiness, prosperity and long life', he exclaimed

> Give three times three cheers for them…. another cheer for our noble patron, the Marquis of Lansdowne, three times three cheers. For our kind manager, Mr. T. Trench, three times three cheers….[231]

He added a short description of the area's natural beauty, the 'modern Elysium' that had among the gentry brought the area its retreat status

> A retreat for the gods themselves; that person is John T. Trench, yes and this is his marriage day… three times three more [cheers]….

Froude had written of Trench's marriage in *Fortnight*, one of two items of 'news' that were edited out on republication in *Short Studies*. Trench had dropped in on the Froudes 'out of the clouds'

[229] This appears never to have been published.
[230] *A Fortnight in Kerry* II, p. 29.
[231] The landlord, the agent and the tenant; in the eyes of the people, they all amounted to the same thing, imposters in an era of growing nationalism.

> We had imagined him far away preparing for his impending marriage. He had been obliged to return to Ireland by an intricate lawsuit, which he had just brought to a successful issue at the assizes….

Froude decided to publish the details of the lawsuit, a tale fit to claim a place 'in the next edition of his father's book', for reasons twofold: Trench was too modest to do so himself and because 'the story is characteristic of place and people'. A colourful account of the eviction of Sir St. George Gore and of Trench's 'confession' of delight in it followed. The drama of the 'confession' was too much for Froude to suppress

> On his way down to us … he had stopped his car, walked up to (Gore's) house, and executed a deliberate parade for some minutes outside the drawing-room windows. The provocation was too strong for flesh and blood to bear. Had Mr --- been at home, the consequences might have been considerable.

Froude supplemented the account with commentary on Trench's hair-raising journey home, in the face of supposed death threats by Gore.[232]

Froude's second item of 'news' was more indicative of the growing climate of unrest in the area. His salmon-nets had been stolen and the thief could not be found. In an irony that was not lost on Froude, he resorted to Fr. McCarthy for help, 'to exert the power which I had accused him of possessing' (within twenty-four hours the nets were found).[233]

Froude had reconciled with Fr. Callaghan McCarthy on his return in 1870, 'when he understood at last that I meant him no ill, but had rather intended to compliment him'. McCarthy had forgiven him on the score of 'invincible ignorance'. Froude had commenced his second instalment of *Fortnight* in bewildered apology of his first. The manner of his published apology to McCarthy, however, demonstrated that he did not fully comprehend what he was apologizing for.

Of his other 'offences', Morty O'Sullivan, he stated, had been a name selected at random with no individual in mind, and of O'Connell

> If the anecdotes of his forefathers which remain among the traditions of the coast are untrue or exaggerated, I meant no dishonour to the past or present owner of Derrynane.[234]

Of smuggling, he wrote

> The restrictions inflicted by English selfishness on Irish trade in the last century erected smuggling into patriotism; and if the O'Connells on the shore of the Atlantic submitted quietly to the despotism of the officers of the revenue, tamer blood ran in their veins than might have been expected from the character of their famous representative….

Apologies addressed, Froude continued his discourse from the point he had left it in April 1870. If Froude was bewildered by the reaction to the first instalment, it did not influence him into editing the second.

---

[232] Gore responded to this incident in the form of a pamphlet entitled *Pamphlet: by Sir St George Gore, Bart, on the 'Vagaries' of Messrs Trench & Froude* which he published from his address of Redcliff, Aunascaul, Tralee in April 1871. He described Froude, among other things, as 'a reckless holiday scribbler' and the 'Trench Lansdowne Chronicler', and of Trench he wrote that Lansdowne's wealth did not 'authorise a servant to parade in his master's best suit'.

[233] Froude loved, and wrote, 'nearly always with irony'. John Clubbe, *Froude's Life of Carlyle*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1979, p. 39.

[234] Derrynane is the ancestral home of the Liberator.

Using the occasion of another sporting trip–grouse shooting–to open and direct his discourse, he commenced with the story of a double murder in a townland close to Derreen, one learned from the keeper as they made their way up the mountain. The story, which told of the murders of a shipwrecked sailor and a farm girl Kathleen Sullivan in a desolate and isolated valley of the mountain, included smuggling, betrayal and conviction. Froude's dramatic impetus was stimulated in its telling, and in a footnote he assured his readers the story was true.[235]

Resting for lunch with five brace of grouse and half a dozen hares in the bag, Froude took up the topic of religion in his next illustration of life in the locality. Identifying a village by a lake called Glenarm and its Protestant community, he described an altercation between the local Protestant and Catholic clergymen over the exchange of money for performing mass on fishermen's nets, an altercation that culminated in a court action.

'The Irish of the glens do not yet distinguish between a physic-bottle and a charm', he wrote of his next episode on the journey back to Derreen in which he visited a dying woman in a cabin in the glen. Finding the woman had been left alone, he was puzzled that 'the poor soul could be left to start upon its last journey with no friendly hand to soothe the parting pain'.

Visiting guests, who included Bishop Graves and Skelton, occupied the next portion of Froude's discourse, when he opened a rath 'that we might see if it contained any curiosities'. The enterprise may have been an effort by Froude to quell the superstition that still surrounds these antiquities, though as far as this expedition went, 'we came out as wise as we had gone in', adding 'what these places could have been baffles conjecture'.[236]

'I have rambled on incoherently', wrote Froude as he drew his essay to a close, explaining how he wished to convey an idea of the daily life rather than relate a consecutive story. Of the 'long-vexed Irish problem,' Froude offered no proposition for remedy, 'no measures could be expressed in words which could heal a chronic sore as little now as ever disposed to heal'. But he did offer a warning

> let it not be supposed that the late concessions to Irish agitation have touched as yet the source of disloyalty…. the wound remains, and will remain. The Irish, as a body, are disloyal to the English Crown, and disloyal they will continue. The Church Bill was the removal of a scandal; the land Bill will rescue the poorer tenants…. but the people generally regard these Bills, both of them, as extorted by the Clerkenwell explosion….

Froude demonstrated that he had indeed learned much from living in the locality, and continued in prophetic mode

> They do not thank us for them [the Bills]. They rather gather courage to despise us for our fears. Their sympathies on all subjects are in antagonism to ours. If we are entangled in a war, they will rejoice in our defeat; and they will do their worst or their best, whatever their worst or best may be, to forward our misfortunes….

---

[235] This story is known in the locality as the '*Rabach*', its factual content, which I have studied at length, makes grim reading. In March 1831, Cornelius Sullivan, an Irish speaker, was sentenced at Tralee Crown Court for a murder committed in 1815. An Irish speaker, Cornelius was tried in English and later executed in front of the new gaol, 'On the scaffold he appeared quite collected … a very few convulsive struggles marked his exit from this world', *The Kerry Evening Post*, 23 March 1831. His remains were conveyed to the county hospital for dissection; tradition has it that his father journeyed to Tralee on horseback to bring home his son's clothes.

[236] In his *Reminiscences* of Froude (see note 11), Alfred Perceval Graves wrote, 'Froude is not quite accurate here', describing how with his father Bishop Graves and Mr. Mahony of Dunloe he had entered a rath when they found a 'gigantic human skeleton' surrounded by the bones of animals.

Finally Froude reverted to the historical mode to lament England's mismanagement of Ireland but ultimately he held true to his belief that with just leadership, the Irish would be 'the truest and most loyal of followers'. To illustrate his point on leadership, he compared the English-Irish relationship to that of a master of a pack of foxhounds who released his dogs without guidance. 'The fate of that pack and of the flocks of sheep in the neighbourhood would not be difficult to predict'.

Froude broadened this tale when he edited it for re-publication in *Short Studies* to elucidate his meaning, that

> all of us are better for authority. In schools and colleges, in fleet and army, discipline means success, and anarchy means ruin….[237]

and he reasserted his conviction that England, because of its empirical history, could maintain its powers of governance if it did so justly.

When Froude published this second conclusive part in *Fraser's* in January 1871, vitriol spewed forth from the local press. But on this occasion, it was more than the locality Froude upset. As can be learned from the newspapers, his landlord had become embroiled in the matter.

In the first instance, Froude's apology on religion had not acted in the manner intended. 'We still hold by the opinion', stated *The Tralee Chronicle*, that an 'unbecoming' Froude insinuated 'against the mental calibre of the peasantry'. In his description of O'Connell Froude had also erred, guilty of bad taste and personal allusion 'to any one acquainted with the locality'.[238]

The report countered almost every topic covered by Froude, including Trench's court case and endangered journey home

> No one merely reading Mr. Froude's narrative would believe that the would-be murderer of the agent was an Englishman of position and fortune sojourning temporarily in this county….[239]

Froude's failure to contextualize the essay with a preface of its subject's condition, as a remote district subjected for centuries to 'the worst forms of absenteeism and neglect', was identified as the root of the upset. In Froude's typical diachronic fashion, the article's author traced the area's history from the time 'Sir W. Petty helped himself to the vast estates'

> At certain times of the year they [the people] issued forth, bag and baggage and … went in search of wages for themselves and rent for their landlord. This state of things continued until famine, disease, and the fever-hold of the emigrant ship intervened to vindicate the laws of providence; and since then only, have the people of the district been put into the crucible and subjected to Mr. Froude's favourite pestle-and-mortar system….[240]

---

[237] James Anthony Froude, *Short Studies on Great Subjects,* Vol II, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1898, p. 307. Froude's belief in English discipline and fear of Irish anarchy are reflected in the essays of Matthew Arnold*, Culture and Anarchy* (1869).

[238] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo*, 3 February 1871. The allusion, if there was one, is lost to time, but the paper described an army officer who represented the county in parliament, and who was at the time a resident magistrate in Co. Cork. Elsewhere in this edition an O'Connell namesake, if not a relation, complained to the Editor, 'you have laid the lash … but have not *scored* his back'. And he suggested a suitable remedy, 'a Shakesperian [*sic*] scourging from Dirreen to Kerry head would be the right punishment'.

[239] *ibid.*

[240] *op. cit.*

Under such circumstances, a fair and candid mind would be on the look-out for symptoms of improvement, suggested the author, not 'for matter to sneer at'. Describing as 'downright malicious' Froude's observations on methods of cultivation, the writer acknowledged Froude's 'brilliant qualities as a writer', qualities 'natural and acquired' but turned to weapons to 'vilipend and ridicule'

> Not all the head centres spread over the world, nor all the treason-hatchers or sedition-mongers, no not all the penny-a-liners in Christendom can do half as much real, genuine mischief to the peace of this country and the prosperity of the United Kingdom as such a writer as Mr. Froude.[241]

The *Spectator*, though it put it less bluntly, supported this view

> An isolated district, lately in great part depopulated, and where the majority of the inhabitants are Irish-speaking people.… is not precisely the best point of view, perhaps, from which to study the case of Ireland; nor does Mr. Froude possess that spirit of sympathy with his subject which can alone make the study of the character, temper, appetites, and aspirations of a people, trustworthy. On the contrary, it may be not unfairly said that Mr. Froude simply loathes the Irish people, not consciously, perhaps, for he professes the reverse. But a certain bitter grudge breaks out despite his will now and then….[242]

Of Froude's comparison of the Irish to a pack of foxhounds (most certainly that which brought about its subsequent revision), it conjectured–'suppose the hound were to paint its master'.

With regard to Froude's account of Trench, the writer discussed 'the mere atmosphere of association', suggesting that this 'Oxford Fellow's' lack of shame in penning such stories meant he had lost his faculties, 'his mind has warped from associating with the class of mean whites'

> The proprietors of Kerry are one class and their agents are another class; and many of the proprietors of Kerry happen to be nearly as well known in London as they are in Kerry. Can anyone imagine Lord Castlerosse, or Mr. Herbert of Muckross, or the Knight of Kerry, or The O'Donoghue or Sir James O'Connell or the MacGillicuddy or Sir Rowland Blennerhassett executing what Mr. Froude calls a 'deliberate parade'?

The writer concluded with nothing short of a reprimand. If representative thinkers and writers, he wrote, would be 'a little less wild' in the use of their figures of speech, efforts towards fair play might be achieved

> Let us remember that we have heard Mr. Carlyle compare Ireland to a rat, and England to an elephant, whose business it is to squelch the rat on occasion; and that Mr. Froude can even nowadays find no better phrase by which to describe the relations of the two islands than that of a kennel of hounds to its master's whip.

Through the columns of the *Spectator* Froude sought to explain. On the subject of Trench, he wrote, 'it was only by accident that the story was published' and that 'it

---

[241] *op. cit.*

[242] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo* (from the *Spectator*), 7 February 1871. Froude was adept in many languages but it is not known if he had mastered the Irish language, though it seems likely on account of his interaction with the locals.

appears that he [Trench] did not parade opposite the drawing-room windows'.[243] One week later Lansdowne wrote to the same paper on the matter of the eviction on his property, in which he sought to clarify the particulars of the holding.[244]

This letter in turn was followed up the following week from one incredulous John Crompton Todd, who had re-let the lands to the evicted tenant. 'No man of honour would have attempted to disturb him', he wrote, but 'Lord Lansdowne is a young man … allowances must be made for his want of experience'.[245]

Lansdowne was indeed young, and newly-wed. In September 1871, bonfires, fireworks, illuminations and a clergy of both denominations united in Kerry to greet Lord and 'our own Queen, Lady Lansdowne', who was presented with a bracelet of 'a broad and massive band of gold with an immense sapphire surrounded by brilliant diamonds'. The couple had arrived at Derreen, 'their beautiful mountain home', no longer as 'mere visitors', but to take up occupation.

'We are to be evicted without compensation', Froude had written to Skelton in March 1870, just before he published the first of his two-part essay.[246] A sense of grievance at his ousting from Derreen may have contributed to his disregard of Lansdowne's affairs appearing in his concluding essay in January 1871.

The publication of *Fortnight II* coincided with that of another that drew from the same source. William Steuart Trench had followed up his *Realities* with a history of Ireland, which he published, on advice, under the guise of fiction. Entitled *Ierne* (in two volumes) it received a hostile reception in the Kerry press, colliding with the harsh attacks on *Fortnight*.[247]

Another history was also in its concluding stages. Convent Sister-cum-historian Mary Frances Cusack was in 1871 putting the finishing touches to her own publication, *A History of the Kingdom of Kerry*. Describing Froude as a 'poetical historian', she succeeded in incorporating an attack on his essay into the preface of her book just before going to print in February.

Her preface, hastily written, amounted to little more than an uninformed outburst, a public telling-off without an explanation. *Fortnight* embraced so large a range of accusation, she wrote, 'that it is scarcely possible to treat each subject'. In like fashion, she informed the reader of 'grave misrepresentations of fact and opinion in the article … but it would be out of place to mention them here'.[248]

Cusack, who like Froude valued the importance of anecdotal evidence for the light it threw on contemporary history, was born in Dublin in 1829 and raised in Froude's own Devonshire countryside. Indeed Dr. Pusey had encouraged her passage into the church. Later converting to the Catholic faith (and later again back to Protestantism), she was for twenty years from 1861 serving the parish in Kenmare.[249]

---

[243] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo,* 14 February 1871 (from the *Spectator).* An explanation described by a Dingle correspondent in the same paper (edition 21 Feb) as more incredible than the original article.
[244] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo,* 14 February 1871 (from the *Spectator).*
[245] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo,* 28 February 1871.
[246] Skelton (1895) p. 142. Estate accounts indicate that Froude was refunded a sum of money in 1870 for shooting rent; Gerard J. Lyne, *Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society* No: 19, 'John Townsend Trench's Reports on The Lansdowne Estates in Kerry 1863-73', 1986.
[247] Trench was dissuaded from publishing as Gladstone's Land Act was under discussion in Parliament.
[248] M. F. Cusack, *A History of the Kingdom of Kerry*, Dublin: Edmund Burke, 1995 (facsimile of 1871).
[249] Sister Mary Francis Clare Cusack, *The Story of My Life*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1883, p. 9.

She accounted the attack in her preface as justice to the County of Kerry because 'five hundred years hence, anything written by the author of the *History of England* will be quoted as authority'.

Paradoxically, in tying his name to the outset of her history, she assured Froude a link to the county for as long as her book, which is still in print today and described as 'an authoritative reference work', is read.[250]

Froude intended that *Fortnight* might promote relations between the two countries and shed light on Ireland's true condition. He succeeded more perhaps than he could have realized in his own time. The controversy that blazed in the wake of *Fortnight* was testament to the growing rift between a developing nation and the Empire; this *was* Ireland's true condition.

The issue at heart was not Froude's relationship to Ireland, not the right or wrong of his opinions, nor the anecdotal nature of his essay. The issue was Froude as the embodiment of a power in decline. He almost recognized this himself, but was not then in a position to interpret its full meaning

> I was an instance in my own person of the mistakes which Englishmen seem doomed to make when they meddle, however lightly, with this singular people….[251]

He might have written, 'I was an instance in my own person of the mistakes which Englishmen made'.

Surprisingly, *Fortnight* still rankles today. Gerard Lyne, in his recent study of the Lansdowne Estate, had no appetite for Froude, wishing that he 'had confined his writings on Ireland to topographical description'.[252] The history of the human condition, however, demands more than that supplied by topography.

Froude continued to visit Ireland; he yachted to Kenmare in 1877 and as late as 1880 he wrote to Skelton, 'Trench is tempting me back to the Kenmare river'.[253] In 1888, he was again offered Derreen.[254] He was never to return as a resident.

But in the summer of 1872, Froude did return briefly to the scene of his ousting when he cruised the Kenmare river with Lord Ducie–'Derreen was beautiful as ever'.[255] Perhaps it was just as well Froude had left, for in this year he also published the first of a three-volume work entitled *The English in Ireland*.

If *Fortnight* had caused upset, it amounted to little more than a sob in the face of this latest venture.

---

[250] The irony of Cusack's fate would not have been lost on Froude; unable to shut her eyes 'to the evils of Rome and its unchristian character', she converted back to Protestantism and returned to England where 'Rome does not rule … may God in his mercy keep England free'. Cusack (1883) p. 384 & p. 389.
[251] *Fortnight in Kerry* (1871).
[252] Lyne (2001) p. 399.
[253] Markus (2005) p. 177; Skelton (1895) p. 170. Froude added, prophetically, 'if a Paddy shoots me … I shouldn't so much care. The world will not move to my mind for the next quarter of a century'.
[254] Dunn (1963) p. 386.
[255] Skelton (1895) p. 151.

Chapter Three
A Victorian Rebel

Chapter Three: A Victorian Rebel

i: Froude finds his Seat

I can see Derrynane the home of brave Dan,
Just on the horizon the sun it shines on,
On through the mountains to the Gap of Dunloe,
From that to Mangerton and the valley below.

The Vale of Dromaughty so historic to me,
Where the English historian wrote on history,
And only God's mercy that lake did not swell,
And sweep Froude and his writings right onward to H-

And o'er the Atlantic that tyrant did sail,
The names of the Irish he tried to blackmail,
But our famed Fr Burke who did him pursue,
And out of the States he banished him too.

Jeremiah O'Connor
1935[256]

In the grounds of Derreen, midway between the harbour and the house, is an area known today as 'Froude's Seat'. Secluded by trees, its location invites tranquility. A short distance away is the massive rock on which Froude stood to tell the history of Morty, inhabitant of Derreen before Lansdowne, who had shattered on the same rock, bottle by bottle, an appeasing hamper of wine sent by Lansdowne from London. A curse accompanied each libation.[257]

In such a setting Froude is said to have composed *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*. More likely he wrote here *A Fortnight in Kerry* and the many topical essays he published in *Fraser's magazine* during his period as editor in the 1860s to 1874.

