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J. A. Froude and his place in the historiography of the English Reformation.

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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE
J. A. PROUDE AND HIS PLACE
IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE
ENGLISH REFORMATION

by

JUDY BEER

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I. INTRODUCTION

Few English historians have achieved the popularity of James Anthony Froude, whose narrative style rivals that of Macaulay, and whose twelve-volume History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada is made particularly lively by his extensive use of unpublished and virtually unknown manuscript material. Froude's use of this material, in the words of his biographer, rendered "enormous services to the English-speaking peoples in throwing a flood of new light on the events preceding the expansion of his countrymen into all quarters of the globe."1

Froude's characterizations of the men and women of the sixteenth century are generally regarded as brilliant, though the chief among them, notably Henry VII and Elizabeth I, are so unconventional as to have been the subject of considerable controversy. Froude's passionate approach to his material and to his subject, as well as his own strong convictions, have made his work extremely vulnerable to charges of Protestant bias; and his tendency to handle his material rather carelessly has given him a reputation for inaccuracy of detail. In spite of these serious and generally acknowledged faults, however, Froude is still, over one hundred years after the publication

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of his History, often spoken of and apparently regarded with respect by those considered authorities on the sixteenth century.

It is the aim of this paper to explore, as thoroughly as is practicable, Froude's position in the historiography of the English Reformation. An effort will be made to reconstruct the political, emotional and religious climate in which Froude's ideas were formed, to explain how that climate influenced both his attitude toward religion and his approach to the history of the Reformation in England. The attempt will be not so much to set forth the facts of his life, which can be relatively easily ascertained, but rather to relate those experiences and personal encounters which left a lasting impression upon his outlook and values.

It will also be necessary to obtain some grasp of the general historiographical picture as it was in Froude's day, and of the upheaval occasioned when Froude's History of England came into contact with that picture; the specific aim herein will be to ascertain as clearly as possible the position taken by Froude in his History, and the nature of the conflict between that position and that of his contemporaries. The various attitudes taken by subsequent historians of the period will be discussed, dealing not only with specific attempts to refute or corroborate Froude's point of view, but also with cases where that view has been incidentally corroborated or refuted as a result of the process of evolution or metamorphosis which the general historical outlook toward the Reformation has undergone since Froude's day.
Although this paper is cast in the framework of a historiographical study, it will be readily seen that, due to its subject, and due to his subject, it assumes a broader scope. Neither the English Reformation nor Froude himself has as yet been laid to rest by historians, and for the same very good reason. Both have long been regarded in the context of controversy with regard to issues which universally concern men and women today, as they did one hundred, or even three hundred, years ago. Of the sixteenth century it has been said:

The period...which Mr. Froude has chosen for illustration is one which will always be of painful and absorbing interest. It is a time fruitful in lessons for all ages....

Froude's individual experiences may in a sense be said to be fruitful in the same type of lessons, insofar as his life constituted a struggle to be perfectly honest with himself, and to speak what he felt as plainly and as honestly as he could. It has been said of him that:

With definite convictions of his own, he was satisfied that the cause of truth was best served when the points on which men differed were submitted to the most free discussion, when the representatives of two different schools of opinion had the fullest opportunity of expressing themselves....

Froude's History of England was, clearly and admittedly, a statement of his definite convictions, and as such it is marked throughout by a strong bias. Froude is "avowedly the Protoc-

2"History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth", Christian Remembrancer 32 (July 1856): 56.

tant historian,4 and on this basis there have been those who have tended to discount his work. However, it has been recog-
ized that "The true significance of any controversy cannot be fully appreciated until the different viewpoints of the opposing parties are understood,"5 and on this basis alone Froude's work is not unworthy of study. Moreover, to the student of historiography, Froude is of interest simply as a study in reaction: his History was written with a view to counteracting what he felt were unjust appraisals by Catholic historians. It cannot be denied that he overreacted in an effort to compensate for what seemed to him to be the biases of others. The questions for the student are, first, how far is it profitable to make use of such polemical material, on both sides of a ques-
tion, to arrive at some middle ground which can safely be con-
sidered a factual picture of the period under discussion; and, secondly, if there is value in doing this, how is it best to be done - what is especially to be looked for, and what avoided.

Froude raises a second dilemma for the student of history regarding the relative importance of accuracy in details to the overall value of an historical work. While his work has generally come to be regarded as untrustworthy in matters of detail, there is also general agreement that it is highly reliable in terms of the overall picture of the period which it presents. Relative to this matter of accuracy, it must be considered that Froude wrote during a period which constituted something of a


5 Joseph Bernard Code, Queen Elizabeth and the English Catholic Historians (Leuven: Bureaux du Regueil, Bibliothèque de L'Université, 1930), vii.
crossroads in historiography. He is the last in a long line of what may be called the literary school of historians — men who wrote multi-volume histories of a particular period, for a wide reading public. However, Froude was, by virtue of the particular material used in the preparation of his History, in the vanguard of a more modern school of historians who have attempted to reconstruct the events of the past from original documentary material. This placed Froude and his work in a rather complex position, for, as one specialist in historiography has written:

A work of original research, which outlines new hypotheses of explanation or challenges accepted orthodoxies — such a book is measured along the lines of its scholarship. The same standards do not necessarily apply, however, to works of popular history.

Froude's History is in the ambiguous position of falling at once into both categories, and thus of being criticized from two entirely different points of view. In the light of so unprecedented an undertaking, it is perhaps not surprising that, though eminently successful on the second count, he was (to a large extent) a failure on the first. His reputation may have been hampered as well by the fact that neither he nor his contemporary critics were sufficiently detached to realize at the time this particular paradox, and the judgments against him do not therefore clearly reflect the difficulties under which his History came into being. Here again, the student of

historiography is faced with a specific problem: he must attempt to assess the relative merits of each type of historical research, and writing—the scholarly and the literary—before the permanent value of Froude's work can be accurately determined.

These particular problems, insofar as they relate to Froude, are within the province of this paper, and they will accordingly be dealt with, as will the broader issues such as the nature of historical truth and the responsibility of the historian thereto. It is hoped that some general assessment, if not a concrete verdict will emerge as to the value of Froude's work to the student of history today.

A brief discussion of the sources most frequently consulted in the preparation of this paper may perhaps be useful at this point. Primary was made, of course, of Froude's History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada. For the chapter on Froude's spiritual and emotional development, his work, The Nemesis of Faith was referred to frequently; though not technically autobiographical, it clearly reflects Froude's own views during a particularly critical period in his life and was therefore of considerable value. Waldo Hilary Dunn's biography, James Anthony Froude, might almost be considered a primary source, because a great deal of it, particularly the first volume, consists of extracts from an autobiographical fragment prepared by Froude but not previously published. Though Dunn's book and the other full-length biography, Life of Froude by Herbert Paul, were most helpful in terms of the acquisition of factual material, both are some-
what defensive of and highly favourable to Froude (biographers as well as historians being occasionally motivated by reaction to the work of others); and therefore had to be used with some caution.

For the general background material contained in the first chapter of this paper, R.K. Webb's *Modern England from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* provided a helpful survey of the period involved, particularly of the religious developments. Owen Chadwick's *The Mind of the Oxford Movement* contains a penetrating and detailed introduction, as well as representative extracts from the work of the Tractarians, and was accordingly a convenient and useful reference work.

Two works by F. Smith Fussner, *The Historical Revolution* and *Tudor History and the Historians*, provided a great deal of information on historiographical developments of both the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and were used extensively in this regard.

A number of contemporary reviews of Froude's *History* were used to obtain some idea of the initial impact of his work. Almost all of these were published anonymously, but those in the *Edinburgh Review* have been acknowledged to be by Goldwin Smith and have seemed to be by far the most thorough and penetrating of the reviews consulted.

For the purposes of comparing Froude's *History* with the works of modern historians, the most extensive use has been made of J.J. Scarisbrick's *Henry VIII* and J.E. Neale's *Queen Elizabeth*, as these works are recognized today as lead-
ing authorities on the two main periods dealt with in Froude's History.

Finally, Andrew Lang's excellent article, "Freeman vs. Froude", which appeared in Cornhill Magazine for February 1905, was by far the most helpful source of information on Froude's use of his source material; this article is particularly authoritative, as Lang had himself gone over much of the same material that Froude had used.
II. FROUDE'S CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS HERITAGE;
HIS EARLY LIFE AND APPROACH TO HISTORY

It might seem a truism to state that every nineteenth-century writer is a product of the nineteenth century. But to fail to appreciate that fact fully, to attempt to study such a writer outside that context, would be automatically to miss the essence—both of his difficulties and of his contributions. This is perhaps particularly true of the historian, whose absolute objectivity we have been taught to value so highly. During the first half of the nineteenth century in England, however, objectivity was anything but the prevailing mood. Those fifty years might be compared to the coming and passing of a summer storm. At first, the day seems bright and clear; objects stand out sharply against the sunlight. Gradually, a haze begins to form; what seemed easily definable becomes somewhat softened and blurred, and there is a rising sense of oppressiveness. As the thunderclouds rise, there is a heightened intensity, at once romantic and dramatic. Finally, the storm breaks in its fury; afterwards, it is possible to see and breathe clearly once more, and men are able to go about the prosaic business of restoring their world to order.