Ireland was often the subject of his essays, and if not the subject, invariably drawn in to illustrate his compositions and speeches. At an address delivered to students of St. Andrew's in 1869 on the topic of education, Froude spoke of a future for Britons abroad as émigrés whom he hoped could look back on Britain, 'not like the Irish when they fly to America–as a stepmother who gave them stones for bread', but with pride. Holding up Ireland as an example of England's error of government, he said

> We said to the Irish cottier, you are a burden upon the rates; go find a home elsewhere…. we bade him carelessly go where he would, and shift as he could for himself, he went with a sense of burning wrong, and he left a festering sore behind him. Injustice and heedlessness have borne their fruits. We have raised up against us a mighty empire to be the rival, it may be the successful rival, of our power.[258]

[256] From *On Dromaughty Mountain October 1930*, related by Jeremiah O'Connor, Rock Lane, Kenmare on 16 January 1935; from School's Collection, p. p. 454-7 of S. Iml. 461, Barony of Glanerought, Neidin Boys School; stamped 7 August 1936 by the Irish Folklore Commission.
[257] *Fortnight in Kerry,* Part I, p. p. 524-525. (Also related in *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy.*)
[258] *Short Studies on Great Subjects,* Vol II, 'Education–An Address Delivered to the Students of St. Andrews, 19 March 1869', p. 468.

He returned to this theme in an essay which appeared in *Fraser*'s in January 1870, *England and Her Colonies*. The Irish in America, he wrote, were England's bitterest enemies

> The millions who fled from the famine carried with them the belief that it was England which, in one shape or other, was the cause of their misery…. it was their belief then. It is their belief now.

England cannot save the Irish, Froude continued, 'that portion of her volumes the sibyl has burnt already'; but England could follow her example and 'do for England what Ireland did for itself'.

In this same year Froude had completed the final volume of his *History of England*, the Irish press keeping a careful eye for 'misrepresentations' by 'this Froude', this 'desperately and unscrupulously Anglo-Saxon and anti-Irish writer on English history'.[259] Froude now turned his pen to Ireland, urged on by Carlyle, who had failed in the task himself.[260]

Froude understood what reception such a project might receive not only from the reaction to *A Fortnight in Kerry* but also from the excited press response to Trench's thinly-veiled Irish history *Ierne*. During the month of February 1871 Trench's book rarely left the columns of *The Tralee Chronicle*; all commentary was hostile.[261]

The first volume of *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* was published in 1872. Contemporary criticism of the book was complicated by the furore that surrounded its publication–it coincided with a series of five lectures on English-Irish relations delivered by Froude in America. In this respect the book can be seen as a political history of the nineteenth century.[262]

So far as it is possible to separate a *History* from response to Froude's political outlook, the attempt aids a clearer picture to emerge of his role in both.

ii: Froude as Politician

> Is it so certain that we shall never be entangled
> again in the quarrels of the continent?
> *Short Studies II*

In the autumn of 1872 in America, Froude, a lone representative of England, foresaw the outcome of racial disharmony in Ireland fifty years before the Treaty

> If I know anything of the high-spirited, determined men in the north of Ireland, they would no more submit to be governed by a Catholic majority in a Dublin parliament than New England would have

[259] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo,* 3 June 1870, 'James Anthony Froude and the Spanish Armada'. Of critics of his *History*, Froude wrote, 'the reviewers knew so little of the subject themselves that they did not recognise that I had anything new to say'; Dunn (1961) p. 200.

[260] Carlyle had seen that to write on Ireland, 'as if a remedy could be found there', would be labour 'vain as spinning ropes of moonshine,' Clubbe (1979) p. 478.

[261] *The Tralee Chronicle* reproduced articles from *The Freeman*, the *London Echo*, and the *London Weekly Reporter*. The *Chronicle's* editor assigned space in four February editions to give voice to the book and an open letter addressed to Lord Lansdowne from one of Kenmare's 'unpaid police of Ireland', Catholic priest John Sullivan, also filled its columns.

[262] Froude's *History* might have drawn from any century with similar results; the subject of Irish history at this period was a contentious subject for an English historian.

> submitted to a convention of slave-owners sitting at Richmond. Within a year either England would have again to interfere, or there would be a civil war in Ireland itself….[263]

'The world has suffered enough from sectarian bigotry', he stated, 'which one of us knows as much as another, and all know next to nothing'.[264]

Froude was speaking on the issue of Home Rule on the occasion of his fifth and final lecture; Home Rule, the land issue, education, post-famine social revolution–Froude did not remain silent on the burning political issues of the late nineteenth century. He addressed the social revolution that had followed the Famine, in which he implicated the Irish among its causes, and defended England's efforts to alleviate its effects

> Cobbett long before had dwelt upon the madness of allowing an enormous population to spring up like mushrooms…. no one listened to Cobbett. Not O'Connell…. Not England…. Did the priests ever show a fear that their flocks were growing too large?.... Can a single Catholic Irishman be pointed to who expressed any word of alarm? Who showed any glimmer of foresight?[265]

Of ten millions of money in aid voted in Parliament eight millions of it, he claimed, was 'embezzled by intermediaries'. 'That was not England's fault'.

Of the 'political delirium' that followed the Famine, he described the Young Ireland movement as a 'scuffle in a cabbage garden…. not till then had insurrection been ridiculous'. Speaking from his first-hand experience of Ireland in 1848, he went on

> The whole movement was hollow. When I asked them what they would do when they had got power, not one of them could tell me. The delusion was from the lips outwards. It was the very shadow of a dream, which vanished at the first rattle of a policeman's musket.[266]

Dismissing the Movement as a comedy, he moved on to more substantial effects of the Famine, the passing of a Poor Law whereupon 'the days of idleness and amusement for squires and squireens were over'. Of the Encumbered Estates Froude approved, seeing that it would 'at last give back the Irish soil to the Irish nation'.[267]

Of the exodus, Froude idealized on how he would conduct his own Parliament, how he would provide opportunity of emigration if desired, and re-settle at the government's expense those who wished to go to the States, yet he also realized that the remedy for Ireland's ills was to break the connection with England, to remove the 'splinter in the wound': 'the heart of the matter lies in the land'.[268]

On this issue he relit the fire kindled in *Fortnight*: 'It is high treason to say a word against O'Connell', he said, 'very well, I must be a traitor'

> O'Connell was for eighteen years all but omnipotent on Irish subjects. Had he cared to use his enormous influence to pass a Land Act he might have stopped unjust evictions a generation before

[263] *Short Studies on Great Subjects,* Vol II, 'Ireland since the Union–last of the USA Lectures October and November 1872, p. 557. Paul wrote of this American trip, 'It is impossible not to admire the chivalrous and intrepid spirit with which he undertook single handed to justify the conduct of his countrymen before the American people', p. 202.
[264] *Ibid*. p. 532.
[265] *Ibid*. p. p. 534-5.
[266] *Ibid*. p. 539.
[267] *Ibid*. p. 542.
[268] *Ibid.* p. 553.

> Mr. Gladstone stopped them. On O'Connell's own estate the finest peasantry in the world were as hunger-stricken as in any other part of the island.[269]

No Irish legislature would have passed the Land Act, he claimed, as he progressed to the subject of Home Rule, an Act he believed would result in a 'priest's parliament' which would tell the people, 'for whom alone I care' to make do with your lot as given by God.

Religion, where the occasion afforded it, coloured Froude's speech. The subject was raised continuously. Education, he stated, provided free by the government to Catholic and Protestant so that 'all may be brought up together and learn together and leave off hating each other', was not embraced for 'the priests do not like it. They consider their young people to be tainted by companionship with heretics'.[270]

Conversely, Froude offered a measure of praise to the Catholic clergy, drawing on his own experience of life at Derreen, where he lived with 'unlocked door and open windows with as much security as if we had been among the saints in paradise'

> Ireland is one of the poorest countries in Europe. There is less theft there, less cheating, less housebreaking, less robbery of all sorts, than in any country of the same size in the world.… this absence of vulgar crime and this exceptional delicacy and modesty of character, are due alike, to their everlasting honour, to the influence of the Catholic clergy.[271]

Drawing his speech to the moment, Froude addressed the subject of revolution, which he felt was justifiable only when all other means had failed, 'when the wrong is so deep' that 'intellect and conscience' had passed to the insurgent side. If such a point was arrived at, he said, 'then I would say go–deliver Ireland'. Addressing the Fenian movement in language that can only be determined as deliberately inciteful, Froude challenged the qualities of the organization in a revolutionary struggle, describing its members as 'do-nothings'.

Small wonder that with threats made on his life, Froude's lectures were cut short and he returned to England.

Froude's political argument on all stages of Ireland's development was so well measured through research and intellectual interpretation that it proved difficult to refute him. Voices raised, fists shook, death threats emerged, but he had no able opponent. Write about what you know, he had learned from Goethe, and on Irish history Froude had done his homework.

Galway born Very Rev. Thomas N. Burke, son of a baker and popular Dublin preacher, happened to be touring the States in 1872. He felt 'the blood boil in his veins' at Froude's lectures. In 1872 he published a reply to Froude's five lectures to 'defend faith and country', a faith that he stated would 'not fall before the small, though poisoned spear of a Froude'.

The historian had no right, he claimed, to go to America and 'cast the horoscope of Ireland's future' because Froude was an actual living example of English contempt for Ireland. The philosophy of Irish history could never be understood by such a man, he argued, who ignored the strong pride of the Irish.[272]

---

[269] *Ibid*. p. 531.
[270] *Ibid*. p. 532.
[271] *Ibid*. p. 525.
[272] Thomas N. Burke, *Ireland's Case Stated in Reply to Mr Froude*, New York, P. J. Kenedy, 1883. To understand the level of passion Froude raised in Burke, the following passage will illustrate: 'If any man dare to come–as long as I live–to say that England's treatment

Burke admitted at the outset he was not qualified to reply to Froude's views of Irish history and his subsequent efforts proved this. At times he used curious language for a man in his position

> Earl Strafford went home rejoicing that he had got these subsidies and this body of men; but no sooner did he arrive in England than the parliament, now in rebellion, laid hold of him, and in that same year, 1640, Strafford's head was cut off, and it would be a strange Irishman that would regret it.[273]

And again on the issue of Cromwell

> For a people thus forsaken, down-trodden, as our fathers were, would not one, any one, of these reasons be sufficient justification to rise?[274]

As a political opponent, Burke fared better, resorting to personal attack for dramatic effect. 'I must say I never practically experienced the difficulty of hunting a will-o-the-wisp in a marsh, until I came to follow this learned gentleman', he declared, offering words of guidance in matters historical

> I would advise the learned gentleman, seeing the manner in which he treats history, to sacrifice to Mercury for the gift of a better memory.[275]

Froude was not relying on memory, however, he worked from fact. Burke's use of an oral tradition did not stand up when the 'theys'–'They made laws declaring that the killing of an Irishman was no felony'–could be neither identified nor supported.

Though lacking in historical substance, Burke's reply inadvertently captured the symbolism of the occasion

> [he] has come here, though not a Catholic, like a man going to confession. He has cried out loudly and generously 'we have sinned'. The verdict he calls for must surely regard the future more than the past….[276]

America, superpower in the making, was indeed supplying, if not the confession box, the stage on which England and Ireland could air their differences and so work towards resolution. In effect refereeing the domestic ails of Europe.

As Froude looked from the past into the future, his rhetorical tone was empirical; he was able to think beyond the age of empire (many of his predictions have proved right) but he could not avoid being a part of it, decadent or no. At a deeper level he understood Empire had had its day. A little over a decade later he wrote

> The British Empire will dwindle down before long into a single insignificant island in the North Sea….[277]

---

of Ireland was just, and was necessary … if any man dare say that, either at home or abroad, Irishmen have ever shown the white feather in the hour of danger–if I was on my death-bed, I would rise to contradict him'. P. 151.

[273] *Ibid.* p. 105.
[274] *Ibid*. p. 107.
[275] *ibid*. p. 208.
[276] *ibid*. p. 217.
[277] Dunn (1963) p. 557.

Burke also understood the decline of English supremacy. He wrote

> History tells us that empires, like men, run the cycle of the years of their life, and then die.… Who would have imagined … that the greatest power that was to sway the whole Roman Empire would be the little unknown island floating out in the Western ocean.… England has been a long time at the top of the wheel. Do you imagine she will always remain there?[278]

Burke conjectured about Ireland's future. Though he noted the growing power of Germany, Austria and Russia in the face of an English army that he described as 'nothing', he envisaged that Ireland would take her liberty not from men, but from God.

Both men were on equal ground on the future of the United States: 'America will be to the whole world what Rome was and what England was a few years ago … she will rise rapidly into that gigantic power that will overshadow all other nations'. And for her European trade, wrote Burke, 'Ireland lies there, right between her and Europe'.

'Bully Burke', wrote Carlyle shortly before Froude's return to England, in the light of fierce press criticism, the essence of which he discerned as 'absolutely nothing' and to deserve from Froude 'no more regard than the barking of dogs'

> what he is saying about Ireland is the genuine truth, or the nearest to it that has ever been said by any person whatever … all the circumambient balderdash and whirlwinds of nonsense tumbling round it are and eternally remain nothing.[279]

The 'circumambient balderdash and whirlwinds of nonsense' had been carefully numbered by former Young Irelander John Mitchel (who was warned by Carlyle when they met in Ireland in 1849 that he would most likely be hanged). Then living in America, Mitchel noted the power of Froude's oratory and writing to act upon the passions of men.

1641: Reply to the Falsification of History by James Anthony Froude is an example of such aroused passion. Mitchel published his reply in 1873, numbering himself the fifty-first critic of the delinquent, dishonest, treacherous, affronting and scandalizing evil sinner that was Froude.

Mitchel, unperturbed by the critics' track record, felt obliged to enter the same field as his fifty predecessors to expose the 'determined dishonesty and treachery of that pretended historian'.[280] Burke had disappointed him, had 'given up the whole case' and walked off 'almost hand-in-hand' with Froude.

Describing Froude as 'irritating enough to provoke a saint', Mitchel set himself a task that rationality–'the Historian brandishes before us 200,000 authorities'–would have shown him was doomed.[281] Eighty-nine pages of rant followed, aimed at a historian whose credentials he, with a typical Mitchel paradox, at once described as 'intimidating' and again as 'far less than nothing'.

More than half-way through his task, Mitchel remained undaunted

> Some readers, by this time, may be disposed to say, we have had enough of Froude: he is already convicted Impostor, and no historian: and it is making too much of him to keep pursuing him in this

[278] Burke (1883) p. 221.
[279] Dunn (1963) p. 383.
[280] John Mitchel, *1641: Reply to the Falsification of History by James Anthony Froude entitled The English in Ireland* subtitled 'The Crusade of the Period', London: Cameron and Ferguson, 1873. Note Mitchel later published a history of 1840s Ireland, *The Last Conquest of Ireland, Perhaps.*
[281] *Ibid.* p. 16.

> way. Certainly, it is making too much of *Froude*, himself, whose literary pretensions I estimate very low, and whose historic merits are far less than nothing. He composes fiction in a picturesque style: and ought to have confined himself to that species of composition. He could match Mrs. Emma Southworth, or our graphic fellow-countryman Captain Mayne Reid. If he would contribute a striking tale of horror to the New York *Weekly Fee-Faw,* he could command more per column than ever did Sylvanus Cobb; but he had no call to the writing of history. However, it still seems needful to expose a little more of his misdealing….[282]

The bulk of Mitchel's text was given over as a reply to the opening chapters of Froude's *History,* which dealt with events of 1641. Too enraged to form any semblance of an argument, Mitchel's rodomontade was uncontrolled and unsupported. When confronted with the repercussions of the period, his steam was evidently out. 'It is not my purpose to follow Froude through all his details relating to the Cromwellian settlement', he wrote, surmising that perhaps Burke had not fared too badly in the task of Reply after all

> Perhaps I should never have undertaken to expose any of the delinquencies of Froude, but that the excellent Father Burke, in his most admirable course of lectures, dealt so gently with the Impostor, and even admitted his honesty and good faith. Father Burke's lectures, as I read them now in their collected form, appear to me a most complete answer, and most scathing rebuke; a work, indeed, which will live while the Irish race lives. If I have ventured to come forward into the same field, it has been mainly with a view of exhibiting not the honesty and good faith, but the determined dishonesty and treachery of that pretended historian; and to show that all this has been perpetrated with the odious intention of affronting and scandalizing a whole race and nation. I am not so good a Christian as Father Burke; and it gives me pleasure to think that I may have contributed a little to destroy such remnant of credit as Froude had, whether at home or abroad…. I would counsel him–after the example of his Cromwellian heroes–to fall down upon his knees, and seek the Lord and wrestle nightly with the Lord, so that, peradventure, grace might be given him to repent, and confess, and receive absolution of his sin.[283]

'Let them [Froude's critics] not imagine that they can impale such a man as this upon the horn of an inverted comma', Mitchel had written at the outset, Froude was 'too hard a nut' to crack. As with his predecessors, Mitchel surrendered his pen, his opponent very much intact.[284]

For all his anger Mitchel was shrewd enough to see the political impact of Froude's commentary. Froude knew well, he wrote, that he was lighting a political fire, 'a fire that he has little conception of'.[285]

iii: Froude the Historian

> Facts were made for us and if we evade
> or deny them, it will be the worse for us
> *Short Studies I*

When the Normans took charge of them, wrote Froude, surveying historical method of conquest, the Irish were scarce more than a mob of armed savages with a temperament depicted best in the character of Shakespeare's Captain Macmorris.[286] The turning point

[282] *Ibid.* p. 48.
[283] *Ibid.* p. p. 88-89.
[284] *Ibid.* p. 17.
[285] *Ibid*. p. 18.
[286] Captain Macmorris, character in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, the only Irishman presented in Shakespeare's plays.

as far as English-Irish antagonism went, he wrote, came in 1641 with the insurrection that culminated in Cromwell. Using supporting documentary evidence, Froude described in gruesome detail the fate of thousands of Protestants at the hands of Irish rebels in 1640s Ireland. He did not spare the dramatic content of his supporting documentation

> They put both man, woman, and child that are Protestants to the sword, not sparing either age, sex, degree, or reputation. They have stripped naked many Protestants, and so sent them to the city–men and women. They have ravished many virgins and women before their husbands' faces, and taken their children and dashed their brains against the walls in the sight of their parents…. cutting off their ears, fingers, and hands, plucking out their eyes, boiling the hands of little children before their mothers' faces, stripping women naked and ripping them up….[287]

History, Froude continued, 'has permitted the massacre of 1641 to be forgotten'. From this 'turning point' Froude proceeded with his history, devoting almost half of the first volume to the seventeenth century and the subsequent two and a half volumes to the eighteenth.

In December 1873, Froude informed Skelton he had been working hard to complete the book, for which he confessed the Irish would hate him, 'which I do not wish, as I cannot return the feeling'.[288]

Published shortly afterwards in the early spring of 1874, Froude had concluded the work at the period of the Union of 1800, quoting a passage from Lord Cornwallis's speech to draw his history to a close, a passage that portrayed Ireland as Froude would wish it

> I hope I feel as becomes a true Irishman for the dignity and independence of my country. I would therefore elevate her to her proper station in the rank of civilized nations. I would advance her from the degraded post of a mercenary province to the proud station of an integral and governing member of the greatest empire in the world.[289]

At just forty-four pages, the final chapter was the shortest in the third and final volume. 'None of the reviews noted the falling off at the end of the book', wrote Froude to his daughter Margaret in April.[290]

The 'falling off' referred to the sudden death of Froude's wife Henrietta, following which he had been 'drowned in black deluges of woe as no other man in London'.[291] Bereaved and widowed once again, with a new set of young children to care for, Froude was left to face the backlash of criticism of his book alone.