By 1800, the cool serenity of the Age of Reason had been proven to be but a superficial crust on the boiling
cauldron of human unrest; violent revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic had left Englishmen at least with an urgent need to regain their political and social bearings. Wellington's victory in 1815 did much to restore national self-confidence, and ended for over a generation the threat of external domination. But at home far more complicated issues were rising which would open the floodgates of uncertainty. The advent of industrialism, looming ever larger as the century progressed, brought with it a crying need to reduce to some degree of comprehensibility the changing relation of the rich to the poor, and of the state to the individual. Abroad, industrialism led to expansion of empire, and new economic theories had to seek their place alongside the still unresolved political relation of the governing to the governed. Material progress seemed to hold out infinite promise, but it quickly appeared that unlimited suffering would be the necessary corollary. These problems, coupled with a rising reaction to eighteenth-century rationalism, led to a host of romantically-inspired efforts to envision and define some all-encompassing panaceas.

In view of the intensity of these issues, and of their implicit connection with the nature of man and of his ultimate place in the universe, it is not surprising that religious questions in one form or another dominated the intellectual scene. "...among the elements in early Victorian society that gave character to the age and determined its course, religion, curiosity and love for the empirical study of social phenomena were to be found in a close and inseparable bond..."

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was central." From the atheist to the confirmed believer, every thinking man was faced with the need to attempt to rationalize his faith (or lack of it) with the complex political, economic and moral issues swirling around him. For men reared within the doctrinal edifice of the Anglican Church, the early decades of the nineteenth century were particularly critical. A series of incidents, political in their immediate nature, exposed vital weaknesses in the fabric of the Church; and the resulting efforts to repair the damage wrought basic and far reaching changes not fully appreciated even today.

One modern writer has noted, "The Church of England was, and is, an established church. This means that the Church is deeply imbedded in the fabric of national life." The obvious difficulty in such a system is that every shift or change in the "fabric of national life" necessitates an adjustment by which the political and ecclesiastical arms of the state may continue to dwell together in relative amity. The establishment of the English Church in Elizabethan times was brought about only by the unswerving insistence upon a via media whose scope was broad enough to include within its doctrinal limits the great majority of English people, though it

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3 J.M. Ludlow wrote, in a review of Proude's Nemesis of Faith, "In this year 1849...the one thing upon which turn the life and death of man is...how the man stands as towards God and thereby as towards his fellow-men...." Quoted in Waldo Hilary Dunn, James Anthony Froude (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963), 2 vols., I:141-42.

necessarily (and deliberately) excluded both the Catholic and the Puritan extremists. Under the Stuarts, however, the need to maintain this balance was lost sight of, and the nation was wracked by rebellion and civil war as first one side and then the other struggled for ascendancy. The victory of the Puritans led to the expulsion of the High Churchmen. With the Restoration, they returned eager for revenge. This swing of the pendulum reached its height in the reign of Queen Anne, whose "Tory and High Anglican stance ensured that by reaction the Hanoverian bishops would be Whig in political sympathies and, to a very large degree, liberal, or latitudinarian, in their theology." This situation prevailed into the nineteenth century, the ecclesiastical arm gradually declining as the secular arm grew stronger. Convocation, the legislative body of the Church, did not meet at all from 1717 to 1855. More and more the authority of the bishops tended to be subordinated to the needs or wishes of the politicians. This situation continued as long as it did largely because the opposition failed to resist it and remained virtually in default. For over one hundred years, "the assertion of a spiritual independence was no characteristic of the high tradition. That tradition was content to be conservative..., it was coming, in the unemotional age, to be 'high and dry' as the Oxford leaders called it."  

6Ibid., 36-7.  
Thus, when the overwhelming problems of the early 1900's became evident to Englishmen, the Church was in a less than favourable position to provide the strong spiritual support they so earnestly sought. All of these factors combined to raise the threat, however vague, of disestablishment: if an increasingly secular society could receive no valuable guidance from the Church, it was evident that men might soon logically conclude that there was no need for such a Church; even such vestigial temporal power as it still possessed might be lost to it, and it might even be legislated out of existence. The result was the "crisis of the eighteen-thirties when the revival of the Church as a divine society seemed imperative in the face of a Parliament that was no longer wholly Anglican." Once again, religion in England was ripe for reaction.

This essential concern for the political (and no less importantly for the spiritual) life of the Church moved one of her pastors, John Keble, to preach a sermon in July of 1833 on the subject of "National Apostasy". On the surface it was a specific answer to the immediate concern over the needs and authority of the Church vis-à-vis the State. But it drew its inspiration from the deeper wells of a grass-roots need of multitudes of Englishmen for a fresh and meaningful devotion; hence it touched off a reaction to the broad sense of spiritual barrenness of which the "high and dry" Church was but symptomatic. The inception of the Oxford Movement is said to have

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been concurrent with this sermon of Keble's; nearly two decades elapsed before the ensuing furor was quenched, and by that time not only the religious picture but much of the attitude toward the past was wholly altered.

Born in 1815, James Anthony Froude came of age during these critical years, surrounded by all manner of conflicting ideas and ideals. A reviewer of Froude's Nemesis of Faith, writing at the middle of the century when the crisis was passing, referred to "the fiery struggles and temptations through which the youth of this nineteenth century has to force its way in religious matters..." Like other young men of his day, Froude had to attempt to steer his course safely among a bewildering array of issues which, like a recurring Scylla and Charybdis, threatened moral and emotional shipwreck. Authority or oppression, freedom or licence, inner conviction or outward conformity - the list must have seemed endless and the distinctions difficult, if not painful to draw. Above all, it must be remembered that it was an age of feeling and passion; not until nearly mid-century did the romantic elements which characterized the early Victorian age begin to subside.

But these violent human emotions were often rigidly suppressed. Such was the case with Froude's father, the Arch-

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deacon at Dartington parsonage in Devonshire. A widower, left with several growing children, devoted to his parsonage and probably to his family, Archdeacon Froude kept his inner feelings sternly repressed beneath a mask of reserve. The youngest in the family by several years, Anthony felt keenly what must have seemed to him mere lack of affection and "from his earliest years felt chilled, crushed and fettered." 11

In such an atmosphere, it is not surprising that the attitude toward religion in the Froude home took the form, not of open speculation, but of a strict moral code. In later years Anthony wrote

...we were never worried about our spiritual emotions.... Religion meant essentially 'doing our duty'. It was not to be itself an object of thought but a guide to action.... Unfortunately, it addressed itself only to our sense and conscience, and many years had to pass before the other elements in my character were subdued into their places, and I practically understood what it all meant. 12

In spite of the apparent restrictions on individual reflection, however, Froude's innate sense of honest practicality in religious matters asserted itself quite early in his life. He has written, "When people said that it would be dreadful to appear in the presence of God, it seemed to me that we were in the presence of God already, and in our relations with so awful a being there could not be a more or a less." 13 This unquestioning acceptance of the presence of

11 Dunn, Froude, I:24.
12 Froude, Autobiographical Fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:20.
13 Ibid., 43.
his Maker in the affairs of men characterizes all of Froude's mature writings and does much to explain the initial appeal of Carlyle.

Froude's earliest educational experiences were pleasant enough. While still a very small boy, he came under the influence of an enthusiastic and romantic young teacher of Greek, who instilled in him the love of the language and of the heroes of its history which he retained all his life. He had a good memory and quickly learned by heart long passages from Homer. He was regarded by all who heard him as an exceptionally gifted child, and high hopes were held for him. Before he was twelve, it was decided that he should be sent to Westminster School, and the prospects were good that he might be admitted to Oxford by the time he was sixteen.