One who took immediate umbrage to the volumes was Warden Hatton Flood, relative of celebrated Henry Flood, who committed his anger to text. Entitled *Notes and Historical Criticisms on Mr. A. Froude's English in Ireland in the 18th Century*, and published in 1874, it failed to live up to its title. In fact, its venomous content reduced it to little more than a vicious personal attack in defence of his relative in language that

---

[287] James Anthony Froude, *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century,* Vol I, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1881, p. p. 113-114.
[288] Skelton (1895) p. 152. To another friend Froude explained the book's purpose, 'the meaning of the book as a whole is to show what comes of forcing uncongenial institutions on a country to which they are unsuited', Dunn (1963) p. 370.
[289] James Anthony Froude, *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century,* Volume III, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1882, p. 555.
[290] Dunn (1963) p. 390.
[291] *Ibid.* p. 388.

described Froude as, among other things, a malicious, prejudiced zealot, a violent partisan, a modern Diogenes.[292]

A synopsis of Froude's work will serve to illustrate the cause of such an impassioned response: Froude's handling of the 1760-90 period, when a free representative legislature, 'which yet was not free and was not representative', existed in Dublin, where political decisions were shaped in London for 'a gentry which could not rule–a church which could not teach–laws which could not be enforced'.[293]

Such consequences in Ireland had resulted from the preference of unreality to fact, wrote Froude. For the fact was, as he saw it, that Ireland was a foreign country and England preferred to assume otherwise. It provided a mock parliament in which the national discontent could find a voice, yet one that if it threatened to become a reality would cease to exist.

Froude drew a picture of the condition of Ireland in the years prior to Flood's entry on the political stage. 'The country was sworn to secrecy', he wrote of the Whiteboys, the most remarkable feature of this period being, he discerned, the ability of thousands to conceal the scheme of organized revolt from the strictest investigation. Of absentee landlords at this time, 'they cared no more for those who provided them an income from Ireland than the owners of a West Indian plantation would for the slaves whose backs were blistering in the cane fields'.[294]

While the government was quibbling over a pension scheme, he wrote, 'the sole authority recognized and obeyed was the Whiteboy committee'. Such was 'the general drift of the stream' before an attempt was to be made to crush the oligarchy.[295]

Let us pause for a moment, wrote Froude, to notice a few persons obscure and unheard of at this time, 'about to pass to the front of the stage'. Introducing political figures and their pedigrees in the manner of a playwright, twenty-seven year old Flood entered Froude's stage, then–in 1759

> a handsome figure, a rich sonorous voice, and a mind stored with the phrases which millions of young Irish hearts were then prepared to accept as the Open Sesame of Paradise….[296]

He became at once the idol for Irish patriotism, and liberty as Flood understood it was the child 'not of facts of life but of eloquence'. Irish genius runs naturally to words, observed Froude.[297] Froude's dramatic impulse allowed his commentary of Flood's political life to cross the border of analysis and interpretation into what would today be determined as libel. Writing of Flood's political opponent Grattan, Froude wrote, 'compared with Flood he was sane'.[298]

Flood had demanded that the British parliament should pass an act renouncing 'forever' the legislation of Irish affairs, but 'nothing satisfied Flood', for Flood 'raged in tempest of words for hours and ended in a shriek'. Oratory is the saddest of efforts when the audience is out of sympathy with the speaker, added Froude.[299]

---

[292] Torquay: printed at the Directory Office, 1874.
[293] Froude (Vol II, 1882) p. 2.
[294] *Ibid*. p. 23.
[295] *Ibid*. p. p. 43 & 48.
[296] *Ibid*. p. p. 50-55.
[297] *Ibid*. p. 54.
[298] *Ibid*. p. 376.
[299] *Ibid*. p. 377.

Froude formed his account of Flood from state correspondence and illustrated parliamentary affairs with extracts of speeches made in the House of Commons. The oratory contained within them, the political mud-slinging scenes of debate in the parliament of the day, provided Froude with the dramatic material to bring the period to life. Here the true shape of history could be found–'attention floats loosely over generalities, and only individual instances can seize it and hold it fast'.[300]

Drawing from a scene between Grattan and Flood that occurred in the Commons in November 1783, Froude allowed both sides a hearing. The topic was Flood's speech on the reduction of the army. What ensued was a heated debate between Grattan and Flood about retrenchment

> I am not afraid of the right honourable gentleman. I will meet him anywhere on any ground, by night or day. I would stand poorly in my own estimation and in my country's opinion if I did not stand far above him. I do not come dressed in a rich wardrobe of words to delude the people. I am not one who, after saying Parliament was a parliament of prostitutes, made their voices subservient to my interest. I am not the mendicant patriot who was bought by my country for a sum of money, and then sold my country for prompt payment. I was never bought by the people, nor ever sold them. Give me leave to say if the gentleman enters often into this kind of colloquy he will not have much to boast of at the end of the session.[301]

Grattan rose to this challenge in a manner Flood had not anticipated

> Sir, your talents are not so great as your life has been infamous. You were silent for years, and you were silent for money. When affairs of consequence to the nation were debating, you might be seen passing by these doors like a guilty spirit waiting for the moment of putting the question that you might hop in, and give your venal vote…. Or you might be seen hovering over the dome like an ill-omened bird of night, with sepulchral note, a cadaverous aspect, and broken beak, ready to stoop and pounce upon your prey. You can be trusted by no man. The people cannot trust you. The Ministers cannot trust you. You deal out the most impartial treachery to both. You tell the nation it is ruined by other men, while it is sold by you. You fled from the embargo; you fled from the sugar bill. I therefore tell you, in the face of the country, before all the world, and to your beard, you are not an honest man.[302]

'An Irish row in its wildest form', observed Froude (one which culminated in custody to prevent a duel) 'in which two leading members could rate each other like fishwomen, was unlikely to command authority in Ireland'.[303]

Warden Hatton Flood considered the period of 1760-90 the most important since the time of Molyneux. He had written to Froude when he learned of his work on this period for *The English in Ireland*, and offered him documentation and 'every assistance in his power'.

'I thought a writer whose name had a certain notoriety might be trusted to write an impartial account of the character of a great celebrity in the history of Ireland in the eighteenth century', he wrote in his *Notes*, and did not conceive that Froude would 'misrepresent or disfigure every trait in a public life of thirty years'. Froude should not be writing personal history, he commented, let alone the history of a nation, and he warned that if Froude thought the dead do not bite he needed to think again.

---

[300] *Short Studies on Great Subjects,* Vol I, 'England's Forgotten Worthies', p. 478.
[301] Froude (Vol II) p. p. 409-410.
[302] *Ibid*. p. p. 411-412.
[303] *op. cit.*

Like Mitchel, Warden's anger subsided in the face of abject criticism; 'I pass over the malicious slanders' as 'too contemptible to be seriously noticed'. What his attack did unwittingly achieve was to illustrate Froude's integrity in his historical method. Warden published a selection of letters in his *Notes,* his letters of protest to Froude's publisher and letters exchanged with Froude during 1873, and one in 1874 when arrangements were made for Warden to collect his papers.

Froude's letters to Warden Hatton Flood concealed nothing of his intention. If Warden believed that in offering assistance to Froude he had assured a measure of sympathy and support in the historical portrayal of his relative, then he knew nothing of this man. In May 1873, Froude had praised Warden's own published memoir of Henry Flood, which he had evidently supplied to Froude

> I attach great value to biographies of this kind. It is here only that we find the personal traits of the principal actors in history, which put flesh on their bones and blood in their veins.[304]

But he had also advised Warden that he was 'in possession of some very curious correspondence' between Flood and Lord Harcourt and the English Cabinet previous to his taking office.

Four months later, Froude's research had provided him with the light in which he would cast Flood. He wrote to Warden from Glenlyn, Lynmouth in September

> I cannot say I admire your distinguished kinsman. The great orator I conceive to have always been a misfortune to your country. But of Grattan, I have a very bad opinion indeed … on every measure of real value to Ireland, he was always in opposition. Wolf Tone, is to me, distinctly superior to Grattan.[305]

Froude wrote again to Warden from London in October

> I am not at all surprised at your great kinsman's political conduct; probably any ingenuous and ardent man who wished well to his country, would have felt and acted as he did. I do not think either he or Grattan contributed to the true welfare of Ireland–as events turned out–yet it is hard to say what they could have done better. England then, as always, refused to consider the most necessary acts of justice till they were forced upon her; and though I believe it would have been happier for Ireland could she have been governed as we now govern India, by a Council acting strictly for the good of the people, England had not then awakened to the consciousness that the good of Ireland was an object she was bound to promote.[306]

Froude's *English in Ireland* brought him friends as well as enemies. One who greatly admired his history was Samuel Murray Hussey, the best known of Irish land agents. In 1874 Hussey had assumed the agency of the Earl of Kenmare's estates, operating from offices in Killarney and Tralee, and with residences in both towns (Edenburn in Tralee and Aghadoe House in Killarney). Captain Henry A. Herbert numbered among his principal clients.[307]

---

[304] Warden Hatton Flood, *Notes and Historical Criticisms on Mr. A. Froude's English in Ireland in the 18th Century*, Torquay: Directory Office, 1874.
[305] *ibid.*
[306] *op. cit.*
[307] *Journal of the Kerry Arachaeological & Historical Society*, no 21, 1988, 'The Kenmare Estates during the Nineteenth Century', by James S. Donnelly jr.

On reading Froude's book, which he 'found so accurate and informative', Hussey had written to the historian with a request that they should meet. A long and intimate friendship ensued, a friendship that was 'one of the privileges of [his] life'.[308] Hussey believed Froude was not only 'the most gifted writer' he had ever met, but one who 'understood Ireland better than any other Englishman'.[309]

Hussey's *Reminiscences*, which Froude had encouraged him to write, included an account of his friend–'a broad-minded man, who hated petty misconception or a narrow view of anything'–that in its writing highlights the affection and regard Hussey held for him.[310]

Hussey was convinced that Froude would have made a mark at Westminster, 'more than his friend Lecky', and wrote too on Froude's relationship with Carlyle (who would form the subject of Froude's next major work). He regretted that Froude was in 1904 degraded to mere chronicler of 'the bilious sage of Chelsea' to the detriment of his 'own great services to historical literature'.[311] Hussey believed Froude's prediction of the recession of the British colonies to be correct, and that 'nothing has happened since his death to shake its inherent probability'.[312]

The two corresponded on Irish affairs; Hussey recalled how Froude once wrote of governmental 'quack measures' in Ireland, 'I see they are putting some fresh sticks under the Irish pot, so it will soon boil over'.[313]

'It would certainly be of interest to give a few of his racy letters, too often undated, which I have preserved', wrote Hussey of their twenty-year friendship, but 'his executors firmly refuse the necessary legal consent, so that I am compelled to make my book irreparably the poorer by omitting what should have been one of its most attractive contents'.[314]

Neither friend nor foe was another Co. Kerry resident, Mary Agnes Hickson. In 1872 and 1874, Hickson had published at her own expense two volumes of historical records entitled *Selections from Old Kerry Records Historical and Genealogical*. Based on historical manuscripts she had inherited from her father, the volumes served to establish her reputation as a historian.

It cannot be said how Froude became acquainted with this woman, though as a member of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, their introduction may have been through fellow antiquarian Rev. Graves. Certainly Froude made use of Hickson's records for his *English in Ireland*.[315]

Longman's published the first of two volumes of Hickson's subsequent work, *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century or The Irish Massacres of 1641-2,* a work which was prefaced

---

[308] Home Gordon, *The Reminiscences of an Irish Land Agent, Being those of S M Hussey*, London: 1904, p. 282.
[309] *ibid.*
[310] *ibid*. p. 283.
[311] Only once, wrote Hussey, had Froude mentioned Carlyle to him during their long friendship and then in illustration of a contemporary situation in Ireland on which they had been conversing. 'There was nothing to show me my friend was utterly absorbed in the Carlyles', he wrote, 'on the contrary, he was a man full of keen interests of which they were only one'. And 'a subordinate one', he noted, adding, 'He would have been horrified at the prurient indecency with which the most private affairs of the Carlyles have been exposed and distorted to please a public which really has a higher moral tone than is possessed by those who have gibbeted the defenseless dead'. (p. 283.)
[312] Gordon (1904) p. 284.
[313] *ibid*.
[314] When Hussey died in 1913, he was the oldest magistrate in Co. Kerry and Froude would no doubt have delighted in the irony that despite numerous threats made on his life, which included his home at Tralee being dynamited in 1884, Hussey died 'peacefully in his bed' at Killarney aged 89 years (*The Kerry Evening Post*, 12 November 1913).
[315] Hickson scholar Russell McMoran believes their relationship began 'when Froude took information from Mary Hickson's *Old Kerry Records* for his Irish history'. Letter from McMoran to me dated 23 November 2008.

by Froude. The work appears to have been inspired by Froude's illumination of the subject in his *History*, combined with Hickson's own interest in the period following family genealogical research that had traced a rebellious ancestor to Cromwellian times.

Of Hickson little is known, though she was a woman with an ungovernable temper which revealed itself through the columns of the local press, which she held in 'a continual state of uproar' on issues historical, religious and political.[316] Tralee historian Russell McMoran is currently preparing a third volume of Mary Hickson's Old Kerry Records from material collected from her newspaper contributions, which he estimates at 300,000 words.

From such material McMoran has been unable to discern the Froude-Hickson relationship. He told me, 'she attacked Froude for his version of the Danish silver robbery at Ballyheigue, she attacked him for his *Fortnight in Kerry*, she attacked him over the preface he wrote for her book (which he re-wrote), but Mary Hickson attacked everyone'. Yet, he added, 'she paid tribute to him after he died'.[317]

Describing Victorian letter-writing as risqué, Russell added, 'I think Froude wrote the preface to Hickson's book on the seventeenth century as an act of kindness. He wanted to give it credibility and due importance. He was very well known and respected. Mary Hickson was an obscure genealogist with a very bad temper'.

Mary Hickson had set about transcribing a large number of depositions relating to the 1641 massacre for publication so that 'readers might judge them independently'. Hickson, wrote Froude in the preface

> … has no English prejudices, she is the descendant of some of the exiled and transplanted Irish and Anglo-Irish of 1649, she is keenly alive to the wrongs which her country has suffered at English hands…. she firmly believes many of her countrymen in 1641 committed frightful crimes, she explains better than any previous writer the causes which drove them into fury….[318]

'The confidence with which the innocence of the Irish of any such crimes is now insisted upon has been the growth of time', insisted Froude, yet on this important historical question, conciliation will not be good for 'anything which rests on a basis of cowardly lies'. Hickson's work, maintained Froude, would work towards 'the clear ascertainment of the truth' which would do more towards allaying hatreds between classes, creeds, and nations, 'than the most absolute reversal of the Act of Settlement of 1660'.

Citing Hickson's credentials, commended by scholars for ability and research, Froude named, among others, Lecky. W. E. H. Lecky offered the reply that Burke, Mitchel and his 'fifty' critics had been waiting for, one which answered Froude in exactly the daunting manner that he had insisted on: check his sources

> When the historian brandishes before us the 200,000 authorities which we must master before we can 'convict' him of even one error, he intimidates…. he offers to submit the examination of his authorities to a commission of five Irish Judges … and if they find that he has been unfaithful in citing any one, he will expunge that passage.[319]

---

[316] *The Kerry Magazine*, no 11, 2000; 'Mary Agnes Hickson: Forgotten Kerry Historian' by Russell McMoran.
[317] Correspondence between author and Mr. McMoran 23 November 2008. Froude substituted his tale of Trench and the eviction with one of Ballyheigue in the 1700s when he edited *Fortnight* for republication in *Short Studies*; as can be seen, even the substituted tale served to cause controversy.
[318] Mary Hickson, *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century or The Irish Massacres of 1641-2,* London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884.
[319] Mitchel (1873) p. 16.

Lecky and Froude were friends and near neighbours in London, having met at a literary dinner in 1865, during which Lecky had been magnetized by Froude's pictorial and amusing conversation.[320] Lecky had taken a role in the London circle that orbited Carlyle (he had listened to Carlyle speak of Cromwell and Ireland in complete though silent disagreement with 'almost everything he said') and had in the years before publication of *The English in Ireland* formed a suspicion that Froude's approach to Irish history might be more tongue-in-cheek than scholarly. He was also perturbed by what he viewed as a one-sided political philosophy.

Irish by birth and of a younger more liberal generation, Lecky set out to provide a rational, critical assessment of Froude's work devoid of the emotion that had disabled earlier attempts. This entailed following Froude's path into the archives in a manner described by Lecky's biographer as 'obsessive' (and in the process of which he helped to develop the method of historiography which insisted on using 'original sources').[321]

He later followed Froude into Co. Kerry, and a description of him has been left by J. F. Fuller, at whose gate Lecky stopped one summer afternoon to admire the scenery, close to the hotel at Parknasilla that had once been occupied by Rev. Graves. Fuller invited Lecky in for afternoon tea, during which they chatted about such things as the local scenery and books, where the 'unassuming' Lecky sat in a low armchair, the position of which

> seemed to reduce his body to the smallest proportions, exaggerating his ungainly limbs, and giving undue prominence to his feet, with a comical result….[322]

The result of Lecky's trail of Froude was an eight volume *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, the first two volumes published in 1878 (completed in 1890). On factual grounds Froude was not refuted, for in the final analysis, 'the fundamental difference between the two men was a difference of interpretation of basic historical facts'.[323]

Lecky's descriptions of events have been recently described as neither striking nor memorable due to a lack of imagination. In contrast to Froude, whose talent enabled him to see 'the dead as they appeared when alive', Lecky lacked the power of telling a story which is 'the historian's primary gift'.[324] Lecky's approach to Flood and the scene that Froude so vividly described demonstrates that difference

> In October 1783, in one of the debates on the proposed reduction of the forces, a violent altercation broke out between Flood and Grattan, and two invectives, both of them disgracefully virulent, and one of them of extraordinary oratorical power, made all cordial co-operation, for the future, extremely difficult. The interposition of the House prevented a duel…. the old friendship of the two leaders was at an end, and words had been spoken which could never be forgiven.[325]

---

[320] Donal McCartney, *W.E.H. Lecky, Historian and Politician 1838-1903*, Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1994, p. 64.
[321] *Ibid.* p. p. 75-77.
[322] J. F. Fuller, *Omniana: The Autobiography of an Irish Octogenarian*, London: Jarrolds Publishers Ltd, undated, p. 143. The sight put Fuller in mind of a description from Dickens, 'several legs too many and all of them too long'.
[323] Dunn (1963) p. 365; 'happily the efforts of Froude's enemies to question the historical accuracy of his work have come to naught. Time has been working in his behalf', wrote Dunn in his appraisal (1961), p. 8.
[324] *Eire-Ireland, A Journal of Irish Studies*, 'Lecky and Dicey: English and Irish Histories' by Norman Pilling, Minnesota: Irish American Cultural Institute, Fall, 1981.
[325] William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol II, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1897, p. 355. On Froude's death, Lecky wrote of their 29-year friendship, 'few men have borne themselves amid graver differences of opinion with such complete absence of personal bitterness,' Dunn (1963) p. 590.

In December 1880 Froude wrote to Skelton that he was adding a supplementary chapter to a new edition of his *English in Ireland* in which he 'said out his own mind' on Irish business. 'No one knows what is to be done–the government, I believe, as little as anyone … the worse symptom is the total absence of courage on all sides'.[326]

In this supplementary chapter Froude summed up the eight decades which had passed from the Union of 1800

> Ireland stands again before the world calling herself poor and miserable, and accusing the English connection as the occasion of her wretchedness: English authority is again paralysed….[327]

He quoted sixteenth-century Pandor to illustrate his exasperation, 'what might the King do more than he hath done?'.

Surveying the historical and political landscape of those eight decades, Froude clung fast to his convictions; 'O'Connell cared no more for the poor than the harshest of Protestant absentees,' and the condition of things which made the calamity of the Famine possible was due 'essentially to those who had undertaken the government of Ireland, and who had left Ireland to her own devices'. Of Gladstone who had determined the root of Irish strife as Protestant ascendancy, he wrote, 'he overthrew the Church; he passed a land Bill' but Gladstone did not see as Froude did the real grievance, 'the real grievance is our presence in Ireland at all'.[328]

'We cannot keep a people chained to us to be perennially wretched because it is inconvenient to us to keep order among them', he stated

> In an independent Ireland the ablest and strongest would come to the front…. there would be no longer the inversion of the natural order which is maintained by the English connection….[329]

Nature and fact may tell us, he went on, that 'an experiment which has lasted for seven hundred years shall be tried no longer'. In his final analysis, Froude concluded, 'let Ireland be free'.

iv: Froude's Contribution to Irish Historiography

> But mourn, my country, thus to thee
> The double boon assigned;
> What boots it that the land is free
> If chains are on the mind.[330]

One hundred and thirty-five years now separate Froude's *History* from modern Ireland. It is difficult to equate the passion this work evoked to the three volumes that stand innocuously on reference-only shelves today.[331] 'No man in our day has set so many historical and literary controversies afloat', wrote a contemporary, 'everyone reads him'.[332]

---

[326] Skelton (1895) p. 173.
[327] James Anthony Froude, *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., p. 556.
[328] *Ibid*. p. 581.
[329] *Ibid*. p. p. 584-585.
[330] Gallwey, Thomas, *Lays of Killarney Lakes and Occasional Poems*; Dublin: Hodges, Foster & Co., 1871.
[331] The three volumes that I consulted at Muckross Research Library were formerly property of the family of Henry Arthur Herbert.
[332] *The Kerry Evening Post,* 4 May 1889.

Froude's reading public in Ireland today is difficult to assess. Little of his Irish writing is readily available in the country's libraries; appearances suggest he lies now in the same ashes from which he lifted Flood.

Forty years ago, Donal McCartney, a recent biographer of Lecky, provided a balanced critique of *The English in Ireland*. 'Few Victorian politicians or intellectuals knew Ireland at first hand as well as James Anthony Froude', he began, 'yet none were denounced more bitterly for ignorance of things Irish than he'.[333]

As historian, McCartney argued, Froude's misfortunes began when he opened his *English in Ireland* with the period of 1641, for the period 'had not yet passed out of politics into history'. The shock of Froude's 'vivid retelling', though it served towards capitulating the era into such a sphere, indicted a nation as opposed to individuals. The result of this, stated McCartney, was that at the time of his writing (1969) the State papers on which Froude based his history had still not been published.

Having so fallen at the outset, Froude, suggested McCartney, fell again in allowing his views to encroach too far into his narrative

> The Floods and the Grattans and the O'Connells were all bag and wind (like Gladstone in England)…. Irish rebellions were made up of loud promises and vain performances…. the faults of the Irish were Roman priests and superstitions, demagogues and orators, cowardice, idleness, unruliness, military weakness and political failure….[334]

But as an imperialist tract, McCartney believed the book's significance had been overlooked; for though Froude condemned misgovernment of the past in Ireland, he exhibited in his writing the imperialism that had seen it that way.

To illustrate the political potency of Froude's work, McCartney noted that the weekly *Nation* covered the Burke controversy for four solid months. He believed that Froude added the ignition to the fuel and oxygen already present in Burke and O'Donovan Rossa, the ensuing fire burning long enough for Froude's work to be taken up and used in political propaganda on all sides (as for that matter was Lecky's).[335] Indeed, McCartney argued that the debate initiated by Froude foreshadowed and helped to prepare the ground for what was to come in the crises of land, Home Rule and the Troubles.

McCartney described Froude's *History* as a 'protest'

> I believe that this book was written not primarily to tell the story of Anglo-Irish relations in the past at all, but to state his views and to preach his solutions to the contemporary problems of Empire and Ireland, and responsible self-government and democracy. Historical narrative was merely the form which Froude naturally chose to present his case.[336]

Certainly Froude may have jacketed his motive with an unavoidable imperialistic 'protest', but the revival of Empire was not his true motivation, for he understood Empire had had its day 'even before he published his first volumes' of English history in 1856.[337] He understood it when he sat before Muckross Abbey in Killarney, as far back as 1848

---

[333] Donal McCartney, 'James Anthony Froude and Ireland: a Historiographical Controversy of the Nineteenth Century', published in *Historical studies* VIII, edited by T. D. Williams, Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 1971.
[334] *Ibid.* p. p. 175-6.
[335] Fenian O'Donovan Rossa had been delivering lectures in America to the detriment of England; Froude's lectures were designed to counter the damage.
[336] *Historical Studies* p. 174.
[337] Clubbe (1979) p. 31.

> Once, once for all, if you would save your heart from breaking, learn this lesson–once for all you must cease, in this world, to believe in the eternity of any creed or form at all. Whatever grows in time is a child of time, and is born and lives, and dies at its appointed day like ourselves.[338]

Froude designed his *History* in recognition of Ireland as distinct from England, as suggested in his title. He intended to portray how the two had not, did not, and would not mix.[339] That intention was ultimately a subtle and inseparable blend of history and politics bound with a deep and genuine concern for the country.

Froude's *History* is less of a manifesto, less of a protest, more of a lament, a dramatic farewell to an Empire he had been setting on his literary stage since the 1850s. Why? Because he cared; history had taught him to do that.

Twenty years after McCartney, it was noted that 'Froude's influence on Irish historiography was enormous'. This was the verdict of Professor Louis Cullen's *Reassessment of a Concept*, an exposé of Daniel Corkery's *The Hidden Ireland*.[340]

The Hidden Ireland, first published during the period of national revival, was intended by Corkery as 'a study of some of the Munster Gaelic poets of the eighteenth century'. Corkery determined that Lecky's *History* presented 'only a body that is dead and ripe for burial' and lacked 'the very life of the building'. Such a history could only be of value, he claimed, 'for information on the material conditions and the story of the Dublin parliament'.[341] For the spiritual conditions of the century, it was necessary to explore the territory neglected by historians, to unearth the 'hidden Ireland'.

The concept of a hidden Ireland, wrote Cullen, was primarily a literary one, 'yet the concept has been used as an historical interpretation not only by Corkery and other literary men, but by many historians'.[342] He argued that Corkery's achievement was to give a title to a concept which already existed in fact, a concept that did not spring from careful assessment of the historical or even literary evidence of the eighteenth century, but which originated in 'the complex character and outlook of James Anthony Froude [who] must be regarded as the effective creator of the hidden-Ireland concept'.[343]

Froude's dark and dramatic picture of British policy, suffused with sympathy and belief in the country's potential, produced 'an unqualified picture of havoc, oppression and poverty in Ireland'. Corkery developed this concept to impose a pattern on the eighteenth century rather than describe it, resulting in a poetically simplified history 'so filled with poverty, it does not deal with the poor at all'.[344]

In citing Lecky in his discourse, Corkery was conforming to what time had determined as the standard reference for the period of the eighteenth century. In Dublin today a statue looms large to Lecky (a short distance from another of O'Connell) its appearance over the

---

[338] Froude (1849) p. 18.
[339] Dunn (1963) p. 370.
[340] Louis Cullen, *The Hidden Ireland, Reassessment of a Concept*, Mullingar: The Lilliput Press, 1988.
[341] Daniel Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland, A Study of Gaelic Munster in the Eighteenth Century*, first published 1924, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd, 1977.
[342] Cullen (1988) p. 4.
[343] *Ibid*. p. 7.
[344] *Ibid.* p. 35. An irony that would not have been lost on Froude. *Fraser's Magazine*, 'forerunner of the modern magazine' which was edited by Froude during the period 1860-74, pilloried all sentimental forms and maintained an anti-romantic quality that sought to contribute to the growing awareness of Ireland and its life in all its actuality. It attacked, for example, a popular travelogue as a conformation to the patronizing manner of English visitors to Ireland. In its origin of staff, however–William Maginn, Francis Mahony, Crofton Croker, Daniel Maclise and Mr. S. C. Hall–it has been described, ironically, as 'a continuation of the vibrant Munster culture,' which related it more to the eighteenth century than the Victorian age. *Eire-Ireland, a Journal of Irish Studies*, XV: I, 'Daniel Maclise, Disraeli, and *Fraser's Magazine*' by John Turpin, Minnesota: Irish American Cultural Institute, Spring 1980.

years unaltered by little more than that left by the birds. Froude meanwhile is fortunate to find a footnote.

'That perverse Victorian', wrote R. F. Foster of Froude in *Modern Ireland*, 'chronicler of Protestant heroism and catholic villainy'–to be valued only for bringing forth Lecky's riposte.[345] More recently Gerard Lyne leant on this judgment to dismiss Froude's history, 'not so much a history as an exercise in polemics, the writer giving free rein to his crude political and racial prejudices'.[346]

Evidently those prejudices cannot be said to have been resolved. Almost a century and a half ago Froude wrote

> At that far distant period when religious and political passion will allow a hearing to historical truth, the merits of the small section of resident Anglo-Irish gentlemen who, under their heavy disadvantages, refused to despair of their country, will not fail of honourable recognition.[347]

The 'small section' that did brave life in the unsettled Ireland of the nineteenth century can be traced on the Protestant tombs in the Protestant graveyards of the country, repeated on plaques in Protestant churches, memory of them burned out in the aftermath of Independence.

In the chapel of the Protestant graveyard at Muckross, Froude would have read an inscription there during his stay in Killarney in 1848, which offered just the kind of dramatic scene that inspired him

> This church of Killegy was built
> as a family mortuary chapel
> by Maurice Hussey of Cahirnane
> late colonel in the army of King James II
> At his death in 1714
> His body was borne here by his 4 sons
> And buried at midnight by torchlight

The 'merits' of the small section Froude wrote of, a section that Froude lived among, socialized in, observed and upset, remains in want of research and assessment in the context of rational and reasoned historiography. The complete story of the English in Ireland is still to be told.

England's 'most fearless Victorian', however, faced the future once more in grief. The ensuing years were destined to hold more. Yet Ireland was never far away in his mind, its condition and the contrast of it formed a major subject in his personal correspondence.[348]

His vacations at the Molt in Salcombe reminded him of Derreen; Disraeli was the only English statesman who knew anything about Ireland; Gladstone had ripened the fruit of the land league; the white people of the West Indies were suffering the same fate as Protestants in Ireland, and an Irish priest, 'great nephew of Father John Murphy,' met on a voyage, promised to tell his countrymen, 'I was not such a bad fellow after all'.[349]

---

[345] R. F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1988, p. 103.
[346] Lyne (2005) p. 398.
[347] *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century,* Vol I, Book IV, p. 557.
[348] Clubbe (1979) p. 68 'Froude always quoted fairly and in context. In this respect he is the most fearless of Victorians'.
[349] Dunn (1963) p. 528. Fr. Murphy told Froude he was right not to have returned to Derreen.

One episode in Irish history however, had taken hold of Froude's imagination in the 1860s during his residence in Co. Kerry, the place that had so often brought him comfort. Its drama hung about him, and simply refused to be ignored.

Chapter Four
A Victorian Swansong

Chapter Four: A Victorian Swansong

i: Symbolic Dunboy

It was in keeping with Froude's observation of the decadent British Empire that he selected as the subject of his next Irish work Elizabethan England's victory over the last stronghold of Munster at Dunboy. Froude shared his enthusiasm for the history of Dunboy with William Steuart Trench, who in 1871, had depicted the ancestors of this 'great Castle of Dunboy and a million of acres around it' in *Ierne A Tale*.[350]

It was to Froude's *History of England* that Trench had looked for support of his work; it resulted in a bold political statement of nineteenth century Ireland. A short examination of this work suffices to reveal how closely the two men interpreted Irish affairs and Irish history and how they shared a bold approach to their subject matter. It also reveals a subtlety of relationship that could only have existed between friends.

Lyne described the two-volume book as 'of a stage-Irish, melodramatic character, little likely to appeal to modern readers'.[351] The melodrama, however, failed to conceal Trench's conscious and visible effort to identify the cause of Irish ills and present his findings to an English audience he had excited in the many impressions of his *Realities*.

His method was simple: he imagined how his employer might find Ireland if he saw it in its natural state, if Lord Lansdowne arrived in the country not to the accustomed illusory fanfare but incognito. His purpose echoed Froude's *Fortnight* as he sought to portray Ireland to an English audience with a blatant determination that those in charge across the water should understand how alien Irish culture was to their own. In the execution of this object, Trench's audacity was well met by Froude's; such a task involved the ridicule of his employer as he steered his character through aspects of Irish life of which Lansdowne would have been totally ignorant.

Trench prefaces the work with a note that the Irish attachment to the land had struck him most forcibly during his role as land agent. To understand and explain this, 'the wells of Irish history must be dug deep' for the source from whence these 'bitter waters flow'. Somehow or other, warns Trench, the people determine to get the land back 'by fighting, by repeal, or by revolution'.

He notes an education going on in the people's 'wrongs' in the thousands of publications which issue weekly from a prolific press that is 'read aloud by the lurid light of the forge fire', discussed at 'every whisky shop, every forge, every funeral, and every gathering'. Shut your eyes to this fact at your peril, he warns England.

Trench explained how in 1870 he had written an Irish history from the earliest ages to the Act of Settlement but had been urged by friends not to publish in light of the Irish Land Bill debate in Parliament. It is unlikely Froude would have been among those voices. 'I yielded', he wrote, 'the work was suppressed after a large portion had been printed and all the illustrations completed'.

---

[350] Trinity educated Trench was born in Co. Laois in 1808, son of Church of Ireland dean of Kildare, Thomas Trench, and related to the first Baron Ashtown. He left Trinity College Dublin without taking a degree to pursue the profession of land agent, which he had 'long set [his] head upon'. He commenced work for the Lansdowne estate in Co. Kerry some time in 1849, taking up the appointment of agent in 1850. He was 'very much a gentleman agent'. Lyne (2001) p. .p. xlv-xlvii.

[351] Lyne (2005) p. lvii.

Trench determined however that all was not in vain; if past life was not acceptable at that time (as Froude was on the verge of finding out), the present state of affairs might still be, if presented in fictionalized form. He was specific in stating that many of the incidents and scenes presented were 'almost all founded upon fact'. The identity of the characters therein left little to be guessed at among the gossips of nineteenth century society.

Trench sets his tale in Derreen, and opens on a warm summer's evening in August when two (foster) brothers, Donald O'Sulevan and Teague O'Hanlon–Donald the royal ancestor of Dunboy–are en route to a midnight Phoenix meeting in the Kerry mountains, from where they look upon the 'bay of Kenmare, its coast adorned by the woods and castles of Dromore and Derryquin'.[352] 'Suppose ten thousand Americans were to land in Bantry Bay…. there wouldn't be man, woman or child that wouldn't welcome them with such signs of joy as never was seen in Ireland yet', suggests one brother to the other of the prospect of America intervening in the affairs of the two countries.[353]

In the light of such a suggestion, Trench notes how the Fenian James Stephens 'has lately been in these quarters. He has stayed about Hungry Hill … for nearly six weeks together and he gives good hopes of the future'.[354]

The gathering on the mountainside consists of young men–'boys', an 'awkward squad', with stout sticks instead of muskets, 'a piece of straw-rope tied on one ankle, and a peeled switch or gad' fastened about the other, 'most of them speaking only Irish' ['a language now rarely in use']. Gathered together from the counties of Cork and Kerry, they 'fancied they could overthrow the trained army and firm government of England'.[355] Dismissing hopes of American intervention, Donald puts down their efforts at forming an army; 'drilling and marching is useless' he tells them, for 'when Smith O'Brien rose he thought he had all Ireland with him', but when he 'took to the field in earnest, not a priest joined him'. Wait for a better time coming, is Donald's advice.[356]

Returning to his home at Derreen, Donald relates his history there, how his chieftain father had detested the building of county roads that enabled 'the tourist to visit the remotest valleys of the Kerry highlands', and how his death had been hastened by vexation that the public were able to obtain 'free passage through his estates'. Of the chieftain's four children, Donald was the elder and had travelled in France and Germany whereby his education was 'much extended'; his younger brother Redmond, who had

---

[352] W. Steuart Trench, *Ierne A Tale* in Two Volumes, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1871, p. 11. Access to both volumes can be gained online at www.archive.org ; reference courtesy Eugene Roche, Special Collections, UCD.

[353] *ibid.* p. p. 13-14.

[354] *Ibid* . p. 15. James Stephens, 1825-1901; Trench wrote of Stephen's undying hatred to British rule in Ireland (p. 265), of how he had been wounded in the leg during Smith O'Brien's futile rebellion and had had a very fine funeral before escaping to France in disguise. He was known to have taught French at a ladies school in Killarney, tutored a family near Dublin (p. p. 266-7) and to have favoured concealing himself in the region of Coomeengira and the deep valley of Glenmore, specifically at the ruined fishing and sporting lodge on the lake (both areas described in Froude's *Fortnight)*. Trench portrayed the founder of the IRB, who canvassed physical-force movement some 3,000 miles around Ireland on foot in the late 1850s, as an illusive shadowy figure with a brilliant ability to foil and elude. His residence in Killarney and suggested involvement in a court case invites research. For an account of how James Stephens and John O'Mahony conspired to propagate among the Irish in Ireland and America, which includes detail on Stephens's ruse of feigning his own death and describes how the first symptoms of the work of these men appeared in the extreme south west (after which Fenianism 'spread like prairie-fire') and culminates in Stephens's arrest and escape from the *Irish People* (a newspaper of which Stephens was the author) trials of November 1865, see *Speeches from the Dock* Part 1, 'Thomas C. Luby', Dublin: A. M. Sullivan, 1868. The court case alluded to by Trench is that of Daniel O'Sullivan on charge of being a member of the Phoenix Secret Society. The three-day trial commenced at the end of March 1859 when 'the Crown packed the jury. They insolently ordered every Catholic that came to the box to 'stand aside' and the horrible spectacle of a packed Protestant jury to 'try' a Catholic state prisoner was flung in the face of the country from our Tralee courthouse … the farce of a one-sided case was presented to the 12 of the Elect. 'Trench did not write about how Attorney General J. D. Fitzgerald undid Mr. Whiteside's woeful work and how O'Sullivan's conviction was cancelled', wrote the *Tralee Chronicle,* 24 February 1871.

[355] *ibid.* p. 24.