At Westminster, however, his family made the unfortunate decision to place him in the College, which meant that he would be living in quarters, without adult supervision, with boys whose average age was between fourteen and fifteen. Froude was only twelve, small for his age, and suffering at the time from an internal ailment. The whole experience was an unmitigated disaster; the greater part of his time was spent in efforts merely to survive and to defend himself as best he could against all manner of physical and emotional brutality. The promise of his early scholarship was rapidly eroded away, and he later wrote ruefully that "the only accomplishments that I had brought away from Westminster lay in cooking, shoe-cleaning, fire-lighting, bed-making, and such like; besides these, per-
haps, an ability to bear hard usage without outwardly com-
plaining."\textsuperscript{14} To the end of his life, Froude felt keenly
the depth of this loss. He never forgot that "the...years
most important for an education in scholarship had been
tirely wasted, a loss never to be repaired."\textsuperscript{15}

The greatest damage, however, was to Froude's self-
esteeem. After three years it had become evident that nothing
good would come of the Westminster experience; the family
tended to conclude as well that nothing good would come of
Anthony, and he was summoned home in disgrace. The entire
blame for his failure at school was attributed to his own
weakness or incompetence, and for nearly two years his fam-
ily took pains to let him feel the extent of their disapproval.
It is small wonder that, as the result of such a childhood he
developed what one writer has called "a glacial reserve which
may have concealed a yearning for affection."\textsuperscript{16}

There were, however, several positive aspects associ-
ciated with Anthony's inauspicious return to Dartington. First
of all, instead of being continually victimized and harrassed,
he was simply ignored. The countryside around his home was
beautiful, and the peace and solitude had a healing effect
on his wounded emotions. Secondly, his father's excellent
library was available to him, and he made good use of it, gradu-
ally renewing the intellectual interests of his early boyhood.

\textsuperscript{14} Autobiographical fragment; quoted in Dunn, \textit{Froude}, I:43.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 45.
\textsuperscript{16} Ausubel et al., \textit{Modern Historians}, 50.
The third influence during these years at home, if less serene than the books and the landscape, probably did more than anything else to shape the course of Froude's career. He has written that "I had been from early life in an atmosphere of controversy."\(^{17}\) Much of that atmosphere was due either directly or indirectly to his older brother, Richard Hurrell, the brilliant and passionate darling of the family whose sense of right seemed to allow for little opposition from any quarter. During the years when Anthony was at home, Hurrell was at Oxford, where he and John Henry Newman were closely associated with the deeply questioning controversies of the Oxford Movement. Newman and other friends of Hurrell's were frequent guests at Dartington, and in their zeal to reinterpret and reinstil the ancient mysteries and traditions of the Church, they freely debated a range of subjects which far surpassed even the high Tory and Anglican sentiments of the old archdeacon. Clearly they gave rise to deep reflections in the mind of his youngest son, who later wrote:

> I was left to listen, and listen I did with wondering ears. Everything which I had been taught to believe as a child, everything at least which had touched my imagination, I heard questioned or denied. Transubstantiation, which I had shuddered at the name of, was spoken of as probably true. The Church was the supreme ruler of the world, and was sovereign over the State. The reformers, whom I had been taught to look upon as saints, were now to be hated. Popes, in our circle, had been undoubtedly Antichrist. I now heard that the true Antichrist was liberalism and the French Revolution.\(^{18}\)

From the point of view of Froude's future historical

\(^{17}\)Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:72.

\(^{18}\)Ibid., I:40-41.
The most significant of these challenges to his early beliefs was the low esteem in which the Oxford reformers were coming to hold the Henrician and Elizabethan reformers. Here the guiding spirit was undoubtedly Hurrell Froude, who, in the last years of his short life, wrote that "odious Protestantism sticks in people's gizzard," and, "really I hate the Reformation and the Reformers more and more." While this extreme sentiment may have been the impassioned outburst of an overly-zealous partisan, it was not inconsistent with the logical requirements of the Oxford Movement. A basic political thrust of the Movement was its effort to reassert the ancient authority of the Church in order that, if the necessity arose, ultimate obedience to the Church could be invoked in spite of, or even in opposition to, the growing political domination of the early 1800's. As the English Church had been originally subordinated to the State during the Reformation, it became essential in some way to bypass the Reformation without entirely repudiating it. Hence the growing insistence by the Oxford men on the reverence for antiquity, on the writings of the Fathers, and particularly on the vital doctrine of apostolic succession; hence, given the general emotional needs of the time, the returning interest in the devotional and visible elements of

19 Chadwick, Mind of the Oxford Movement, 53.
20 Ibid.
what Archbishop Laud had seen as the "beauty of holiness."\(^{22}\)

A distinctive feature of the Oxford Movement which has bearing upon this point is its insistence upon the emotional rather than the rational aspects of faith and devotion. Wholly in tune with the romanticism of the day, it "was one part of that great swing of opinion against Reason as the Age of Reason had understood it and used it."\(^{23}\) There was an emphasis upon emotion and personality which, though it had much to do with the pervasiveness of the Movement's influence, contained within itself the seeds of a skeptical reaction. A certain lack of caution was sensed, particularly in the words and actions of the Movement's more extreme adherents; moreover the concurrent return of Catholicism to relative favour was seen by many Englishmen as portending a return to evil days.

Furthermore, in spite of efforts made by Newman and others to avoid it, the warm enthusiasm fostered by the Movement's leaders led not unnaturally to a tendency on occasion to treat historical facts with passion rather than with clear-eyed objectivity.

It cannot be said that either \([\text{Hurrell}]\) Froude or Newman did more than dabble in the history of the Reformation, and neither was well qualified to make sound judgments upon the subject. But they had both formed an impression of an antithesis, perhaps an incompatibility, between the ancient Church and the Protestant leaders of the Reformation...\(^{24}\)

Practical thinkers, Anthony Froude among them, sensed this

\(^{22}\)Quoted in Chadwick, Mind of the Oxford Movement, 18.

\(^{23}\)Chadwick, Mind of the Oxford Movement, 12.

\(^{24}\)Ibid., 54.
weakness, and it in some measure curbed their own eagerness about the loftier ideals of the Movement. Proude was to be disturbed over this later while working with Newman on the Lives of the Saints, and he was eventually to "revolt against the irrationalism" which he saw in Newman's approach. Even as an inconspicuous teenager listening to his elders expounding their wisdom, his independent mind had grasped an inconsistency between their views and his own study. In contrast to his brother's conviction that England's serene pre-Reformation past had been the innocent victim of rising empiricism, Anthony noted that

The history which I had been reading seemed to say that, at least under the feudal system and patriarchal sway of the Plantagenets, England had been particularly well skilled in treason. Reign after reign had been marked with rebellion, regicide and revolution. ... I could not but think there were gaps in my brother's knowledge of his own country, and perhaps even of the French Revolution. It was said that the worst horrors of the Reign of Terror were child's play compared with the massacre of the Huguenots, whom he so despised, inflicted by the Church in the sixteenth century.

Thus Proude's essential doubts were raised, and the ultimate cast of his mind was set, very early in his experience. For the moment, however, he kept those doubts within himself, and continued to study and to ponder the things which he heard. His father's watchful eye had not missed the serious interest and intellectual capacity of his youngest son, and after Anthony had been two years at home it was felt that he might after

\[25\] Chadwick, Mind of the Oxford Movement, 42.
\[26\] Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, Proude, I:41.
all be made ready for Oxford. Accordingly, in 1835 he was sent to Hubert Cornish, a private tutor at Merton. Once again, it was his misfortune to fall in with someone whose romantic tendencies overshadowed his sense of serious scholarship. Froude described Cornish as

an amiable man of dreamy tendencies, a friend of Keble’s, a moderate poet; but he talked to me of Wordsworth when I ought to have been working at Aeschylus and Horace, and of theology when I could not write correctly a sentence of Latin prose.... My tutor failed to discover in me any signs of ability, and I, if I had any, was never led to suspect its presence. What I needed was to be interested in the work which I had to do, and some serious convictions on the nature and value of human life; some principle and sense of duty. Nothing of all this was impressed upon me....27

He was, however, able at the end of a year to enter Oriel College at Oxford. Here he was warmly received by the kindly Newman, who must have felt a natural sympathy for the brother of his dear and recently deceased friend Hurrell Froude. While Anthony appreciated Newman’s kindness and revered his exemplary personal qualities, he failed to respond warmly to the older man’s ideas. He did not feel any sense of spiritual kinship with Newman’s circle of friends, and he was perhaps at this point in his experience in need of other, different lessons than those which Newman had to teach. He was gradually becoming aware of the attractive side of his own personality. He discovered that he had a gift for conversation and a sense of humour, and during his early days at Oxford he tended to bask in the new-found awareness that these qualities caused

27 Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:45.
others to admire him and to seek his company. To the more serious and studious observers, he must have seemed an irresponsible young man at this time, but it was a period of the most essential growth for Froude: he was gaining self-confidence, without which the development of true moral strength is never really possible.

This process was accelerated by a brief if intense love affair with a young woman Froude met on a reading party during Oxford's Long Vacation of 1838. It was an affair of short duration, broken off by the girl's father who understandably doubted Froude's future prospects. Its initial results were painful in the extreme to the young man, but as often happens the long-range effects were therapeutic. As Froude described it years later:

The sense of being valued by another made me set a value on my own life. I had something to care for, something which made it worth my while to distinguish myself.... Every faculty that I had, brightened up as if the sun were suddenly shining. The trifles on which my time had been wasted ceased to interest me. I had yet a year before my final examination. There was still time to acquit myself at least respectably. I read night and day. I abandoned my foolish habits: my interest was to deserve the fortune which had so suddenly shone upon me.²⁸

The break, when it came, was utterly devastating. Waldo Dunn refers to the ensuing period as the "darkest period of Anthony's mental and spiritual struggles."²⁹ As Froude himself recollects it:

²⁸Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:51.
²⁹Dunn, Froude, I:59.
...I was stunned and stupefied almost as if I had been struck by lightning. Months passed before I could collect myself to throw off the leaden torpor into which I had been plunged... I recovered out of it to find myself hardened into a sullen feeling that I was the victim of a relentless fate, but also with a sense that fate should not master me.... There may have been something stilted in this, but it was real, too, for it did represent a turning point in my small history. The past was past. I would put it away.... Anyway, I resolved to show that I was not what I was supposed to be. ... The first class which I had faintly dreamt of was now beyond my hopes,... but, when the time came I did at least better than the authorities expected of me.... I got a fair second, and was made to feel that in future competitions I might still recover my place.30

This, such as it was, constituted what must be termed Froude's formal education. It must be noted that, paradoxically, almost all of the time he spent within the framework of an educational institution was devoted to trying to unwind the snarls of his human experiences, or to develop his character. The lessons of life he learned at school; for the most part, the lessons of scholarship had to be learned almost in spite of the educational system. This fact may go far to explain whatever validity there is in later charges that Froude was not a careful scholar. It is interesting to speculate on what he might have become had he had anything remotely resembling the ordinary scholastic experience of the moderately well-to-do English youth of his day. It is easy to regret what he missed. On the other hand, it is perhaps too easy to underestimate the value of what he did receive. The mature man is the product of all experiences, the good as well as the bad, and the most vital

30Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:59.
qualities in human character are often forged in the fires of the most difficult trials.

If nothing else, Froude had learned what it was to suffer. The aspect of his suffering which is most significant is not that he survived it, not that he endured it, but that it left him without a trace of human bitterness. Though he resented long and bitterly the circumstances which had brought so much misfortune upon him, there was something in his nature which refused to attach that resentment to his fellow human beings. Hence, he emerged from his youthful trials with a broadened scope and a firmer foundation for viewing the affairs of men. Some years later, in a review of Froude's History of England, his brother-in-law, Charles Kingsley, would write that Froude possessed "the genius of human sympathy.... he had the power of seeing things in men and women which the mass could not see; of saying things of them which the mass dared not say...."31 Kingsley recognized that these were valuable attributes and not easily come by, and he observed that it would be good for the public knowledge that no one should exercise the craft and mystery of a historian, unless he had had his fair share of the sorrows and joys - nay also, perhaps, of the weaknesses of humanity.32

An additional benefit, if such is the word, of these early experiences stems from the fact that when one has been hurt badly enough and has survived the pain, he ceases to be


32Ibid., 213.
overly afraid of being hurt again. Throughout his life, Froude would often be bewildered and disappointed by public reaction to his works, but he was never so intimidated that he failed to state with candour the facts as they appeared to him. His biographer Herbert Paul has written that he was "constitutionally fearless"\(^{33}\), and this was as true of his mental as of his physical makeup. When Froude himself acknowledged that "character, vigour, independence, these may best form when there is most occasion for independent action,"\(^{34}\) he was certainly speaking from experience. And these were qualities which he admired and demanded in others. John Skelton, his friend of many years, recalled that "the type of mind most distasteful to Froude was what may be called the evasive or casuistic. He loved candour. His friends could not be too frank and outspoken."\(^{35}\)

This is not, however, to imply that Froude's early experiences had turned him into a cold or a hard man, though it may have seemed so at times. His was a very complex nature. Leslie Stephen worked closely with Froude on Fraser's Magazine and was his neighbour for many years, yet he never really understood him. "Froude alternately attracted or repelled him, and even in his last days, he would sometimes return to Froude as to an unsolved problem."\(^{36}\) In a letter to a friend, Stephen


confessed:

Nobody of my acquaintance is a greater puzzle. Sometimes I fancy that I like him very much, and sometimes I altogether turn against him. He has some very good and amiable qualities, but I never quite trust him. Partly I think my distrust is owing to the simple fact that both he and I are rather shy by disposition, and two shy people make a bad mixture.\(^\text{37}\)

To those who were able to pierce the outer shell, however, the puzzle was easily solved. John Skelton, in the following passage, pays moving tribute to qualities in Froude's nature which were perhaps less evident to the outside observer but which were all-important to those who knew him well:

...while he had a passionate scorn of meanness and truckling, he had an equally passionate reverence for truth, as he understood it, whatever guise it assumed. The mask might be sometimes...impassive...; but behind it was an almost tremulous sensitiveness—a tenderness easily wounded.... For myself I can say without any reserve that he was, upon the whole, the most interesting man I have ever known. To me, moreover, not only the most interesting, but the most steadfastly friendly.... I have found him ever the same, the most loyal and lovable of friends, the frankest and most genial of critics.\(^\text{38}\)

Perhaps because of the experiences noted above, perhaps because his childhood had been so bereft of guidance, and perhaps because he was essentially practical rather than speculative, Froude was by nature a disciple rather than a leader. Basil Willey has written perceptively of him, "Not himself a spiritual pathfinder, he is dependent upon outside strength."\(^\text{39}\)

\(^{37}\) Maitland, Leslie Stephen, 231.
\(^{38}\) Skelton, Table-Talk of Shirley, 121-2.
Froude was himself aware of this aspect of his human relationships, and he expressed it clearly in the following passage from *The Nemesis of Faith*:

...the mind of a young man is very plastic. As personal affection lies at the root of our first opinions, so the influence of persons whom we love and venerate is for a long time paramount; and, by a natural necessity, a mind falling in its growth under the influence of a great man, great alike in genius and in character, assumes the imprint such a man will fix upon it, and most imitates what it most admires.  

This, coupled with the "passionate reverence for truth, as he understood it, whatever guise it assumed", explains the fact that Froude felt throughout his life the influence of the two personalities in England with whom the word "truth" is most consistently associated: Newman and Carlyle. These two mental and spiritual giants, both "great alike in genius and in character", appealed to the opposite sides of Froude's nature: it is perhaps not an oversimplification to say that Newman appealed to his essential tenderness, and Carlyle to his frankness. It goes without saying that the inherent and unquestioned goodness of both men was their strongest aspect, and it was first of all to this that Froude was inevitably and permanently drawn.

Froude's connection with Newman had begun when the former was a small boy, for for many years "Newman had been an intimate friend of the Froude family, a frequent guest at the Dartington Parsonage, an alter ego of Hurrell

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Froude. When Froude arrived at Oxford in 1836, shortly after Hurrell's death, Newman, as has been seen, greeted him with typical kindness. It was to this vital human quality, not to speculative theories, that Froude at once responded. As he later recalled,

Newman himself, young though I was, had a strange fascination for me. For one thing he was kind, gentle, and utterly unaffected, with a most striking presence. His sermons, which I attended from the first, interested me more than any addresses which I had ever listened to, and I was never shy of him or afraid of him.

Froude possessed, if anyone did, a sensitivity to human emotions equal to that of Newman, and he must have been intuitively swept away by Newman's enthusiastic appeal to the emotional side of men's religious thought, by his vigorous efforts to instill vitality into the "high and dry" Church, and especially by his utter sincerity. The hero of Froude's Nemesis of Faith expresses an admiration for Newman which must assuredly echo Froude's own sentiments:

Newman had dared to tell them [the English clergy] that their armour was pasteboard; the oil drying out of their lamps; that a tempest was rising which would scatter them like chaff before it. Catholic feeling - Catholic energy - Catholic doctrine, exhibited in holy life, in prayer and fasting, their own witness at least of their own fidelity, might save them.

In spite of a deep personal attachment to Newman on the emotional level, Froude's was essentially a very different type of mind, and gradually but inexorably the paths of the

41 Dunn, Froude, II, 306.
42 Autobiog. fragment; quoted in Dunn, Froude, I: 47-48.
43 Froude, Nemesis of Faith, 155.
two men diverged. "Newman was above all concerned with the life of the mind, with the operation of reason, with the training of the mind to reach rational conclusions." Froude's approach to vital issues was somewhat more down to earth, chiefly concerned with things he could see and hear. While he could follow Newman in his desire to beautify and revitalize the English Church, and even to reverence the antiquity of its traditions, he was not at heart a speculative thinker; and by 1845, when Newman entered the Roman Church, "Froude was being carried in the opposite direction, toward a theological skepticism that saw religion as a moral and national force rather than a metaphysical doctrine." Markham Sutherland's words in *The Nemesis of Faith* indicate the extent to which their author misunderstood the real object of Newman's quest:

He went on to the end - to the haven where sooner or later it was now clear he must anchor at last. The arguments for the Catholicity of the English church continued the same, but he on whom they were to tell was changed. He might have borne her supineness if he could have found the life in her for which he thirsted; but, as his desires deepened with his advances in the real feeling of Christianity, it was natural that his heart should incline where he could find them most fully gratified.