[356] *ibid.* p. p. 36-39.

remained at home, felt keenly 'the wrongs of his race' and was in America testing sympathy. Two daughters, Kathleen the elder, and Ierne, who seemed to have 'qualities belonging both to Saxon and Celt,' and who was imbibed with 'sentiments of romantic nationality which pervaded all her family'.[357]

The character of Ierne Trench symbolized as Ireland (a kind of *Cathleen ni-Houlihan*): a beautiful young woman in simple but beautiful symmetrical dress with jacket, a Swiss red-ribboned hat and an embroidered leather girdle, containing dagger and revolver 'equipped like a modern Diana–a rifle instead of a bow'.[358]

Later crossing paths with a stranger on the mountain, 'a well-bred Englishman' out shooting grouse, Ierne watches him fire at a bird. 'You have succeeded in killing your enemy', she tells him, to which he replies the bird is a friend 'who affords me considerable sport'. 'And is it the habit in your country to shoot your friends?' enquires Ierne.[359]

When the stranger takes another shot at a grouse but only wounds it, Ierne succeeds where he fails, to 'put an end to his sufferings'. Had she not, she says, it was destined to have borne its suffering in agony and solitude, died in misery, or lived maimed and wounded for life. This is what you call sport, she tells the stranger, in a clear symbolic message that England was 'sporting' with Ireland, content to leave the bird half-dead, Ierne insisting on resolution.[360]

Accepting Ierne's invitation to stay at Derreen, where her ancestors were once princes, 'we are little people now, almost foreigners in our own country', the stranger observes a sadness in Ierne and asks that she sing what is 'in her heart'. Trench shows no small element of compassion for his subject when he transcribes an eight-verse poem written from an emigrant ship bound for the States, evidently by someone in fever. It is a transcription of the kind of literary material used a generation later by the Nationalist movement figure-headed by W. B. Yeats.

> Lift me up, Nelly, Mavourneen,
> Out of this darksome place;
> For here I can't think of dying,
> Tho' death comes on apace.
> 'Twill kill my poor tender darling
> to tell her that I am dead
> That my shroud was the seaman's canvass,
> And my grave, the ocean bed.

A tear could be seen in the stranger's eye, writes Trench.[361]

The stranger, who remains incognito for much of the first volume of the tale, is introduced as Alexander Fitz-Norman, Earl of Killarney–in effect Froude's evictor Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice, 5th Marquess of Lansdowne. Though Trench modelled this character on Lansdowne, he utilized the empathetic personality of Froude in his descriptions.

---

[357] *ibid.* p..p..55-59.
[358] *ibid.* p. 87. Ireland symbolized in this manner was not a new concept; Sydney Owenson's prototypic novel, *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) was followed by a number of similarly styled works (see Introduction to *Irish Literature The Nineteenth Century* Vol I edited by A. Norman Jeffares and Peter van de Kamp; Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006).
[359] *ibid.* p. 83.
[360] *ibid.* p. 92.
[361] *ibid.* p. 95 and p. 106.

Trench sets about placing the Earl in scenes from Irish life; he involves him in a faction fight, which he holds no different to a duel, explaining that Irishmen were 'only acting now as gentlemen have shown them the example. Are not duels carried out exactly upon the same principle? ... Is it any wonder when duelling is scarcely yet banished out of gentlemen's society that faction fighting is still continued?'.[362]

He introduces the Earl to Teague's mother Aileen, forever talking of a time that 'is not yet come'. She tells him when offered a coin, 'I don't want pity, nor gold' (though she does accept it).[363] Here Trench portrays superstition in a more comprehensible light, 'fairies are but the poor countryman's idea of those spirits which in London demonstrate themselves in séances and table-rappings'.[364]

He steers the Earl through a pattern: he is challenged to a fight, later broken up by O'Sulevan, who intimates that such passions could easily be directed against England to end Ireland's woes–'by the sword or the law, God only knows'. Perhaps the sword is not wise, O'Sulevan informs the Earl, but 'it is through England we have received all our wrongs and it is through England we must be righted'.[365]

A lunch at the caves of Ardgroom provides an opportunity for the Earl and Ierne to engage on politics and history. The Earl asks if it is possible to forgive and forget; Ierne replies, 'would you be content to kiss the hand that smote you?'. The Earl is strangely ignorant of Irish history; 'had the study of Irish history been attended to in England as it ought, I doubt not the Irish character would have been better appreciated than it has been'. The Earl resolves to study, 'it is right the truth should be known, whatever it may be'.[366]

As with Froude, 'everything interested the [Earl] at Derreen–Irish history, Irish wrongs, Irish rights, and the various phases of Irish character'. He visits Dromore, Garinish Island and the castle of Ardea, the 'fatal castle that O'Sulevan went to meet the Spanish envoys when his own castle of Dunboy was invested by Carew, and ultimately blown up and destroyed'.[367]

The Earl visits Dunboy, 'once so celebrated in history that on hearing of its fall, King Philip of Spain countermanded an expedition to Ireland of 15,000 men' to a place which once 'held high state in the ancient halls' of Donald's ancestors. At the ruined site, Kathleen relates 'The Story of the Castle of Dunboy'.[368]

On their return to Derreen, a historical debate ensues which casts back to the Norman invasion in which Trench examines enmity between race and religion. 'English historians are in general unwilling to dwell upon these things,' writes Trench, and alluding to Froude, 'it is only of late that the real facts have been brought to light'.[369]

Rivalry over the affections of Ierne finds the Earl challenged to a duel on Sherky Island. Aided by Macquarral of Macquarral's Castle (who might be identified as Mahony of Dunloe Castle in Killarney) the opponents miss their first shots, the second hits the Earl in the leg, though he spares his opponent death.

While having his leg nursed by Ierne at Derreen, the invalid Earl begins to understand more of Irish history, 'her little tales of sorrow or of wrong would bring tears or flashes of

[362] *ibid.* p. p. 122-123.
[363] *ibid.* p. 61 and p. 114.
[364] *ibid.* p. p. 108-9.
[365] *ibid.* p. 184.
[366] *ibid.* p. p. 141-145.
[367] *ibid.* p. p. 187-188.
[368] *ibid.* p. p. 191-206.
[369] The real facts Trench referred to were those taken from Froude's *History of England*, which he cited at length in his footnotes.

fire from her eyes as she related them'. In scenes reminiscent of Froude's 'Italian lakes' of 1848, Ierne often takes the stranger out on the lake, 'allowing the little skiff to float out to sea with the tide' spending many hours in the little boat alone together. 'These were dangerous times for the wounded Saxon stranger' writes Trench, in a playful allusion to his friend.[370]

Ierne sings to the Earl verses to the air of Thomas Moore's The Meeting of the Waters

> I recall the blest days that have long pass'd away,
> When a mother's soft hand on my youthful head lay;
> And a mother's sweet voice, as I sat on her knee,
> Would murmur, 'Mavourneen, acushla machree,'
> 'Mavourneen, mavourneen, acushla machree'.

'All my songs are sad,' says Ierne, 'the ballad poetry of Ireland is tinged with a deep melancholy.'[371] As the couple linger in the little skiff upon the water, Ierne tells the stranger

> You ought to know why it is that we feel as we do on these subjects. Neither can these things be much longer ignored by England. Disaffection is rapidly spreading. I hear a new society has lately sprung up amongst the Irish in America…. the same disease breaking out under different forms.[372]

Trench reaches again for Froude's *History of England*

> Lord Clare stated in his celebrated speech on the Union that Ireland had been confiscated three times over. I believe he would have stated it more correctly had he said five or six times over.

Outlining the confiscations 'under which the Irish people have groaned' in Strongbow, Elizabeth, James, Cromwell, William, and Penal Law, Trench writes, 'tell me is it any wonder that England and English rule should be hated in Ireland'?[373]

Trench concludes his first volume with an escape bid at a trial aided by Stephens, who had been at Derreen dressed as a country girl, 'able to assume almost any disguise, but incapable of turning his versatile talents to any practical advantage'. He can hate well, observes Trench, but has not the genius to organize a nation.[374]

At the court proceedings the Earl is compelled to reveal his identity as Alexander Fitz-Norman, 'a young nobleman not long come of age, who possessed vast estates in Ireland as well as in England, but who was not yet supposed to have visited his Irish property'.[375] Trench conveys his disquiet at the vacuous illusion created for the ruling classes in Ireland when the Earl is questioned on the stand: 'I suppose there was a grand reception on your arrival, as is usual on such occasions–bonfires, illuminations, and emblazoned addresses from a loyal and grateful tenantry, and all that sort of thing?'.[376]

The trial over, O'Sulevan and the Earl talk. The Earl understands how deeply England has wronged but insists those wrongs could not be simply rectified 'to make the ghosts of

---

[370] *ibid.* p. 272.
[371] *ibid.* p. 277.
[372] *ibid.* p. 279.
[373] *ibid.* p. 290.
[374] *ibid.* p. 338 & p. 333.
[375] *ibid.* p. 304.
[376] *ibid.* p. 307.

our forefathers who did the wrong lie more quietly in their graves…. these romantic ideas will never serve the cause of Ireland'.[377] What has been done cannot be undone, he adds, 'without a deep injustice to the present possessors and a revolution so tremendous as to shake to the foundation the solid basis on which all property has for ages past been built'. 'The forfeited estates will remain as they are, and can never again return to their ancient possessors'.[378]

The Earl has touched on the 'keystone of the arch' observes O'Sulevan, for the one 'craving desire of the native Irish is the restoration of the forfeited estates…. the secret spring by which in a moment the green flag of Erin could be unfurled'. 'How very carefully have the old title-deeds been still preserved' observes Trench, but 'whatever may be in the womb of the future, there is no hope at present'.[379]

Trench removes the scene of Volume Two to Co. Tipperary, where the Earl is to survey his estates. On his departure from Kerry, the Earl comments, 'I shall never again have so good an opportunity of seeing Ireland in her true colours, and hearing the true sentiments of her sons and daughters'. To Ierne he says, 'your warlike speech, embracing all my race, without exception, gives me little encouragement either to remain or return' but 'my sojourn here has at least taught me to honour and respect the feelings of her ancient people'.[380]

In Tipperary Trench goes to great lengths to explain the importance of land to the Irish, the hopelessness of the improving landlord whose 'squarin' fields and throwin' down ancient boundaries, puttin' one man in, and another out, and changin' the face of the country' are viewed as 'another link broken which bound the ancient race to the soil'– another step further off in their claim to repossess the land of their forefathers. He observes 'the election of a convicted felon, O'Donovan Rossa, to represent Tipperary in Parliament at the last general election is perhaps the most remarkable instance of the spirit which pervades the peasantry of that county even up to the present day'.[381]

It can only be understood through history, argues Trench, how 'a people so justly celebrated for hospitality, kindness, gentleness, and affection yet can frequently imbrue their hands in blood'.[382]

Having duly arrived in Tipperary, the Earl's agent Mr Snugg apologizes for the lack of display, informing the Earl the tenants would have insisted on 'bonfires, tar-barrels, and fireworks' to greet him and show their joy on his arrival had they known he was coming.[383]

Accommodated by his friend Mr Hardon ('Wild-duck Hardon' because he has been so often fired at), 'a bachelor with large means', Trench allows Hardon to relate a number of his near-death tales which Trench assures readers in his footnotes are true.[384] A statement made by Hardon to the Earl can be interpreted as a direct message from Trench to his noble employer Lansdowne

---

[377] Trench understood otherwise when he wrote, 'if you want to rouse the enthusiasm of an Irishman, talk to him, not of the present, but of the past', p. 248.
[378] *ibid.* p. 334.
[379] *ibid.* p. 339 & p. 336.
[380] W. Steuart Trench, *Ierne A Tale* Vol II, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1871 p. p. 3-12.
[381] *ibid.* p. p. 27-31.
[382] *ibid.* p. 30.
[383] *ibid.* p. 40.
[384] *ibid.* p. 97. Trench had encountered agrarian violence in the Ribbon Society during earlier years spent at Sopwell Hall in Co. Tipperary. It seems likely that Trench modelled Hardon on himself and his own experiences of agrarian violence during this period spent in Tipperary. He used the opportunity to write of murder and the futility of English law at this period.

> scarcely anything happens in Ireland different from what I and others who have lived amongst the people expect, however different they may be from *your* expectations, judging Ireland as you do by the rule of your English experience. *You* thought that all the people would be in your favour and in great delight when you set your improvements agoing…. You *now* know who was right.[385]

Returning the story to Kerry, Ierne and the Earl admit of a growing affection for each other. Out on the lake once again, they allow 'the little boat to drift quietly' to an island where they speak of the possibility of commitment, 'I will never mate with one whom the world chooses to think so much above me, as it considers the Earl of Killarney above a daughter of the O'Sulevans of Dunboy'.[386]

Trench subsequently devotes an entire chapter to the incompatibility of the two countries. It emerges in conversation between the Earl and O'Sulevan's brother Redmond, symbolically a discourse between Ireland and England, Trench's thrashing out of the *ifs* and *what ifs.*

Patriotic Redmond reveals his stance on matters to the Earl

> we must worry England, worry Parliament, worry the navy, worry the army, worry the manufacturers in the large towns in England, and, above all, worry those who call themselves 'the English garrison in Ireland'; and never let them rest nor give them hope of peace until the evils of Ireland are brought prominently before the world and in sheer self-defence are redressed.[387]

Restoration of the forfeited estates is Redmond's resolve yet he believes it cannot be effected through legislation for that basis admits the right of the Cromwellian, Saxon and Norman. Ireland wants its own legislation and a repeal of the Union[388]

> Ireland is like Lazarus in the grave, bound hand and foot with grave clothes. She is not dead, but sleepeth. She will yet arise in her might and demand her full measure of justice.[389]

Ultimately Trench can find no meeting point, no resolution to his own positing. He sends Ierne to London to experience life and society there and to open her eyes to a wider experience. London, dazzled by her beauty, gossips about her identity and her relationship with the Earl.

Yet neither in England can Trench find resolution, for there religion separates Ierne from the Earl. At the Earl's second proposal of marriage, she informs him, 'amidst the ruin and persecution which have pursued our race, we have throughout adhered to our religion'. She cannot relinquish the 'last relic of former freedom'.[390]

In exasperation, Trench determines that an answer might be found in travel and education. The Earl travels, Ierne enters a convent. Years later, the two meet again by chance in Australia. Ierne has found that religion alone cannot sustain her and on this new and unfamiliar ground, they find it possible to reconcile, 'in Ireland those who venture to read or think for themselves are frequently set down as infidels. Here it is quite different'.[391]

---

[385] *ibid.* p. 194.
[386] *ibid.* p. 238.
[387] *ibid.* p. 249.
[388] *ibid.* p. p. 252-259.
[389] *ibid.* p. 246.
[390] *ibid.* p. 312.
[391] *ibid.* p. 318.

Trench idealizes on such a union; the couple wed, and return to Ireland to 'wild cheers of welcome'.

As it had been with Froude, so the press lynched Trench's book on publication in 1871. In County Kerry, Kenmare parish priest Fr. John O'Sullivan described it as a 'filthy libel' and addressed his objections to Lord Lansdowne in an open letter published in the *Tralee Chronicle*. The object of his concern was to clarify his role in informing on Phoenix members in 1858

> We are the unpaid police of Ireland. Her Majesty thinks so. Prince Arthur, the present Lord Lieutenant, and your Lordship must have thought so, when you all condescended to receive the hospitality of the convent.[392]

Trench 'seems to think that he can knock every one here about as he pleases'

> You saw his disgusting behaviour when the tenantry entertained your Lordship, and I do protest as Chairman, I would have ordered him out of the room as well as his son for an uncalled for sentiment he had the audacity to propose, without permission from the chair…. I never met the Trenches without calling up that saying of Juvenal, 'A lot, taken up by Dame Fortune from the lowest dregs, and placed on the top of the wheel, in one of her merry moods'.[393]

The editor of *The Tralee Chronicle*, describing Trench as 'an anti-Irish Irishman' and 'Lord Lansdowne's agent turned nasty novel writer' subjected the book to four incensed review articles. Denouncing the book as a libel that should be burned, he added, 'we can well conceive the effect this slander will produce on the ignorant bigots of England'. Trench, he said

> forgot to mention the fact that in one of the principal hospitals of the City of New York there is a ward called the Lansdowne Ward because for months and months together it was crowded by the emigrants from the Lansdowne Estate who left it commonly in their coffins. What mattered? The estate was cleared.[394]

Addressing a case of murder of a boy on the Landowne Estate and subsequent sentence passed by Chief Baron Pigott, the editor stated, 'we seek in vain in *Ierne* for details of the murdered orphan'. Letters of living fire should burn on every page of Steuart Trench's history, he blazed, till they are blotted out by tears of repentance. Reaction was less harsh from *The Kerry Post*:

> if the work is a deeply political one … it is also as romantic a love story as may be met with among the light reading of the day…. it delineates the characters of all classes in society…. the book will prove more valuable as a faithful picture of the state of society in this country, and the social and spiritual and moral condition of the agricultural classes.[395]

The London press displayed none of the enthusiasm it had shown for *Realities*. 'A story in which there are so many vulgar gentlemen, so many unwomanly ladies, and so

---

[392] *The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo,* 21 February 1871.
[393] *ibid.*
[394] February 10, 14, 21, 24 1871, the final one of which addressed the Phoenix Trials. See note 5.
[395] Re-printed in *The Tralee Chronicle,* 28 February 1871.

many bloodthirsty common people,' tutted *The Freeman;* 'as a history, it is weak and flatulent, and as an Irish story, insulting and contemptible.'[396]

Describing Trench as a 'Kerry Munchausen', his book as 'saturated with dangerous and incalculably injurious doctrine' and manifest in innuendo, it displayed snobbish disapproval: 'There is not a gentleman from Lord Killarney to Mr Hardon who does not vaunt like a parvenu; not a lady who does not discourse like a soubrette'.

'We must confess to a weariness in reciting the unhealthy artifices of Mr Trench', concluded the writer, 'a book ill conceived, ill-pursued, but not ill-executed; a book the product of a mind lashed into extravagance by a coarse ambition for reputation'.

Dismissed in the *London Echo* as a 'great failure as a novel, as a history it is a failure still greater', the *London Weekly Reporter* went into more detail of what it described as ludicrous 'wretched twaddle'.[397]

When baulked in his object to write the Comic History of Ireland, Trench coolly transferred the name of the whole to that of *Ierne*, a name common to Irish girls but also the old historical name of the country, began the article. 'Miss Ierne is a sort of Admiral Crichton in petticoats', O'Sulevan 'a character which Mr Trench, without asking leave, has coolly modeled upon that of The O'Donoghue…. Does Mr Trench mean to hold him and his views up to ridicule, or does he wish us to see in him a model for all Irishmen to follow?'.[398]

The writer continued an excellent if unwitting job of exposing a number of the personalities behind Trench's depictions. Of Hardon it shrewdly observed, 'this Hardon seems to be a landlord of the school that some writers delight to honour'.

Mr Trench has several times in his book tried hard to imitate Mr Disraeli's *Lothair*, continued the article, one scene plagiarised from the work of the Conservative leader was inexcusable. 'We thought such bad taste was confined to Mr Disraeli', the writer went on, 'astonished' at its repetition in a nephew of the late Lord Ashtown.

'Like his model in politics, he has not scrupled to take the greatest liberties with the names of several noble and well-born houses': 'O'Sulevan is a palpable travesty of The O'Donoghue', O'Sulevan's sister Kathleen 'one of Ireland's gifted historians' against whom Trench had taken 'a most unwarrantable liberty with the name of the nun of Kenmare Convent of Poor Clares'. The identity of the Earl of Killarney was too obvious for the writer to state–'who is meant by his lordship is clear'.