A little farther on, Markham Sutherland continues:

For myself I fell off; not because I had determined not to follow, but because I had not yet felt this intensity of hunger and of thirst which could drive me to accept the alternative, and consent to so entire an abandonment of myself.

It seems not to have occurred to Froude that Newman's

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emotional hunger and thirst remained largely with his old associations, but that his inability to accept what he could not logically rationalize prevented him from remaining with all that he held dear. Newman's case was clearly a victory of the mind over the heart; it is not likely that, had such a separation of these vital factors been possible to Froude, the mind would have been the victor.

In spite of these theoretical differences, Froude never lost his affection for Newman, or his conviction that Newman's honesty was above reproach. When many others were calling him at least a liar, Froude continued to insist that "he was incapable of dishonesty, that whatever his opinions he was a pure and saintly person,"48 and that he was "a man of most perfect personal truthfulness."49

Probably Newman's chief legacy to Froude was a devotion to and respect for human goodness. In spite of the vigour of Froude's attacks upon systems and institutions, his life and his work (with one or two notable exceptions) were free from any petty dislike of or attack upon persons. Newman must have been his ideal of gentleness and kindliness, and to the extent that his own life reflected these traits, the debt must be largely due to Newman.

Herbert Paul mentions a second vital contribution which he feels Newman made to Froude's historical career:

48 Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:67.
49 Ibid., II,306.
Froude gave to the Protestant cause the same sort of distinction which Newman had given to the Oxford Movement. Newman's University Sermons are neither learned nor profound. Yet the preacher's mastery of the English language in all its rich and manifold resources has, and must always have, an irresistible charm. The mantle of Newman had fallen on Froude...

Certainly few if any who heard Newman speak came away without a deep impression of the beauty of his use of words. Those who have enjoyed the relaxed and flowing style of Froude's books must be most grateful to Newman for having provided such an inspiration.

There is a further, negative aspect of Froude's connection with Newman which may have had a more far-reaching effect on his work than has as yet been noticed. Froude could never accept the suggestion that Newman was less than entirely honest in his decision to become a Roman Catholic. Believing this, Froude "nevertheless believed as strongly that Newman was a victim of his own nature, of his own delusions. In short, he held that Newman was honestly self-deluded, the slave of his own emotions and sophisms." Froude, along with probably the majority of Englishmen of his day, equated Roman Catholicism with the surrender of individual freedom; he had been at Oxford when Newman left it, and he was close enough to him to know the pain that decision had caused the older man, and to be aware of the many struggles that ensued as he sought to find his way during the difficult years immediately following his conversion. Froude truly loved Newman; he had a natural

51. Dunn, Froude, II:306.
antipathy to any system which he felt restricted a man's right to his own conscience. And so it is not improbable that Newman's experience was the source of much of Froude's bitterness against the Catholic Church, which so thoroughly colours his History of England. Many years later, within months of Newman's death, Froude wrote to a friend, "intellect fights no battle, Reason is no match for Superstition, and one emotion can only be conquered by another." He was speaking of the Calvinists' extreme opposition to Catholicism during Elizabethan times, but he may well have been led to such a conclusion as a result of his sorrow over Newman's loss to Protestantism. For, rightly or wrongly, this is exactly how he viewed the state of mind which he felt had allowed Newman to be victimized by an oppressive creed.

Vital as was his personal contribution to Froude's experience, intellectually "Newman...raised more doubts than he solved." Froude was always ultimately swayed more by the lives and actions of men and women than by abstract ideas. When he had finished at Oxford, he accepted a position as tutor to the family of an Evangelical clergyman in Ireland. He found among his new acquaintances there a way of life which "to a remarkable extent shaped his entire future course." The product of Oxford in the 1830's, Froude was understandably filled with the religious and devotional ideals of the Move-

52 Skelton, Table-Talk of Shirley, 205.
54 Dunn, Froude, I:62.
ment, and he had probably had little time or inclination heretofore to assess the merits of those ideals in the wider context of the world beyond Oxford. Now he was to find that his experiences with the Cleaver family "contradicted the assumptions of the Tractarians that High Catholicity was an essential note of true religion. Gradually [he] became aware that High Church and Low Church did not exhaust the intellectual world."55

In Oxford, history had seemed to be on the side of Catholicism; it was the 'movement party' which claimed the dedicated lives. Here in County Wicklow it was just the reverse: here were the facts which justified the Reformation.56

Froude has himself described the change which began immediately to occur in his thought when he became virtually a member of this remarkable family:

A thousand prejudices dropped off of themselves, the narrowness and silliness of the High Church conception of Evangelicalism among the first of them.... For the first time I was in the presence of a purely spiritual religion, the teaching of the New Testament adopted as a principle of life, and carried into all the details of ordinary thought and action. About this there could be no mistake: a beautiful principle of unobtrusive piety, which, if it was the fruit of a false belief, confuted and destroyed the most precious evidence for the truth of Christianity.... I could never more believe the opposite theory that the grace of God was confined to the ministrations of the Catholic Church, still less in the exclusive knowledge or the exclusive excellence of Catholic teachers and preachers, who calumniated or denied the virtue of those whose lives and actions were in favourable contrast to so many of their own.57

56Willey, More Nineteenth Century Studies, 114.
57Dunn, Froude, I:56.
Here, in the face of such evidence, Froude came firmly to grips with a conviction which was never to leave him and which was to become the cornerstone of his History of England: "Whatever might be the "Notes of the Church", he concluded, 'a holy life was to be the first and last of them; and a holy life, it was demonstrably plain to me, was no monopoly of the sacramental system.' 50

As usual, Froude was not impressed with the doctrine, or the relative lack of it, which the Evangelicals professed. Until he met the Cleavers, his opinions regarding Evangelicalism had been essentially negative, based on the prejudices of his brother and of other Oxford High Churchmen. But two things about Cleaver and his family struck him so forcibly that a return to Neumanism was forever cut off. First, there was the Reverend Cleaver himself and "the sweetness and incomparable grace of disposition which so singularly distinguished him." 50 And secondly, there was the manifestation in life of Christian graces which led Froude to say later of Cleaver and his wife that "they two approached nearer to the type of Christian saint than any religious persons of any creed that in my long life I have since fallen in with." 50

In addition, during his stay in Ireland, Froude developed great admiration for the embattled community of Protestant Nonconformists who, dwelling in the midst of Catholic Ireland and constantly oppressed by a virtually dessicated Established

50 From J.A. Froude, Short Studies on Great Subjects, iv, 302, quoted in Willey's More Nineteenth Century Studies, 114.

50 Dunn, Froude, I:65

50 Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:65.
Church, manifested that vital spirit which so captured his imagination and was later to give life, power and colour to his history of the Reformation:

...in them lay the fighting power of the Protestant party. They alone could be relied upon to fill its ranks in case of rebellion. The Protestants were the English garrison of Ireland. The Nonconformists were the rank and file of the army, and without them the Anglo-Irish establishment consisted only of the bishops and clergy, peers and landowners, and their immediate dependents.51

These lines, with very few changes, could have been inserted into Froude's History to describe Knox and his followers during the Scottish Reformation.

The Reverend William Cleaver was never a famous man as were Newman and Carlyle; of the triumverate whose lives and ideas were to hold such sway over Froude's spiritual development, he seems virtually neglected in many of the essays written about Froude - almost unnoticed between the giants who flank him. And yet, in some ways his influence was the most important, if the most subtle, of all. For it was to Cleaver that Froude owed his lifelong reverence for what he refers to in The Nemesis of Faith as "that golden thread of humanity which winds along below the cruelty of the exclusive theory, and here and there appears in protest, in touches of deeper sympathy for its victims, than are ever found for the highly-favoured."52 It has already been seen that Cleaver

51 Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:63.
52 Froude, Nemesis of Faith, 13.
provided the balance that kept Froude from wholly embracing Newman's Catholicism; on the other side, he prevented Froude from drifting after Carlyle into his militant non-sectarianism. Cleaver is undoubtedly the reason why Froude's sense of God never contains the dreadful aspect of divine wrath which characterized Carlyle's religious fulminations. For to Cleaver was due that concept of a loving Father which ultimately satisfied most fully Froude's sense of what the Almighty must be, and whose opposite nature Markham Sutherland so forcibly refutes in the following passage from *The Nemesis of Faith*:

No, if I am to be a minister of religion, I must teach the poor people that they have a Father in heaven, not a tyrant; one who loves them all beyond power of heart to conceive; who is sorry when they do wrong, not angry; whom they are to love and dread, not with caitiff coward fear, but with deepest awe and reverence, as the all-pure, all-good, all-holy. I could never fear a God who kept a hell prison house.63

Most important of all, however, it is to Cleaver's influence that we owe Froude's solid, non-doctrinal Protestant convictions. The obvious futility of any attempt to envision a non-Protestant Froude's *History of England* is sufficient indication of the impact of this unobtrusive gentleman upon his life and work.

Though continually swayed back and forth by the opinions of those whom he loved and revered, Froude was always his own helmsman, never allowing his admiration for others to steer him away from his own deepest convictions. It might be said

that those who influenced him did so by clarifying and crystallizing his opinions, not by forming them for him. This was brought out in 1842 when, back at Oxford, Newman brought out the controversial Tract 90. Among the Cleavers' circle of friends in Ireland, Froude writes, the tract "was a subject of vehement censure... It was considered dishonest, and its author was spoken of in terms which I could not bear to hear." 64 True as always to himself and to those he loved, Froude feelingly defended Newman's integrity, purity and saintliness of character. The Reverend Cleaver was not unnaturally concerned about the effect of such opinions upon the education of his children, and, apparently without personal animosity, he and Froude concluded that, in Froude's words, "a connexion which had been so useful to me, and, I believe, in some respects not disagreeable to my new friends, had to be brought to an end." 65

Returning to Oxford and to all the familiar excitement, Froude was elected Fellow of Oriel College. At Oxford he found that "the Movement as it was called was hurrying on more rapidly than ever and sweeping with it the most brilliant minds of the rising generation." 66 "My own impulse," he continues, "was to go along with it. I was no sooner within its sphere than the attractive personality of Newman would have recovered its absolute ascendancy with me had I not been held back by my Irish experience of what Protestantism, which I heard at

64 Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:66-7.
65 Ibid., I:66.
66 Ibid., I:72.
Oxford turned into contempt, was really capable. Cleaver's anchor had held, but just barely, and Froude admits that he might yet have been swept away but for the arrival upon his mental horizon of the third, and best known, of the men whose ideas shaped his destiny. In *The Nemesis of Faith*, Froude wrote that Newman was not the only greatly gifted man then living in this England. I think he was one of two. Another eye, deep-piercing as his, and with a no less wide horizon, was looking out across the same perplexed scene, and asking his heart, too, what God would tell him of it.

There is an interesting contrast between the influence upon Froude of Thomas Carlyle, to whom this deep-piercing eye belonged, and the influence of Cleaver and Newman. Of the three, Carlyle was the only one with whom Froude's initial contact was not personal. In other words, he first came to know him through his writings. Yet, of the three, he is the only one with whom personal contact was maintained throughout his life - the relationship ending only with Carlyle's death many years later.

Froude has clearly described the state of his developing thoughts and convictions at this time, still not quite freed from the influence of the High Church movement. The dilemma, as his practical mind saw it, lay in a lack of present evidence for religious belief:

> It had always struck me as odd that, if to think rightly of religion was the thing of greatest moment to us, the principles on which we were ruled by Providence should not be found, like all other knowledge, in the present reality of our actual life and experience.... Things, not books, were our real teachers - while theology seemed to possess every time but the

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57 Autobiog. fragment, quoted in Dunn, *Froude*, I:72.
58 Froude, *Nemesis of Faith*, 156.
Even the mysterious privileges of the church and the present virtues of the sacraments were not known to us by experience. The existence of God might be a conviction resting in the constitution of our minds, but the operations of God as described by Catholic teaching were not supported by any outward facts. Facts seemed to contradict them.59

These lines reveal the crux of Froude's difficulties with Newman's theoretical, doctrinal faith. He needed a God whom he could accept as real, as alive - a God whose hand he could see in the affairs of men. "Across these perplexities," he writes, "Carlyle's books passed like a flash of lightning."70 As Froude remarked, in connection with both Carlyle and Emerson:

I found myself addressed by thinkers of a power and earnestness at least equal to the most brilliant of the Churchmen, with this difference: that I was no longer referred to books and distant centuries but to present facts and the world in which I lived and breathed. . . .

In the French Revolution, in which my brother had seen Antichrist, Carlyle saw the visible revenge of God upon human wickedness. . . . Laws had been laid down in the constitution of things for human conduct, and enforced in this world by awful penalties. It was the answer to the sick question of every thinking soul: Why, if God exists, are there no signs of him?71

While these startling ideas did much to clear the air for Froude, they did not at once resolve all his doubts. It has been noted that

Froude remained throughout this time [1842-49] at the meeting-place of the cross-currents: reading Carlyle, Emerson, Goethe, . . . and yet at the same time preparing for ordination [Deacon's Orders were a prerequisite to teaching at Oxford at that time] and writing (at Newman's request) a Life of St. Neot for Newman's series of English Saints.72

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59 Autobiog. fragment; quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:72-3.
70 Ibid., 73.
71 Ibid., 72-3.
72 Willey, More Nineteenth Century Studies, 115.
Froude's reference to Carlyle in The Nemesis of Faith, which came out in 1849, indicates that he was not even then entirely prepared to accept the great man's interpretation of the world's ills: "Carlyle only raises questions he cannot answer, and seems best contented if he can make the rest of us as discontented as himself. ..." 73

Carlyle's influence upon Froude's thought during this early period was of a far more general nature than it was to become after the two men had become close friends. In the 1840's Froude's mind needed to be expanded, and this broadened outlook was what Carlyle's writings provided. As Froude wrote in 1849:

Only wider experience flings us back upon ourselves; the experience which shows us that men who, while they unite all the greatest qualities in greatest measure, may yet be as various in opinion as in the variety of their gifts.... Painful, indeed, is the moment when this first breaks upon us. It is easy to be decided so long as we feel so sure that all goodness is on our side..., but how terrible becomes the alternative when we know men as they really are! 74

Carlyle did fling Froude back upon himself, and the moment was indeed painful. But, once and for all, Newman's doctrinal spell was broken (though the spell of his personality remained as before), and Froude could see his path more clearly. His real debt to Carlyle in this sense was his "emancipation from clerical bonds." 75

73 Froude, Nemesis of Faith, 35.
74 Ibid., 125.
75 Paul, Life of Froude, 59.
As this extended period of soul-searching drew to a close, Froude brought out his controversial book, *The Nemesis of Faith*. It has unquestionable autobiographical overtones, but it perhaps resembles more closely a laboratory experiment in which Froude is trying to resolve his own situation by examining an experience which parallels, though it does not describe, his own. The book is in effect an indictment of any man who adheres to formal creed at the expense of his own conscience. Markham Sutherland, the hero (if so weak a figure may be so designated), returns at length to the fold of the Church, but in so doing has sacrificed whatever had been worthy in his own nature. He dies, guilt-ridden and unmourned, but (hollow victory in the author's eyes!) a faithful son of the Church. By contrast, the heroine remains unrepentant to her death of her illicit love for Markham, convinced that, as she has been true to herself, she is innocent of sin. Though a sinner in the eyes of the Church, she is happy and entirely at peace with herself.

The book has been frequently described as showing that loss of faith in the creed of the Church leads as well to loss of moral sense, but in reality it asks the far deeper question whether any creed is really capable of determining and defining, much less of safeguarding, the moral sense. The intimation, however indirect, by one who had taken orders and was in the position of teaching others, that perhaps essential moral decisions ought to be made on the basis of individual conscience rather than formal creed, was something that the Church of England,
in its current enervated state, could not tolerate. Newman's incisive mind was quick to grasp the dangers inherent in such an argument at such a time, and he wrote to Froude's sister-in-law, "Anthony Froude's sad book seems to come as an external tempter to unbelieving views - while the feebleness, the helplessness of the Anglican system seems unlikely to exert any influence over you as its antagonist." 76

On the other hand, Frederick Denison Maurice, at this time virtually the embodiment of the "Broad Church" and its effort to promote unity among the shifting and splintering factions, saw The Nemesis of Faith as having an essentially positive potential, for he realized how close to the heart of things its criticisms really were. In a letter to Charles Kingsley shortly after the book's publication he wrote:

> It is a very awful and I think may be a very profitable book... it brings us to the root of things.... I am reviewing it in effect in everything I am writing .... It is reviewing him to show whether the habits of the religious world, its half beliefs and no beliefs, its Jesuitisms and its open lies, are leading us. It is reviewing him to show that we are not given over to the infidelity which is the natural effect of these influences, that there is a mightier counteracting influence amongst us if we will use it. 77

Froude's intentions when he wrote The Nemesis of Faith could hardly be said to have been so far-reaching. He had had much on his mind, and as the result of pouring it out in his


77 Quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:142.
book, his mind was clear, and he felt as if a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders. Though he became convinced later that it would have been better if the book had never been written, the ideas formulated and expressed in it were an essential part of his intellectual development.