Trench had evidently succeeded in irritating, if not educating, the audience he had intended to address. Outlining the negative impact of the book, the *Reporter* concluded it was 'done with Mr Trench', and trusted not to be troubled with him again

> What end it was intended to subserve we repeat we do not know…. As a novel it is a failure, as an historical sketch it is a mockery; as a picture of Irish life it is utterly unreliable; as affording any hint as to the course of future legislation for Ireland it is worse than useless. Its policy is obstructive, its plans savour of retrogression and ascendancy. As such if for no other reasons it is worthy of naught but reprobation….[399]

[396] From *The Freeman* in *The Tralee Chronicle,* 21 February 1871.
[397] From the *London Echo* in *The Tralee Chronicle,* 28 February 1871.
[398] *London Weekly Reporter* in *The Tralee Chronicle*, 3 March 1871.
[399] *ibid.*

A more sober response issued from the *Edinburgh Review* in April, in a twenty-nine page discourse that attended to a number of the issues raised by Trench. It noted the 'great change' (an 'unfavourable' one) that had occurred in Irish fiction and the demise of 'the peasant of Sir Jonah Barrington'. It identified the cause as political, that Englishmen too fondly anticipated the abatement of Irish opposition after forty years of liberal legislation, but 'it often happens that a nation which has endured the most crushing laws with seeming insensibility throws them off with violence as soon as the burden begins to be diminished'.[400]

The result was 'a class of novels which are simply disguised pamphlets', observed the writer, 'designed specially for the inculcation of some theory in politics or social life'. The intent of such literature was threefold; some to keep alive memory of Penal Law 'in the interests of the Catholic religion'; others to misrepresent history in order to excite an imaginative people; and the more foolish of the three to convince the Celt he can never be content 'till the restoration of his old Brehons, and chieftains, and tanists, and harpers'.[401]

Trench's work was designed to inflame, being a 'history of Irish wrongs' which allowed 'nearly all the advantage to the side of the passionate Celt'. His energies might have been better expended, suggested the writer, not in stimulating, but in sedating political disquiet.[402]

Addressing the land issue and agrarian outrage, the writer described such crime as both a preservation of Brehon law combined with 'a sawing at the branch' on which the Irish sat, for their doctrine on land was not dissimilar to M. Proudhom's in revolutionary France, one which failed to acknowledge the right of property itself as the creation of law. Recovery of forfeited estates was 'mere sentimental delusion', inflamed by Irish national writers–'do national writers ever consider on what the title of the claimants–the whole Irish people–is based?' No individual Irishman could prove he had through his ancestry any right to land, 'the thing is impossible'. Neither could race answer the question, 'national writers cry 'Ireland for the Irish' but they do not decide who were the first occupiers of the island'. The advantage of not inquiring too deeply as to the legal proprietors was, surmised the writer, to keep the rent in the pocket 'till the rightful owner turns up'.[403]

This 'radically false' notion of property Trench believed lie at the bottom of agrarian murder. Not so, discerned the writer, impunity was the cause, 'probably as many crimes would be committed elsewhere, if bad men found they had as fair a chance as they have in Ireland of escaping punishment'.[404]

Neither Home government nor Repeal of the Union could work, argued the author (over the bulk of the text), for the Irish were 'children in political affairs'

> They are no hungry democratic reformers like the Socialists of France or Germany, reveling in crude ideas of government, cherishing a wild and fanatical faith in human perfectibility, and expecting to hang the last king with the entrails of the last priest. There is no fight in Ireland between the sons of crusaders and the sons of Voltaire; for the Irish are perfectly obedient to their clergy….[405]

---

[400] *Edinburgh Review*, Vol 133, April 1871, p. p. 501-529.
[401] *Op. cit.*
[402] *Op. cit.*
[403] *Op. cit.*
[404] *Op. cit.*
[405] *Op. cit.*

A country composed of Ultramontanists and Nationalists, as the writer saw it, had mutual interests and an Irish Parliament elected by such would allow for no mediation in Irish politics, 'where is there even the nucleus at present of a middle party?'. How could a ballot vote work in Ireland, he asked, when the chief governing powers are the secret societies and the confessional–'The politicians flatter the Catholics for their votes, and the clergy behind the scenes know how to hold the balance of power in a democracy'.[406]

The writer shuddered at the prospect of education in such hands, 'where is there to prevent,' he said, 'the endowment of a host of orphanages and charities, including monastic and conventual establishments for the education of the young?'. He cited a Royal Commission of Inquiry into Irish primary education that evidenced direct training in Fenianism and hatred from the school books of the Order of the Christian Brothers. He held such literature in the same light as the press, 'wretched prints' which drove 'a vile trade in sedition'.[407]

It was time, concluded the author, to crush Irish lawlessness of every description and counter the principal revolutionary influence which was misrepresentation, 'let Irishmen give up their dreams'.[408]

The first volume of *The English in Ireland* was about to be published. Discussion between Froude and Trench on this reception must be left to the imagination.

ii: Historic Dunboy

> Wool goes out by shiploads, and warehouses at the waterside are crammed with it, and no notice taken
> *The English in Ireland*

In the years that followed *The English in Ireland*, notably those after Carlyle's death in 1881, Froude allowed the artist in him to surface more publicly. A trip to Norway in 1881 produced a ten-verse poem, *Romsdal Fiord*, published with his initials in *Blackwood's Magazine* in April 1883. It recounted the saga of Rolf the Ganger, who for long ages had been lying beneath the soil. As Froude understood only too well, life went on

> The English Earl sails idly by,
> And from his deck would trace,
> With curious antiquarian eye,
> The cradle of his race.
>
> With time and tide we change and change,
> Yet still the world is young;
> Still free the proudest spirits range,
> The prize is for the strong.
>
> Yet men will still be ruled by men,
> And talk will have its day,
> And other Rolfs will come again
> To sweep the rogues away.

[406] *Op. cit.*
[407] *Op. cit.*
[408] This view can be related to the trials against those involved in the *Irish People* newspaper (see note 5) and the perils involved in publishing at this time.

Life had been going on apace for Froude. Since his bereavement in 1874, he had travelled to, and written on, South Africa, produced work for Morley's *English Men of Letters*, wrought with his publications on Carlyle, written on Luther, travelled to, and written on, the Australian colonies and the West Indies. In this latter work he complemented his text with his own illustrations in the manner of John Townsend Trench in his father's *Realities* and abandoned *History*. Many of the scenes were reminiscent of Ireland.

To his friend Skelton in October 1886, Froude wrote of 'some kind of a book beginning to grow up in me–happily not about politics'. Some months later he confided to his friend that work was underway on an Irish novel, 'I can't tell whether it will do to publish. Off one's regular lines one is curiously unable to judge'.[409]

The Two Chiefs of Dunboy, or An Irish Romance of the Last Century was the result of his endeavours, his enthusiasm for the subject palpable in an almost breathless letter to Skelton on its publication in April 1889

> I may say that the Morty of the *Two Chiefs* is nearer the real article than the Morty of *The English in Ireland*. I am almost certain that he actually was with the Pretender. There were Irish officers on his staff–one Sir Edward [Thomas?] Sheridan, another a Colonel Sullivan. This is historical; as also their capture and escape. There was no other Sullivan living of sufficient representative rank to have held the place by the Prince which a certain Sullivan undoubtedly had. Irish officers in the Continental armies did uncommonly well, and, of course, acquired a different way of looking at things from their countrymen.[410]

As indicated by Froude, the seed of *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy* had been planted in *The English in Ireland* in a chapter called 'The Smugglers' in which Froude researched the eighteenth century Irish woollen trade. Froude had lifted from aged manuscripts material to create a scene as incredible as it was real.

Outlining the state of commerce in the late eighteenth century, and the extent to which the books were not balancing, he cited a private statement made by Mr. Hely Hutchinson to Lord Harcourt to set the scene

> Ireland has paid to Great Britain for eleven years past double the sum she collects from the whole world in all the trade which Great Britain allows her; a fact not to be paralleled in the history of mankind. Whence did all this money come? Our very existence is dependent on our illicit commerce.[411]

A form of industry was swept away, observed Froude, which would have made 'four Ulsters instead on one'. Resistance to the law became a bond of union between Catholic and Protestant from the great landlord to the gauger, from the magistrates to the judges who dismissed as 'frivolous' the cases which came to be tried. All persons of all ranks in Ireland were principals or accomplices, wrote Froude, in a system he described as 'a school of anarchy'.[412]

When England attempted to police the trade, the smugglers 'took refuge in bays and creeks where cruisers dare not run in'

---

[409] Skelton (1895) p. 201.
[410] *ibid.* p. 204.
[411] James Anthony Froude, *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century,* Vol I, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1881, p. 499.
[412] *ibid.* p. 500.

> The wool was pressed with screws into barrels, which were washed with brine, that they might pass for butter, herrings, or salt pork casks….[413]

The system worked commercially, socially and politically, wrote Froude, and fostered, and absolutely bred and necessitated habits of lawlessness. It provided

> An open road for the going and coming of the priesthood, it linked itself to the service of the Pretender. Irish 'Wild Geese' in thousands were drafted down to Kenmare or Dingle, Galway or Roundstone, and were shipped to France. If the Pretender was meditating a descent, Irish regiments were collected for him at a few weeks' notice. If the Pretender was lying quiet, there was always the Irish brigade….[414]

In accustomed manner, Froude began to seek out characters who could dramatize the period. First was Daniel Mahony of Dunloe, who held a lease on lands in Kerry, 'renewable forever,' and who made himself 'great and dreadful in the county'

> He had four thousand people under him, under tenants and their labourers, all Catholics whose business was to prevent the collectors of the revenue from troubling honest fellows…. going about by day disguised as women, at night in large gangs, with blacked faces and white shirts, they were called Mr. Daniel Mahony's fairies.[415]

A surveyor sent from Dublin Castle to report on Mahony returned 'a sadder and wiser man'

> The fairies one night burst rudely into his lodging, dragged him from his bed, beat him with most unghostlike efficiency [and] plundered him of the papers which were to bring Mahony to justice.[416]

The Crosbies of Kerry fell under Froude's pen, in the tale of a Danish ship carrying silver bullion that was driven into the Bay of Tralee in 1728 when 'smugglers assembled who under pretence of giving help, would have disabled and overwhelmed the confined and half-drowning crew'. Robbery, murder and a court case ensued, following which Froude 'dropped the curtain' on the scene.[417]

Yet Froude was struck by wilder and more picturesque characters than Mahony and the Crosbies

> The long peninsula which divides the bays of Bantry and Kenmare, had been the dominion of the O'Sullivans of Berehaven…. in the midst of the mountains, the descendants of the old chief's family continued as the vicegerents on the soil of their fathers amidst the wrecked remains of the once thriving Protestant colony.[418]

And so Froude began to recount the history of Morty Oge O'Sullivan, O'Sullivan Bere as he was called, 'as much loved and honoured as his kinsman of Dirreen'. In his youth a

---

[413] *ibid.* p. 501.
[414] *ibid.* p. p. 502-3.
[415] *ibid.* p. 505.
[416] *ibid.* p. 506.
[417] *ibid.* p. 556. Incensed by Froude's account, Mary Hickson wrote her own version of this incident in *Old Kerry Records*, 'The Danish Silver Robbery', dismissing Froude's work as a 'slap-dash sketch'.
[418] *ibid.* p. 507.

distinguished officer in the Austrian army, Morty had chosen to convoy the Wild Geese and 'defied the government and its myrmidons to meddle with him'.

So matters stand until a Galwayman, 'English in character', named Puxley inherits an estate at Berehaven 'close to Morty's den', which includes Dunboy Castle. Puxley is a man with a strong sense of duty, a revenue officer who wastes no time in sending an account of Morty's activities to Dublin Castle.[419]

As usual, writes Froude, no notice is taken. In the absence of a formal coastguard, each officer is left to his own devices. Puxley begs for a frigate with a company of soldiers from Kinsale but no frigate comes; Puxley is left to make war with his own armed boats on the petty smugglers of Bantry and Glengariff. Slowly his actions take effect; the country side is 'furious'

> The wool-packs lay rotting in the caves; the stores of claret and brandy ran low, and no full cargoes could be run in Glengariff harbour to refill the empty bins. Who was this miserable Puxley that he should spoil the trade by which the gentry were making their fortunes, which the Castle winked at, and which the connivance of half a century had legisimatized?[420]

Four years on, the officious Puxley writes to his employers, the Revenue Commission, to inform them of his 'unhappy situation'

> I am at Berehaven ready to be devoured by my enemies the smugglers, who have all concerted my banishment out of that unhappy country–as well Protestants as Papists. They are joined by some of the landlords of the Berehaven estate to execute their design to which intent they keep me constantly going at assize and sessions by laying themselves out in every respect to provoke and abuse me both publicly and privately; all which malice arises from no other provocation given them more than my activity in serving the Crown….[421]

A revenue officer determined to do his duty, writes Froude, is a public nuisance of whom it is necessary to rid the country. Two months after Puxley writes the above letter, he is dead. He is waylaid on his way to church by Morty and two accomplices and murdered outside a smith's forge.[422]

Justice 'half-awoke'; it is only fully realized with the intervention of Puxley's two nephews Henry and Walter Fitzsimon. With the aid of troops, Morty's dwelling place is surrounded but he refuses to surrender, and having sent out his family, determines to set fire to his home

> Amidst the burning ruins, Morty and his four remaining companions were seen standing at bay, blunderbuss in hand. He was evidently desperate, and to save life it was necessary to shoot him. The soldiers fired; Morty fell with a ball through his heart; two of his comrades fell at his side….[423]

Two more are taken, both involved in the murder of Puxley, John Sullivan and Daniel Connell. It is possible, argues Froude, and even probable, that Daniel Connell 'was a scion of the same family which, in the next generation, produced the Liberator'. Among the ruins of Morty's house are found his papers, many 'from persons of consequence in

---

[419] *ibid.* p. p. 508-9.
[420] *ibid.* p. 512.
[421] *ibid.* p. 512.
[422] *ibid.* p. 513.
[423] *ibid.* p. 516.

the country, showing that they were accomplices in the assassination of the revenue officer'.[424]

Morty's head is mouldered upon a spike at the gate of Cork gaol, of the fate of the accomplices, 'the records are silent'. Of Morty

> In is own adventurous way he levied war to the last against the men and the system under which Ireland was oppressed. When he fell, he fell with a courage which made his crimes forgotten, and the ghost of his name still hovers about the wild shores of the Kenmare river, of which he was so long the terror and the pride.[425]

Froude contrasts Morty Sullivan with the history of his kinsman, Sylvester O'Sullivan, who was tried and transported under Penal law but returned under note from Horace Walpole, the English ambassador at the French court, with an enterprise to spy on the smugglers of the Cork and Kerry coast.

The supremely dangerous approach to Port Maghee, where a vessel could be 'broken against the crags like an egg' and which was shunned 'as the ancient mariners shunned the fatal cliffs of Scylla' was a favoured smuggling resort, notes Froude. The cove is ruled by Widow Maghee, a Crosby, who welcomes Sylvester: 'smuggler was to smuggler a friend that sate closer than a brother'.[426]

Sylvester notes down the disposals of brandy kegs at auctions on deck where the ankers are dispersed 'as fast as the boats could take them away' until it happens that his letter from Walpole is by accident discovered. Threatened with his life, he makes for Killarney where he writes down all that has occurred. This letter too is intercepted, and in an effort to save his skin he converts to Protestantism. This remedy backfires, for all are in league with the wool-runners. At Ross Castle where he seeks refuge he is told by Lord Fitzmaurice that 'Kerry [does] not love informers'. Ultimately his Sullivan blood spares him; he is rescued from the stocks and conducted out of Kerry to Dublin.[427]

[424] *ibid.*
[425] *ibid.* p. 517.
[426] *ibid.* p. 520.
[427] *ibid.* p. p. 521-531.

iii: *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy*

Sketch by James Anthony Froude
The English in the West Indies

Of the thousands of manuscripts that Froude consulted to recount the multi-faceted events in his histories of England and Ireland, the plight of Puxley made a deep impression on him. It was almost two decades later that he set Puxley's history in his thirty-one chaptered 'fiction', re-telling Puxley's efforts to stamp out smuggling through the character of Colonel Goring. In recounting events from his *History* as faithfully as he had recorded them there, he added to it his personal experiences in Kerry and incidents that had fed his imagination.

Recalling the rock in the grounds of his old residence at Derreen and the dramatic libations thereon, he wrote of the changes that were wrought when the Earl took up the fallen lease

> And what does the Earl want in Tuosist?… has he not lands enough in England? Has he not tens of thousands of acres among the lime-stone pastures of Meath and Dublin, that he grudges the Sullivans the rocks and bogs of Kilmakilloge?[428]

Morty and Sylvester (who retain their names in the book) reminisce on the same rock

> Remember how you taught me my Classics on the old rock at Derreen, and carved the sundial in the stone for me that will be there to this day; how you tied the brown fly for me that caught the big salmon in Glanmore Lake, when I was a small spalpeen no higher than my leg.[429]

Colonel Goring's residence at Dunboy is an able description of Derreen

> The roof was of purple Valencia slate; the body of the building was constructed of the grey stone of the district, but was almost concealed by ivy and flowering creepers which covered the walls and clustered about the windows. A verandah stretched the entire length of the front, supported on wooden pillars, over and round which twined China roses, with occasional fuchsias.… the back of the house was sheltered by a grove of large trees. Right and left, and scattered about the grounds, were young plantations of pine and oak, and lime and larch.… beyond was a landlocked cove where a dozen stout fishing boats were riding at their anchors.[430]

He draws too on his years there to describe a scene on the lawn before Colonel Goring's window, where there is gathered

---

[428] James Anthony Froude, *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy or An Irish Romance of the Last Century*, London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1906, p. 40.
[429] *ibid.* p. 37.
[430] *ibid.* p. 53.