The reaction to *The Nemesis of Faith* was fierce, as Froude had known it would be, and he immediately acted upon his now firm conviction of his essential hypocrisy in continuing in Deacon's orders, and resigned them. In so doing, of course, he automatically forfeited his Fellowship as well.

It is temptingly easy to conclude, as Basil Willey has done, that during this critical period Froude "finds himself buffeted between two contrary winds of doctrine, flutters despairingly for a while, then yields himself forever to one of them." But such an assessment badly underestimates Froude's own strength. It is true that he relied heavily upon the guidance of individuals whose ideas and character he admired; it is true as well that the process of arriving at an acceptable explanation of existence was extremely difficult for him; and, finally it is true that, once his mind was made up, he never wavered from the side of Carlyle. But it must be clearly understood that the choice of men whose example he would follow was entirely his own; that, however uncertain the struggle, weak men do not so force themselves to seek answers to metaphysical questions; and that Froude's decision to follow Carlyle was made on the strength of his own judgment, not

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at any urging from Carlyle. In spite of his utter devotion to Carlyle, there were limits to Froude's dependence upon his master's views. As has been seen, Froude never renounced his affiliation with established religion; though strongly imbued with Carlyle's theories, he remained to the end of his life a member of the Church of England "as by law reformed."

When, as he was writing his History, Froude sought Carlyle's advice, he did not hesitate to ignore that advice whenever his own convictions ran counter to it. The benign influence of Newman never ceased to exert itself in Froude's consciousness, and he never became harsh and irascible as Carlyle tended to be. He may have come to share in large measure the prejudices and biases of Carlyle, but he was largely free from his master's narrowness, both of concept and of experience. As Waldo Dunn reminds us:

Carlyle's attitude towards life was powerfully conditioned by his birth and upbringing. He remained to the end of his life a provincial. With little direct knowledge or experience of the larger world, he was throughout theoretical and dictatorial. ...Froude had direct knowledge of a far larger and more complicated world than Carlyle ever knew.79

In 1849, however, when Froude resigned his Deacon's orders and his Fellowship, his world must have seemed narrow indeed. In those days, a man who had entered even the most minor orders was by law prohibited from entering any other profession. Froude was undoubtedly aware of this, and fully aware of the doors which would be forever closed to him. But it was characteristic of him that, once convinced that it was
right, he did not hesitate to take this radical step. It was always vital to him to be honest with himself, and so he had no alternative. With typical modesty, he gives Carlyle the credit for his decision:

I had learnt from Carlyle the absolute obligation of being true in these high matters. No one ought to undertake to teach any form of religion who was not convinced of the complete truth of it. 80

What Froude neglects to mention is that Carlyle had been preaching this obligation to the world at large. Froude was virtually the only one who took such pains and made such sacrifices to follow the advice. His essential religious and human honesty was learned from no other human being. Froude was very much his own man. Being what he was, he could have done nothing less, but he never ceased to be bitter about the terrible cost to a man in his position. Nearly forty years later he recalled:

Forty years ago the law said to a clergyman, "You shall teach what the formulas prescribe, whether you believe it or not, and you shall stay at your post, even though you know that you disbelieve it; for you shall enter no other profession; you shall teach this, or you shall starve." 81

To a man of Froude's deep personal integrity, what seemed the logical inconsistency, the moral indefensibility, of such a position, by an official body acting in the name of Truth, was nothing short of anathema; and it left an indelible mark upon him. In one of the bitterest passages of his History of England, he reveals the logical conclusion to which

80 Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, 1:94.

81 Ibid., 1:144.
his own experience forced him, and indicates clearly the impetus behind the stance he took as an historian. Speaking of the statute of 1571 which reinstated the Thirty-nine Articles, he writes:

Convocation, nine years before, had reimposed upon the clergy, so far as they had power to legislate, the too celebrated Thirty-nine Articles of Religion. The Parliament had then refused their sanction to a measure which went far beyond the most extravagant pretensions of the Church of Rome in laying a yoke upon the conscience. But their moderation forsook them now. The heavy chains descended. The faith of England, which, but for this fatal step, might have expanded with the growth of the nation, was hardened into unchanging formulas, and intellect was condemned to make its further progress unsanctified by religion, the enemy of the Church instead of being its handmaid. 82

At this point, the inevitable question arises as to how far Froude's decision to write a history of the Reformation, and to write it from a particular point of view, was a direct outcome of his own personal experience. It is a question of great general importance to the student of history, because it is vital to be aware that historians do not write in a vacuum, and that even the most painstaking efforts to be impartial must be offset because the writer has passed through experiences, has made observations, and has reached conclusions which must necessarily colour his viewpoint.

In this regard, Froude's case is particularly instructive for several reasons. First of all, as has been seen, he

grew up at a time and in an atmosphere particularly concerned
with historical and theological speculations - not a climate
tending to calm objectivity. Secondly, the period about which
he wrote was so similar to his own time as to call up obvious
parallels. In addition, Froude's introspective autobiographical
notes are filled with explanations in his own words of his
reasons for turning to the history of the sixteenth century.
And finally, reaction to the obvious bias of his historical
work has made him irresistibly tempting to the essayist eager
to establish a simple cause and effect relationship between
the man and his work. But Froude was not a simple man, and
all such generalizations must be carefully studied.

On the surface, Froude's decision to become an histor-
tian is explained simply in terms with which young men and
women of the late 1970's will be most sympathetic: he needed a
job. As he expressed it in the preface to his first complete
edition of his History:

The occasion of my undertaking the present work
was, as regards myself, 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....83

There is much below the surface of these lines, to
which we will return later. Froude then goes on to admit
that he was influenced as well by

the attitude toward the Revolution of the sixteenth
century which had been assumed by many influential
thinkers in England and on the Continent. ...Our own
Reformers...were being assailed with equally violent

83Quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:312.
abuse by the High Churchmen on the one side, and liberal statesmen and political philosophers on the other.84

This tendency to downgrade the positive role of the sixteenth-century Reformers can, of course, be traced directly to the Oxford Movement, for reasons shown above.85 It was, not, however, the opinion of the majority of Englishmen in the 1830's and 1840's. As one modern writer has observed:

The aspect of the Movement which rankled in the public, or the academic, mind was the apparent hostility to the Reformation believed to be attributable to the Tractarians. This belief had been founded when Keble and Newman published [Hurrell] Froude's Remains in 1838.86

There were specific reasons for Protestant Englishmen to be concerned in the middle decades of the nineteenth century about the downgrading of the Reformation. Partly as a result of the Oxford Movement, and partly because of liberal politics, England by 1850 was witnessing a Catholic revival. Between 1829, when the Catholic Relief Act was passed granting emancipation to the Catholics, and 1850,

The Catholic population of England increased more than two-fold, from 200,000 to a half-million, while its centre was shifting from country to city. Simultaneously, the Oxford Movement was giving to the Church notable converts and intellectual respectability.87

84 Dunn, Froude, II:312.
85 Supra., 10.
86 Chadwick, The Mind of the Oxford Movement, 53. On pages 54-5, Chadwick notes ...the prevailing state of popular opinion, which resented the alleged Tractarian hostility to the Reformation, and was peculiarly sensitive at this time because of its concern with Ireland and a government grant to a Roman Catholic college at Maynooth....
A modern English historian has explained how administrative difficulties and misunderstandings quickly exacerbated Catholic-Protestant relations during this period:

In 1850, to cope with the growing number of Catholics in England..., the papacy decided to restore the normal administrative structure of bishops and dioceses which the English Roman Catholic Church had not had since the Reformation. All the old suspicion of Rome welling up in fervent Protestant imaginations, and this Catholic plan - sensible and moderate despite the unfortunate extravagance of language with which it was advanced by the papal curia and received by English Catholics - was turned into "papal aggression".88

Casual writers on Froude frequently overlook the fact of this industrial and spiritual fermentation of the 1850's, when Froude was bringing out his History, and simply see his greatest work as a direct reaction to the Oxford Movement:

In early life Mr. Froude had been more or less connected with "the Oxford Movement". The Oxford Movement ceasing to be all his fancy painted it, reaction carried him to the opposite extreme, and there he remained.89

As Tacitus is supposed to have condemned the government of Domitian through the history of Tiberius, so Froude disputed and opposed the ideas of the Oxford Movement through his history of the Reformation.90

There is, to be sure, an element of truth in such statements, but it would be a mistake to attribute Froude's work too directly to reaction to the Movement, and then to