> A motley congregation of men, women and children, sitting crouched upon the grass; the women in blue or madder-coloured cloaks, the hoods drawn over their heads, rocking their bodies to and fro and moaning half-intelligible sounds; the men in tattered coats, unbuttoned breeches and hats … the little ones bare-footed, bare-legged, with ragged, uncombed hair…. each of them wanted something of his honour or the good lady.[431]

Their grievances were more suited to the nineteenth than the eighteenth century

> Where would we live at all except upon the land, and where would I find a bit of ground for me except in the place where I was born? They tell me if I have so much to pay I must work the harder. 'Deed then it is little encouragement we have to work when if I dry a bit of the bog they raise the price upon me, and he that farms the tithes comes and takes the tinth of the crops when the nine-tinths have gone already for the rint.[432]

Froude made no attempt to conceal the names of the Kerry gentry in the story. In conversation with Goring, 'Mr Herbert, a polished gentlemanlike man, who represent[s] the county in the Irish Parliament' tells him

> You do not understand Ireland. These are not the days of Oliver Cromwell. We cannot ride the high Protestant horse in this century, and God forbid we should. These laws which you say the people ridicule are what enable us to live on pleasant terms with them because they feel that they owe their liberties to our indulgence ….[433]

Nor did Froude relinquish the opportunity to incorporate the dramas he had heard while living in the area. The double murder he had transcribed in *Fortnight* he relayed once again during a late-night expedition of Goring on the mountain. Looking upon the scene in Cummeengeera, Goring's companion describes how a clerk from the mine works had absconded, taking a bag of money with him

> He made his way through the hills, climbed down one night on the precipice, and … obtained a night's lodging at the farm. The farmer, tempted by the gold, killed him while he was sleeping, and buried him in a bog hole. Suspecting that he had been seen by the maid-servant, he threw her over the waterfall also, and pretended that she had fallen down by accident…. The murders were discovered; the murderer was executed.[434]

On the same occasion Goring witnesses a midnight drill of six hundred men

> They appeared to have white shirts on; men, he concluded them to be, from the regularity of their movements, and from the short, sharp calls, like notes of command, which in the silence of the night, were distinctly audible, their evolutions appeared to be directed by some kind of authority.[435]

Dramatic incidents that had enlivened Froude's imagination from the Irish parliament of Puxley's day also found foot in the *Chiefs*. A parliamentary scene he described in *The English in Ireland* under Chancellor Lord Bowes, when a mob of several thousand armed with swords and bludgeons 'broke into the House of Lords and placed an old woman with

---

[431] *ibid.* p. 75.
[432] *ibid.* p. 77.
[433] *ibid.* p. 120.
[434] *ibid.* p. p. 169-170.
[435] *ibid.* p. 172.

a pipe in her mouth on the throne', found its way into the book.[436] Goring was visiting Dublin when it occurred; Froude delighted in its telling

> The mob hurled themselves against the doors of the sacred building, which the ushers vainly laboured to keep closed. They swayed along the passages, and poured into the august upper chamber, where some fifty peers and half-a-dozen bishops who had passed the ordeal were expecting, in pallor and anxiety, what was next to follow. The people swarmed in among them, scrambling over the velvet and gold which covered the chairs and benches, jostling against scarlet robes and lawn sleeves–the potter's coarse clay against painted porcelain. Mary Dogherty was conducted in state to the woolsack. The Chancellor's gown was thrown over her back, and the wig squeezed down upon her tattered bonnet. 'Light your pipe now, Mary,' said one. 'Ye will not be complete without the dudheen in the mouth of ye. When ye have drawn a whiff or two to compose yourself, we'll go to business, and you shall give us your spache from the throne'.[437]

Froude pursued the theme of Parliament when Goring is invited to a grand dinner to celebrate the opening of the new Turkish Bath of Dr Achmet Borumborad, former doctor to the Sultan of Constantinople, suspected by Goring of being the Turk's barber. 'Is it possible', asks Goring, 'that Parliament is voting away the public money on such an absurdity as Turkish Baths?' Why not, comes the reply, if the money is kept in the Treasury it will go to his Majesty, unspent it will be used as an excuse to extinguish parliament altogether.[438]

At the dinner party, which includes 'a showy Oxford youth they begin to talk about called Henry Flood', Goring found himself in the 'sparkling society of the Irish metropolis. Essentially, it was just as wild, just as anarchic, as what he had left behind him at Dunboy. But it was more cultivated, and a great deal more brilliant'.[439]

Here Goring meets the triumvirs behind what Froude perceives as a pretence of Irish Parliament who beneath the surface of their disagreements, 'were united in a resolution to keep the management of the country in their own hands and resist the encroachments of the London Cabinet'.[440]

Into such a fold Goring is greeted

> We have heard much of you in the last two years, and everything which we have heard has been to your honour. If more of the gentry were like you, Ireland would be a happier country to live in than you and I are likely to see it. But you have had a hard time of it, and I fear a dangerous one.[441]

Advised by the highest official to turn a blind eye to the contraband trade, to 'swim with the stream', Goring receives a warning, 'if you go on as your have been doing hitherto, you will inevitably get yourself killed…. you cannot live in Ireland without breaking laws on one side or another'.[442]

The evening wears on, 'champagne corks had crackled like musketry fire', and Goring, who has drunk nothing, observes the antics around him as the drunken guests

---

[436] James Anthony Froude, *The English in Ireland,* Vol I, p. 698.
[437] Froude/Dunboy (1906) p. 250. Froude's delight in sketching this scene grew from his incredulity at such occurrence and because it exemplified the state of anarchy in carnivalesque fashion.
[438] *ibid.* p. 282.
[439] *ibid.* p. 283.
[440] *ibid.* p. 285.
[441] *ibid.* p. 286.
[442] *ibid.* p. p. 292-6.

stumble and plunge into Achmet's baths. Achmet, returning from the cellar, hears the noise and

> Dropping the wine, tearing off his turban, and forgetting in his distraction who and what he was, he dashed into the confusion. 'Och Thunder and Turf!' he shrieked, 'nineteen members of Parliament squattering in the water like so many goslings, and my Lord Chief Justice like the ould gander at the head of them….[443]

Uncovered as Patrick Joyce from Kilkenny, Henry Flood, 'who liked to show off his acquaintance with the East, proposed that Achmet in Turkish costume should ride a donkey through the streets with his face to the tail'.[444]

By illustrating the corruption and buffoonery of government in this manner, Froude highlighted not only the absence but the impossibility of government support for Puxley at that time. Goring is left to his own devices. An official sent to survey and report on the peninsula concerns himself more with antiquaries than defence. His eventual report is posted back and forth to Dublin before being forgotten.

Froude portrayed Morty in sorrow, pondering his career in the light of 'the ineffectual strivings of short-lived humanity'

> Man's life was but the shadow of a dream, and his work was but the heaping of sand which the next tide would level flat again.[445]

Such thoughts occupy Morty as he strolls along the sandy shore of his ancestral lands. Here Froude identifies with Morty in reflective language that has echoes of *The Nemesis*

> For how many ages had the bay and the rocks, and the mountains, looked exactly the same as they were looking then? How many generations had played their part on the same stage, eager and impassioned as if it had been created only for them! The half-naked fishermen of forgotten centuries who had earned a scanty living there; the monks from the Skelligs who had come in on highdays in the coracles to say mass for them, baptize the children or bury the dead; the Celtic chief, with saffron shirt and battle axe, driven from his richer lands by Norman or Saxon invaders, and keeping hold in this remote spot on his ragged independence; the Scandinavian pirates, the overflow of the Northern Fiords, looking for new soil where they could take root. These had all played their brief parts there and were gone, and as many more would follow in the cycles of the years that were to come, yet the scene itself was unchanged and would not change. The same soil had fed those that were departed, and would feed the others that were to be.[446]

And so Froude draws a line under Goring's life in the murderous scene at the forge

> Morty fired and missed, and the mark of the bullet is still shown in the wall of the smithy as a sacred reminiscence of a fight for Irish liberty. The second shot went true to its mark…. A shiver passed through Goring's limbs. His arms dropped. He staggered back against the door…. dead.[447]

Such an ordinary occurrence was the murder of a revenue office at that time in Ireland, observes Froude, that it should have attracted small attention. Goring's predecessor had

---

[443] *ibid.* p. 303.
[444] *ibid.*
[445] *ibid.* p. 368.
[446] *ibid.* p. p. 366-7.
[447] *ibid.* p. 416.

met a similar fate. But the assassination of Goring at his own door and among his own people 'created a sense of shame strong enough to last even for a few hours'.[448] When Morty's house is eventually surrounded, and he bounds from the flames into his garden to musket fire, he falls 'as a felon, and as a felon only could he be regarded'

> The body was given in charge to the crew to be carried to Cork. They lashed a rope round the neck and shoulders and made it fast behind the cutter's stern, and in this ignominious fashion they towed behind them all that was left of Morty through the waters of which he had been the glory and the terror.[449]

Of Morty and his patriots, Froude writes, 'history may be found to bear most heavily on those English statesmen whose reckless negligence was the true cause of their crimes'.[450] The final word in the tale Froude gives to Morty in a tribute made to him, and translated from Irish

> It is my endless grief and sorrow
> sorrow that admits no comfort
> that your fair head should be
> gazed at as a show upon a pike
> You moved with kings….
> Mine was the best of masters
> that Ireland could produce

iv: Reception and Reflection

'The earnest student of Irish politics will read it eagerly', wrote *The Kerry Evening Post* on the *Two Chief's* publication, 'no man in our day has set so many historical and literary controversies afloat, or is more dogmatic in opinions political and ethical'.

Describing Froude as 'unequalled' in the literary field, it determined that no political party in the 'vast political struggle' of the day could 'score' in a balanced work that demonstrated Froude's intimate acquaintance with the great variety of Irishmen. Without such acquaintance, it determined, no Englishman could have so written. The reviewer commended Froude for his accuracy and treatment of the subject of race, arguing that such action served to break down racial animosities.[451]

'A weighty political and historical exposition', determined *The Scotsman*, 'pregnant of valuable political teaching [that] ought to be studied by every one who wishes to understand the character of Irish patriotism as manifested in the long struggle against English rule'. The book was 'clothed by the resources of a rich, historical imagination'

> His skill as a literary artist can be seen with remarkable clearness by comparing the historical facts as narrated in his *English in Ireland* and the same facts as set forth in this book, not materially changed in their bearing of sober history.[452]

---

[448] *ibid.* p. 417.
[449] *ibid.* p.454.
[450] *ibid.* p.455.
[451] *The Kerry Evening Post*, 4 May 1889.
[452] *The Scotsman*, 15 April 1889.

Less obliging was an article in the *Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, which followed up Froude's book with its version of 'The True Story of the Two Chiefs of Dunboy' in 1894. It concluded its interpretation to the detriment of Froude's

> How entirely fictitious is the character of Colonel Goring in Mr Froude's romance–a romance which professes to be founded on fact…. The moral which Mr Froude has drawn from the story of John Puxley is not justified by the documents which have come down to us, and he will have to seek elsewhere for that figure which he delights to portray, the Saxon of heroic type, struggling in the meshes of Celtic barbarism.[453]

Standish James O'Grady, who hailed from the actual scene of the *Chiefs*, objected too to 'Mr Froude's picture of the upright, God-fearing, and civilized Englishman contending against a flood of Celtic barbarism'.[454]

He delineated Froude in the preface to his edition of *Pacata Hibernia or A History of the Wars in Ireland* with no evident purpose. Writing of how he had 'chanced upon' various details in the State Papers during research for his own book, O'Grady added, grandiosely

> Froude had a way of his own of reading State Papers; and an extraordinary faculty for not seeing what he did not want to see. I do not impute unveracity–only reckless headlong reading and violent preconceptions.[455]

Froude's biographers had little to say on the work. Kelly described the production as boyish and better placed to Froude's seventeenth rather than seventieth year, 'so foolish a thing could be the work of an old man'.[456] Froude fared better with Paul, who described it as a 'mature and serious attempt at a novel. For distinction of style and beauty of thought it may be compared with the greatest of historical romances'.[457]

Froude's *Two Chiefs* commanded interest, opined Dunn, for in it could be found some of his very best writing. Following a brief outline, however, Dunn moved rapidly on to the next project in Froude's life.[458]

Markus gave a little over one page to the work in her biography of Froude, in which her critique of Froude as biased was unsupported

> He [Froude] was a man who could understand many points of view, yet either consciously or unconsciously he seemed almost stubbornly averse to seeing things through the eyes of or entering into the consciousness of one of the two chiefs of Dunboy–Irish O'Sullivan.[459]

---

[453] *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 'The True Story of the Two Chiefs of Dunboy: An Episode in Irish History' by A J Fetherstonhaugh, Vol IV and XXIV, Dublin: University Press, 1894.

[454] Standish O'Grady (Editor), *Pacata Hibernia or A History of the Wars in Ireland during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth especially within the Province of Munster under the Government of Sir George Carew*, London: Downey & Co Ltd, 1896, p.xxx. Standish James O'Grady (1846-1928) was born in Castletown Berehaven in Co. Cork into 'a family of country squires', his father Thomas O'Grady the Church of Ireland Minister there. He graduated from Trinity College Dublin, qualified as a lawyer but devoted his career to the study of Irish antiquities. Among his published works were two histories of Ireland (*History of Ireland: The Heroic Period* and *History of Ireland: Cuculain and His Contemporaries*) and works of historical fiction–which he based on Irish epics. These works had profound influence on writers of the Irish Literary Renaissance. *See Standish James O'Grady, The Man and The Writer, A Memoir,* by his son Hugh Art O'Grady, Dublin: The Talbot Press Ltd, 1929.

[455] *ibid.* p. xlvi & p. xxviii.

[456] Kelly (1907) p. 122.

[457] Paul (1905) p. 365.

[458] Dunn (1963) p. p. 558-559.

[459] Markus (2005) p. 263.

The adage on which Froude worked, that history was best portrayed through the drama of individual or event, was utilized in this book. In Puxley and O'Sullivan Froude held up two strong characters to symbolize England and Ireland on a Dunboy stage that reflected England as well as Ireland's great past. In this way he attempted to reconcile the pride he held in his own country and its historical greatness with a profound sympathy for that of Ireland's, in full acknowledgment of England's role in it.

Unlike Trench, who felt compelled to marry together his leading symbolic characters, thus pursuing a well-established trope in nineteenth century Irish fiction, Froude–forever aiming for balance and justice, emerged with 'two chiefs'. In his final judgment one had to perish. In the death of Colonel Goring and in giving the final word to Morty's compatriots, Froude anticipated Ireland's history a generation before it was realized.

In terms of subject matter, two centuries have seen no improvement in the issue that ended Puxley's life. In July 2007, the biggest drugs haul in the history of the State headlined the national press when €300 million of cocaine was seized off the coast of West Cork. In a delightful irony, leading customs officer Patrick O'Sullivan revealed the smugglers were English. The local coastguard was not surprised at the haul

> During the winter there is considerable traffic passing through the village late at night. You can be certain it is not tourists. If we want to stop Ireland being used as a back door for the importation of narcotics then a proper system of watch and control will have to be put in place along our coastline.[460]

Last year, front pages carried news that the haul had been eclipsed by another off the same coast, this time to a record half billion euro of cocaine.[461] In January 2009, the policing of Irish coastal waters was brought before the European Parliament by Fine Gael MEP Jim Higgins who had been compelled to resort to EU level by an Irish government 'reluctant to do anything'.[462]

As for the castle at Dunboy, it stands today as an indictment of a recent episode in Irish history, the 'Celtic Tiger'. In place of the old ruin stands an unfinished new one, a castellated-style luxury five-star hotel and apartment complex on which work ground to a halt in 2008. Near the entrance to the 'castle', a part of the old ruin remains, besides which stands a weathered sign regaling the history of Puxley, oddly out of place in the face of modern consumerism.[463]

To the memory of men like Puxley, Froude suffered for his art. His histories were vilified on publication, and were still being vilified decades after their composition. In 1892, ever interested in the affairs of Ireland, Froude attended a talk on Home Rule near his home in Salcombe. The speaker was made aware of the elderly Froude's presence in the audience, and set about imitating him on the subject of English mis-government of Ireland.

His efforts at ridiculing Froude were terminated when the dignified, worldly and perhaps a little weary old gentleman rose quietly to leave the room to shouts of, 'I see that some people do not desire to hear the truth even in the words of Mr James Anthony Froude'.[464]

---

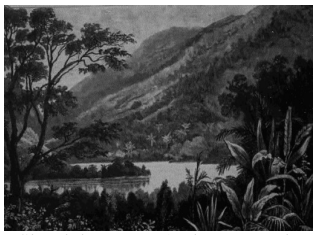
[460] *Irish Daily Mail,* 3, 4, 11 & 12 July 2007; 27 May 2008.
[461] *The Sun,* 7 November 2008.
[462] *Irish Daily Mail,* 15 January 2009.
[463] *Irish Daily Mail,* 10 August 2008.
[464] J. G. Swift MacNeill, *What I Have Seen and Heard*, London: Arrowsmith, 1925, p. 73.

Seasoned in such scenes, Froude continued as an unacknowledged champion of Irish ills, and interest in its condition remained on his agenda right up to his final days. In a letter to Skelton in 1893, one year before his death, he wrote

> Let them do as they will with Ireland, it will be crushed down again before ten years are out, and I shall not be surprised if our Parliamentary System goes down along with it. Lord Derby once said to me that kings and aristocracies can govern empires, but one people cannot govern another people.[465]

On 20 October 1894, following a short illness, Froude exited the world stage in a quieter manner than he had arrived on it. 'The notice of his death', wrote Kelly, 'seen by chance in the newspapers, fell upon us privately with a heavier knell than that of any other living could have done'.[466]

In Co. Kerry, a place that had been so much the focus of Froude's attention and affection, a notice appeared in the local press, a press whose columns had been fired by his writings for more than three decades. It read, 'Professor Froude died this morning'.[467]



Sketch by James Anthony Froude
The English in the West Indies

[465] Skelton (1895) p. 220.
[466] Kelly (1907) p. 125.
[467] *The Kerry Evening Post*, 20 October 1894.

Conclusion

Conclusion

> Tolerance means at bottom that no one knows anything
> about the matter, and that one opinion is as good as another
> *Oceana*

Books, wrote Froude, have their appointed death-day; the souls of them 'perish with the paper'.[468] More than a century on from his death, his works still burst with energy.

His sketch of Erasmus and Luther–when monks came to the altar 'reeking from their petty pleasures' to say mass 'as a cobbler makes a shoe'–was complex history told with schoolboy simplicity. His illustration of the turmoil of the Reformation, when the abbots 'could not manage the Catholics; Catholic abbots could not manage the Protestants; indifferent abbots could not manage either the one or the other' (for which Froude dug two characters from the annals of Woburn Abbey to show both sides of the story) remains compellingly readable. In this discourse he warned 'let it be remembered that this is no sentimental fiction begotten out of the brain of some ingenious novelist, but the record of true words and sufferings'.[469]

This was the cusp of Froude's prose; its grace concealed the magnitude of research and scholarship required to write with such story-like ease. He endowed everything that came before his pen with the living drama of his own imagination.

He related the history of Bishop Hugo of Lincoln and Witham Abbey with scenes that would not be easily forgotten. The scale of Hugo's funeral can be related in our time to that of the Princess of Wales

> The highest and lowest alike had poured out to meet the body. A company of poor jews, the offscouring of mankind, for whom rack and gridiron were considered generally too easy couches, came to mourn over one whose justice had sheltered even them. John was at Lincoln at the time, and William of Scotland with him; and on the hill, a mile from the town, two kings, three archbishops, fourteen bishops, a hundred abbots, and as many earls and barons, were waiting to receive the sad procession. King John and the archbishops took the bier upon their shoulders, and waded knee-deep through the mud to the cathedral. The King of Scotland stood apart in tears….[470]

He drew on ancient history to highlight the importance of the subject to modern generations. Addressing the practical fruits of atheism in a lecture on Calvinism, he reminded readers of Tacitus of

> the hymeneal night-banquet on Agrippa's lake, graced by the presence of the wives and daughters of the Roman senators, where amidst blazing fireworks and music and cloth-of-gold pavilions and naked prostitutes, the majesty of the Caesars celebrated his nuptials with a boy.[471]

'There I conceive', he wrote, 'was the visible product of material civilization, where there was no fear of God in the middle of it–the final outcome of wealth and prosperity and art and culture, raised aloft as a sign for all ages to look upon'.

---

[468] *Short Studies,* Vol I, 'England's Forgotten Worthies', 1852.
[469] *Short Studies,* Vol I 'Times of Erasmus and Luther' and 'The Dissolution of the Monasteries'.
[470] *Short Studies,* Vol II, 'A Bishop of the Twelfth Century'.
[471] *Short Studies,* Vol II, 'Calvinism'.

Anecdote appeared everywhere in Froude's work, often when least expected. In a history of the Bedfords, Froude diverged into a tale of a fishing excursion; in an essay on the colonies, he illustrated population growth with contemporary news

> A few years ago the English public was shocked by the discovery of an institution at Torquay for the murder of babies. A woman named Charlotte Windsor undertook, for certain small sums of money, the charge of inconvenient infants, promising so to provide for them that their parents should be no longer troubled with the burden of their maintenance. The provision was a pillow or a handkerchief pressed upon their mouths, and a grave in Torbay or on the hill-side.[472]

In an enlightened speech to St Andrew's on education–'teach mechanically and you teach nothing'–in which Froude urged his student audience to 'learn French, or German, or Russian or Chinese', he opened with a story

> Many years ago, when I was first studying the history of the Reformation in Scotland, I read a story of a slave in a French galley who was one morning bending wearily over his oar. The day was breaking, and, rising out of the grey waters, a line of cliffs was visible, and the white houses of a town and a church tower. The rower was a man unused to such service, worn with toil and watching, and likely, it was thought, to die. A companion touched him, pointed to the shore, and asked him if he knew it. Yes, he answered, I know it well. I see the steeple of that place where god opened my mouth in public to His glory; and I know, how weak soever I now appear, I shall not depart out of this life till my tongue glorify His name in the same place. Gentlemen, that town was St Andrew's, that galley slave was John Knox.[473]

Froude wrote on a multitude of topics and had much to say on education; he might have been addressing today's world in his observations. The second half of the nineteenth century was 'possessed with an idea that it eclipses all the ages which have preceded it', he remarked on the rise of novelists, historians, and philosophers, and 'as many dramatists who, if not yet equal to Shakespeare, were easily second to him'. Of his contemporary in literature, Charles Dickens, he noted

> More copies of Pickwick were sold in five years than of Hamlet in two hundred. Yet Hamlet will last as long as the *Iliad*; Pickwick will be unreadable to our great-grandchildren.[474]

He acknowledged the transience of the 'popular'

> A year or two pass and, as David says of the ungodly, I went by and lo, they were gone; I sought them, but they could not be found. [475]

Froude blamed both modern criticism and the system of education for a decline, as he perceived it, in literature; of criticism he wrote

> In criticism there is a singular inversion of the rule which holds with ordinary employments. Usually the practical part of things comes first; the judicial afterward. In literature, the aspirant to fame begins upon the bench, and when he has served his time in passing judgment on others he

[472] *Short Studies,* Vol IV, 'Cheneys and the House of Russell and Short Studies, Vol II, 'The Colonies Once More'.
[473] *Short Studies* Vol II, 'Education–Inaugural Address'. Once again Froude spoke with foresight; one hundred and forty years on, businessman Martin Murphy of Hewlett Packard Ireland has urged the Irish government to reform the education system and introduce the Chinese language.
[474] *Short Studies* Vol IV, 'The Oxford Counter-Reformation' letter Two.
[475] *Short Studies*, Vol III, 'Revival of Romanism' (X: Modern Literature and Modern Education), p. 199.

> descends to the Bar to practise on his own account. The world follows the critic, and the critic is still an apprentice in the trade.[476]

Drawing comparison with the modern education system where 'nothing is omitted, nothing is unattempted' to his own schooling, he believed a race between those systems would be as 'between a tortoise and Achilles'. He discerned that overloading young minds left them impoverished, with an absence of genuine interest in anything

> Is it better that a boy should learn to make a shoe excellently than to write bad exercises in half a dozen languages. The wider we make the area of superficial cultivation, the more we destroy the power of perceiving what good cultivation means; we are condemning the generations which are to succeed to creative barrenness and intellectual incapacity.[477]

His comments on educational decline were more scathing

> At no time has the amount of intellect or knowledge requisite for literary success been so small as at the present hour. Year after year the material becomes thinner and weaker…. they are such as the age requires; the public stomach is unequal to stronger diet…. it makes no demand on the higher faculties of thought.[478]

Fear for the loss of literature was at the heart of his concern

> I can be content to look back with proper tenderness on my hairy ancestry. Instead of 'a little lower than the angels' I can bear to look on myself as 'a little higher than the apes' and Pickwick shall be as beautiful as the Tempest and Herbert Spencer more profound than Aristotle and the electric cable of greater value to mankind than the prophecies of Isaiah or the Republic of Plato.[479]

The church rarely escaped a finger of blame in his wide circle of contemporary concerns

> We have had thirty years of unexampled clerical activity among us: churches have been doubled; theological books, magazines, reviews, newspapers have been poured out by the hundreds of thousands; while by the side of it there has sprung up an equally astonishing development of moral dishonesty…. We have false weights, false measures, cheating and shoddy everywhere. Yet the clergy have seen all this grow up in absolute indifference; and the great question which at this moment is agitating the Church of England is the colour of the ecclesiastical petticoats.[480]

Such was the flavour of Froude's influential literary output sustained for more than a staggering five decades of the nineteenth century, a period and output unmatched by Carlyle, alongside whom Froude is so often placed and with whom he is so inextricably linked. Carlyle is both Froude's debt and dilemma; indeed, a review by Walter Olson of the most recent biography of Froude (2005) suggested it might have been titled *The Carlyles and Froude.*[481] In surveying one area of Froude's literature from the vantage

---

[476] *ibid.*
[477] *op. cit.*
[478] *op. cit.*
[479] *op. cit.* Froude described classical writers as 'immortal lights in the intellectual sky' during a voyage to visit the colonies, which formed his book *Oceana*. En route to Australia, he escaped the on-deck 'sport' of gull-shooting to his cabin sofa, 'back into the old world and the adventures of the Ithacan prince'. (p.p.79 & 237)
[480] *Short Studies,* Vol IV, 'The Oxford Counter-Reformation', Letter Two.
[481] *New York Times*, 16 Oct 2005, review of Julia Markus by Walter Olson, 'J. Anthony Froude: That's Froude, Not Freud'.

point of Ireland, however, it is possible to hold the two great men apart for long enough to allow Froude to be observed under the light of his many other achievements.

Froude wrote of Carlyle that when a man has influenced the world it requires to know, in order that 'greatness in proportion to conduct can be assessed', details of the *whole* life, the private of which will be 'either the reward or the penalty of their intellectual dinstinction'. Froude certainly influenced his Victorian world, but the *whole* life has not been adequately analysed.

Froude's achievements and the study of them stagnate because, as observed by Clubbe, 'a great deal of Froude's own life remains unknown and uncharted'. It is not even clear from Froude's three biographers the number of his children. We have only hints of his role as a father from fragments, like that of a letter to his daughter Margaret, written from Mossel Bay

> Here are two pieces of flower which I picked on the road: a geranium and a heath. I wonder in what condition they will reach you. My best love to Rose and the two darlings. When shall I be with you again?[482]

This hints at a different side to Froude, an 'unexpected man of commanding presence, tall and without the least whit of the bookworm about him.' One who was 'the last man in a crowd that you would think was willing to devote the best years of his life to poring over old manuscripts, correcting anachronisms, or bothering himself about the British world'. This much was ascertained by an American reporter in 1872, when Froude did his utmost to deflect attention from himself during an interview.[483] Froude was blessed with humility.

It has been suggested that the interest of today's reader lies more in literary merit than intellectual history.[484] In this respect, Froude's well is deep; his prose transcends the centuries to arrive in our modern world as polished and fresh and clever and humorous as it was in his own. This literary merit endowed his work with life, but was something that he 'never thought about at any time'

> If you sincerely desire to write nothing but what you really know or think, and to say that as clearly and as briefly as you can, style will come as a matter of course.[485]

Perhaps Froude had Carlyle in mind when he wrote, 'there is pleasure in finding that an eminent man is but a mortal after all'.[486] Certainly there is no loss in such a find. Froude discovered that the eminent Carlyle was indeed a mortal. His decision not to conceal his mentor's private life that in the climate of his day ought to have been concealed was ground-breaking and brave. He sacrificed his own projects to write Carlyle's life and suffered for it, even posthumously. To the privacy of his journal he unloaded his disgruntlement

> What, in the name of truth, ought I to have done? It was a tragedy, as truly and as terribly as *Oedipus*; nor was the character altogether unlike. Carlyle's character, when he was himself, was noble and generous; but he had absolutely no control over himself. He was wayward and violent,

[482] Dunn (1963) p. 430
[483] Dunn (1963) p. 373.
[484] *New York Times*, 16 Oct 2005, (already cited).
[485] Markus (2005) p. 202.
[486] *Short Studies,* Vol IV, 'The Oxford Counter-Reformation', p. 319.

> and perhaps at bottom believed himself a peculiar man who had a dispensation to have things his own way. Also, his head was turned by Lady Ashburton, to Mrs Carlyle's further trouble. Was I to hide all this when he himself had prepared his own indictment?[487]

Froude caused uproar as perhaps the only Victorian biographer to imply the importance of sex in marriage. The study of Carlyle's literature has not been impeded by questions raised about his sexuality in Froude's biography.[488]

Froude's relations with Mrs. Herbert came at a time when grief and psychological torment had passed beyond endurance; his health was affected. The unexpected intervention of a young mother who could relate to his grief and who helped to ease his suffering he interpreted as his saving grace; he could not fail to commit an experience that defied the man-made laws of the human race to some form of record. It was his nature to do so.

The love, peace and refuge that Ireland provided this intensely private man was a debt that he repaid in honest discourse. Froude's provocative writing was deliberate; he could not bear witness to the country's sufferings by remaining silent. He was compelled to speak out at a time when his words could not be borne.

After a lifetime of setting down the histories of those who captured his imagination, when Froude sat down in old age to begin work on his own life story, he had not the strength to complete the task. It was to take a lifetime before the first scholarly attempt was made.

Much was lost in the meantime. Carlyle was astute in his selection of Froude for his memoirs. In future years, in future centuries, observed Froude, strangers will come from afar to see the house where Carlyle was born. The most fearless Victorian of all, however, was content to remain out of sight.

The memory of one who had a real intelligence of Carlyle should be 'cherished', wrote Marshall Kelly shortly after Froude's death. Yet it is proper too that such a one should be cherished in his own right. 'Friends,' wrote Kelly, 'we must not leave this one's bones among the infidel'. It remains to be seen if Froude can be made fit for re-burial.

Janet Murphy
May 2009

[487] Dunn (1963) p. 550.
[488] Clubbe (1979) p. 7.

Bibliography

Books

Altick, Richard D., *Victorian People and Ideas,* London: J M Dent & Sons Ltd, 1974.
Burke, Thomas N., *Ireland's Case Stated in Reply to Mr Froude*, New York, P. J. Kenedy, 1883.
Chitty, Susan*, The Beast and the Monk, A life of Charles Kingsley*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974.
Christiansen, Rupert, *The Voice of Victorian Sex Arthur H. Clough 1819-1861*, London: Short Books, 2001.
Clubbe, John, *Froude's Life of Carlyle*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1979.
Corkery, Daniel, *The Hidden Ireland, A Study of Gaelic Munster in the Eighteenth Century*, first published 1924, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd, 1977.
Cullen, Louis, *The Hidden Ireland, Reassessment of a Concept*, Mullingar: The Lilliput Press, 1988.
Cusack, Sister Mary Francis Clare, *The Story of My Life*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1883.
Cusack, M. F., *A History of the Kingdom of Kerry*, Dublin: Edmund Burke 1995 (facsimile of 1871).
Dunn, Waldo Hilary, *James Anthony Froude A Biography 1818-1856*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.
Everett, Nigel, *A landlord's Garden*, Bantry: Hafod Press, 2005.
Flood, Warden Hatton, *Notes and Historical Criticisms on Mr A Froude's English in Ireland in the 18th Century*, Torquay: Directory Office, 1874.
Foster, R. F., *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*, London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1988.
Froude, James Anthony, *Oceana*, London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1886
Froude, James Anthony, *Short Studies on Great Subjects Vol I,* London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898.
Froude, James Anthony, *Short Studies on Great Subjects Vol II,* London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898.
Froude, James Anthony, *Short Studies on Great Subjects Vol III,* London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1898.
Froude, James Anthony, *Short Studies on Great Subjects Vol IV,* London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1883.
Froude, James Anthony, *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century,* in three volumes, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1881 and 1882.
Froude, J. A., *The Nemesis of Faith*, London: John Chapman, 1849.
Froude, J. A., *The Nemesis of Faith,* Second Edition, London: John Chapman, 1849.
Froude, James Anthony, *The Two Chiefs of Dunboy or An Irish Romance of the Last Century*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1906.
Fuller, J. F., *Omniana: The Autobiography of an Irish Octogenarian*, London: Jarrolds Publishers Ltd, undated.
Gallwey, Thomas, *Lays of Killarney Lakes and Occasional Poems*; Dublin: Hodges, Foster & Co., 1871.
Gordon, Home, *The Reminiscences of an Irish Land Agent, Being those of S. M. Hussey*, London: 1904.
Graves, Alfred Perceval, *To Return to All That,* London: Jonathan Cape, 1930.
Hall, Mr. and Mrs. S. C., *A Week at Killarney*, London: Virtue & Co, 1850.
Hall, Mr. and Mrs. S. C., *Ireland its Scenery, Character &c*; London: How and Parsons, 1841.
Hamilton, Ian, *A gift Imprisoned: the Poetic Life of Matthew Arnold*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 1998.
Herbert, H. A., Savings' Banks Speech Delivered in the House of Commons on Thursday, April 29 1849, London: James Ridgway, 1849.
Hickson, Mary, *Ireland in the Seventeenth Century or The Irish Massacres of 1641-2,* London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884.
Honan, Park, *Matthew Arnold A Life*, London: George Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd, 1981.
Kelly, Marshall, *Froude: A Study of his Life and Character*, London: Henry J. Drane, 1907.
Kingsley, Frances Eliza Grenfell, *Charles Kingsley: his Letters and Memories of his Life*, Vol II, Edited by His Wife in two volumes, London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd, 1910.
Lecky, William Edward Hartpole, *A History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol II, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1897.
Lyne, Gerard J., *The Lansdowne Estate in Kerry under the Agency of William Steuart Trench 1849-72*, Dublin: Geography Publications, 2001.
McCartney, Donal, *W.E.H. Lecky, Historian and Politician 1838-1903*, Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1994.
Markus, Julia, *J. Anthony Froude The last Undiscovered Great Victorian*, New York: Scribner, 2005.
Mitchel, John, *1641: Reply to the Falsification of History by James Anthony Froude entitled The English in Ireland* subtitled 'The Crusade of the Period'*,* London: Cameron and Ferguson, 1873.
Newman, John Henry, Loss and Gain or The Story of a Convert, Boston: Patrick Donahoe, 1854.
O'Grady, Standish (Editor), *Pacata Hibernia or A History of the Wars in Ireland during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth especially within the Province of Munster under the Government of Sir George Carew*, London: Downey & Co. Ltd, 1896.
Paul, Herbert, *The Life of Froude*, London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd, 1905.
Skelton, John, *The Table-Talk of Shirley*, London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1895.
Stephen, Sir Leslie, *The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen*, London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1895.
Swift MacNeill, J. G., *What I Have Seen and Heard*, London: Arrowsmith, 1925.
Tillotson, Kathleen, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*, London: Oxford University Press, 1954.

Trench, W. Steuart, *Ierne A Tale* in Two Volumes, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1871.
Trench, W. Steuart, *Realities of Irish Life*, London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1870.
Weremchuk, Max S., *John Nelson Darby: A Biography* by Loizeaux Brothers, First American Edition, May 1993.
Willey, Basil, *More Nineteenth Century Studies: a Group of Honest Doubters,* Chatto and Windus, 1956.
Zeta (pseudonym James Anthony Froude), *Shadows of The Clouds*, London: John Ollivier, 1847.

Newspapers

Irish Daily Mail, 3 July 2007.
Irish Daily Mail, 4 July 2007.
Irish Daily Mail, 11 July 2007.
Irish Daily Mail, 12 July 2007.
Irish Daily Mail, 28 February 2008.
Irish Daily Mail, 27 May 2008.
Irish Daily Mail, 10 August 2008.
Irish Daily Mail, 11 August 2008.
Irish Daily Mail, 4 September 2008.
Irish Daily Mail, 6 October 2008.
Irish Daily Mail, 4 November 2008.
Irish Daily Mail, 15 January 2009.
The Kerry Evening Post, 12 January 1848.
The Kerry Evening Post, 23 February 1848.
The Kerry Evening Post ,7 October 1868.
The Kerry Evening Post, 10 October 1868.
The Kerry Evening Post, 4 May 1889.
The Kerry Evening Post, 20 October 1894.
The Kerry Evening Post, 12 November 1913.
The New York Times, 7 May 1969.
The New York Times, 16 October 2005.
The Sun, 7 November 2008.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 22 July 1848.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 12 August 1848.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 16 September 1848.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 21 October 1848.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 25 June 1867.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 28 July 1868.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 13 October 1868.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 16 October 1868.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 20 October 1868.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 24 November 1868.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 19 April 1870.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 3 June 1870.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 9 December 1870.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 3 February 1871.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 7 February 1871.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 10 February 1871.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 14 February 1871.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 21 February 1871.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 24 February 1871.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 28 February 1871.
The Tralee Chronicle and Killarney Echo, 3 March 1871.

Journals

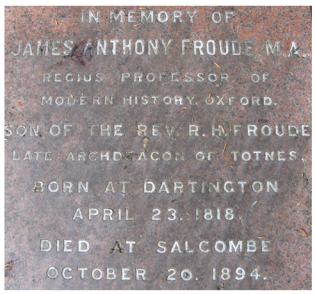
Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society No: 19 'John Townsend Trench's Reports on The Lansdowne Estates in Kerry 1863-73', Gerard J Lyne, 1986.
Edinburgh Review, Vol 133, April 1871.
Eire-Ireland, a Journal of Irish Studies, XV: I, 'Daniel Maclise, Disraeli, and *Fraser's Magazine*' by John Turpin, Minnesota: Irish American Cultural Institute, Spring 1980.
Eire-Ireland, A Journal of Irish Studies, 'Lecky and Dicey: English and Irish Histories' by Norman Pilling, Minnesota: Irish American Cultural Institute, Fall 1981.
Fraser's Magazine, 'Religious Stories', August 1848.
Fraser's Magazine, 'Froude's *Nemesis of Faith*' May 1849.

Fraser's Magazine, 'A Fortnight in Kerry', April 1870.
Fraser's Magazine, 'A Fortnight in Kerry', January 1871.
Historical studies VIII edited by T D Williams, Donal McCartney, 'James Anthony Froude and Ireland: a Historiographical Controversy of the Nineteenth Century', Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd, 1971.
Journal of the Kerry Archaeological & Historical Society, no 21, 1988; 'The Kenmare Estates during the Nineteenth Century' by James S Donnelly jr.
Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, *The,* 'The True Story of the Two Chiefs of Dunboy: An Episode in Irish History' by A J Fetherstonhaugh Vol IV and XXIV, Dublin: University Press 1894.
Kerry Magazine, *The,* no 11, 2000; 'Mary Agnes Hickson: Forgotten Kerry Historian' by Russell McMoran.
Mary Herbert of Muckross House 1817-1893, Killarney: The Trustees of Muckross House (Killarney) Ltd, 1999.
Muckross Newsletter, Issue 6, 1998.
Scotsman, The, 15 April 1889.

Websites

www.archive.org *Ierne A Tale* (in two volumes), by W. Steuart Trench, London: Longmans Green and Co., 1871.
http://books.google.com/ *Loss and Gain or The Story of a Convert,* by John Henry Newman, Boston: Patrick Donahoe, 1854.
www.gutenberg.net *Speeches from the Dock,* Part 1, 'Thomas C. Luby', Dublin: A. M. Sullivan, 1868.
www.kessinger.net *The Nemesis of Faith*, by James Anthony Froude, USA: Kessinger Publishing.
www.mybrethren.org/bios/framjndw.htm *Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled and Refuted,* by Rev. William Reid, William Oliphant & Co., 1876.

SHADYCOMBE CEMETERY
SALCOMBE



5. Onslow Gardens
London S.W.

July 15

My dear Sir

I shall be very glad to see your MS. Will you send it now at once? as I start for Ireland for the summer on Wednesday morning. If there is any delay or if there is a chance of it missing me here, be so good as to address it to me at

Dromquinna
Kenmare
Kerry.

Faithfully yours
J A Froude

C W Mason Esq