88 Webb, Modern England, 301.
89 Andrew Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude", Cornhill Magazine (February, 1906):253.
let the matter stand at that. In a sense, rather than re-
jecting or repudiating the Movement's aims, Froude was simply 
opposing, in a different direction, the very things the Ox-
ford men opposed: the sense of religion as a human phenomenon 
- a matter of social acceptability, of station and propriety, 
of the right of a certain class to an enviable social and 
economic station, from which the spiritual values had all but 
vanished. Though referring to it, Froude was thinking in 
broader and more general terms than mere opposition to the 
Movement when in the spring of 1864 he addressed the follow-
ing words to the students at St. Andrew's University:

We have had thirty years of unexampled clerical 
activity among us;...by the side of it there has 
sprung up an equally astonishing development of 
moral dishonesty.... Yet the clergy have seen all 
this grow up in absolute indifference.... Many a 
hundred sermons have I heard in England, many a dis-
sertation on the mysteries of the faith, on the divine 
mission of the clergy, on apostolical succession, on 
bishops and justification, and the theory of good 
works, and verbal inspiration, and the efficacy of 
the sacraments; but never, during these thirty wonder-
ful years, never one that I can recollect on common 
honesty, or those primitive commandments, Thou shalt 
not lie, and Thou shalt not steal.91

This is always the heart of Froude's argument: if re-
ligion does not appear in the life, the external trappings are 
nothing. But this attitude alone, vehemently as Froude may 
have expressed it, was not of itself sufficient to set him up 
as an opponent of the Oxford Movement. Perfunctory and hypo-
critical religion were, after all, equally distasteful to both 
sides. It was more a case of different paths to the same goal.

91J.A. Froude, Short Studies on Great Subjects, 4 vols.,
Where the Oxford men sought to bring the vitality back into religion through elevation of its sense of awe and mystery, Froude desired to see it brought back by means of good and pure lives. The Oxford men looked to the Fathers and to tradition as a basis of purity in religion, where Froude looked to the elements of moral progress, enlightenment, toleration and justice which the Reformation exemplified in his eyes. While the former view is admittedly Catholic and the latter Protestant, the objectives are not on that account mutually exclusive nor even wholly divergent.

Froude's attitude was not one of opposition to the Movement, not even of opposition to those aspects of devotional beauty which proved to be its most significant success. Ironically, he feared and most vehemently resented those doctrinal aspects of the Movement where its success was least realized. His real and deepest concern was that speculative arguments would tempt men into unquestioning acceptance of what he considered to be the doctrine's spiritually oppressive aspects. He reacted, not against the Movement itself, but against the tangential course taken by Newman's logic. The "defection" of Newman to Rome apparently awakened Froude to dangers which, in the behaviour of less sober thinkers, he might have ignored.

But, even allowing for all these influences, the real motive behind the entire tone and thrust of Froude's History of England is a far more personal one. One modern essayist has noted that "the direction of any man's chief effort is
determined by his deepest emotional needs." In the following passage from his autobiographical notes, Froude indicates clearly the integral connection between his own deprivation, for the sake of maintaining his integrity, and the issues of the sixteenth century:

I protested in my own heart against the association of moral obligation with doctrines on other things which had no necessary connexion with it. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the teaching of the Gospels had been overlaid with ecclesiastical mythology... Belief had been strained beyond bearing, and falsehoods invented as a stimulus to piety had revenged themselves by a furious rebellion against the entire Catholic system. It appeared to me that the Protestants, by their verbal Bibliolatry, had repeated their antagonists' sins by laying a yoke of the same kind on the neck of the disciples, and the same effect was ensuing. 93

93 Froude, Autobiographical Fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:149-50.
II. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF PROUD'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND; ITS COMPOSITION AND PUBLICATION

As with so many other areas in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the attitudes about history, and the approach of historians to their subject, were in a state of flux. In addition to the broad economic and political changes permeating all aspects of English life, there were specific factors which gave an unsettled air to the historiographical scene. In the field of education, the study of "modern" history was being inserted into the curriculum, heretofore virtually the domain of the classics. For the would-be researcher; the vast array of archival material was undergoing its own odyssey as efforts were made to relocate, organize and classify it; there was a growing awareness of the value of this source material, and the first stirrings of a more "scientific" approach to historical research could be discerned. At the same time, the Romantic Movement, spreading throughout Europe, brought with it a resurgence of interest in the chivalrous virtues of the Middle Ages, thus fostering tension over the relative value of classical and medieval history. Finally, as has already been noted, the upheavals of the Oxford Movement gave rise in some quarters to an attitude of hostility to the sixteenth-century reformers.

For the Henrician and Elizabethan reformers, the
attitude toward the past was of necessity tied in with the humanist views of Erasmus, from whom they had adopted two historical conceptions that were to help shape the orthodox Protestant view of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, not to mention that of later generations whose thought was less consciously oriented by the Reformation. The first of these was that classical literature and evangelical Christianity revived together, and the second, that it was the monks and schoolmen who were largely responsible for the intervening darkness.¹

This essentially religious and cultural position formed one side of an argument which was to weigh with varying force in all subsequent histories of the period until well into the nineteenth century. It was complemented by the equally important political question of the derivation and extent of the Crown's authority; the stormy course of Parliamentary development assured that the entire issue would remain unsettled for some time. And at the heart of the argument lay the question of whether the upheavals of the sixteenth century represented a welcome and permanent transition from a darkened past or simply an unfortunate break in the continuity of mankind's development.

Since the era of the Reformation, the English historical tradition regarding the sixteenth century had maintained a distinctly polemical character, closely related as it necessarily was to political developments. Until the

Revolution of 1688 at least, the final outcome of the Reformation remained relatively unsettled, the advantage appearing to be first on one side and then the other; and a man's attitude toward the sixteenth century was necessarily dependent upon his position in the seventeenth.

For political as well as religious reasons, Whig historians in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries tended generally to emphasize the importance of the Reformation as the event which set men free to enter upon an ever-brightening era of progress. Historians taking the opposite viewpoint saw the Reformation as a disturbance of the natural continuity of political, religious and moral development, from which had sprung a multitude of ills. Needless to say, the approach of historians writing from either point of view was something less than impartial.

Writing under a cloud, harrassed by penal laws almost as harsh as those obtaining in the days of Elizabeth..., the Catholics of England were in a position little conducive to the writing of history. In addition to this, it was a time of controversy, not only among themselves, but with their Protestant countrymen. This influenced what they did write, Dodd, Butler and Milner belonging as much to the field of polemics as to that of history.

Protestant writers, on the other hand, continued to build their eulogies on the rambling chronicles of Camden, Stow, Holinshed and others, and when the original work was done, the results were heavy with religious and political bias.2

The first English historian of the Reformation period

2Joseph Bernard Code, Queen Elizabeth and the English Catholic Historians (Louvain: Bureaux du Recueil, Bibliotheque de L'Universite, 1935, xiv-xv.)
to rise successfully above this morass of prejudicial materia-

tal was John Lingard, whose volumes of the History of England

covering the sixteenth century first appeared about 1820. Lin-
gard refused to consult modern sources on this period, declar-
ing, "in the pursuit of truth I have made it a religious duty
to consult the original historians. Who would draw from the
troubled stream, when he may drink at the fountain-head?" 3

In the preface to the first edition of his History of England
(Volume IV), published in 1819, Lingard expanded his historical
ideal:

In composing it I have faithfully adhered to the
rule, which I prescribed to myself in the preceding
volumes; to take nothing upon credit, to distrust the
statements of partial and interested writers, and to
consult every authentic document within my reach.
Fidelity and research are the indispensable duties
of the Historian. 4

Lingard, a Catholic priest, is avowed to have had as
his object in writing his History of England "to make the
Catholic cause appear respectable in the eyes of the British
public." 5 So well did he succeed in this regard that his work
was attacked by a Catholic writer as "calculated to do as
much harm as good to the Church" 6; as late as 1856 it was noted

3Quoted in Donald F. Shea, The English Ranke: John
4Ibid., 41-2.
5G.P. Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth
Century (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), 267. (First published in
1913 by Longmans, Green & Company.)
6Ibid.
that "Lingard is now actually recommended as a standard authority for the young, by educated Protestants." Understandably, however, Lingard saw the Reformation not as "an advance toward freedom... but as a break in English tradition and continuity."

Henry Hallam, whose Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry VII to the death of George II came out in 1827, shortly after Lingard’s History, held a view of the Reformation which was entirely Whig. One modern writer has noted that "his approach was still that of the Enlightenment; he judged the Middle Ages by the standards of his own day, and made no attempt to involve himself in the thought processes of the past." Another writer calls his work "a sustained attack on the Tudor and Stuart despotism and a glorification of the principles of 1688." 10

Hallam went on to provide an outline of the classical Whig interpretation of the Tudor age. Henry VIII appeared as a tyrant, whose sins were forgiven because he was responsible for the Reformation. There was a reason why Henry’s machinations failed to subvert English liberties: "the courage and love of freedom natural to the English commons, speaking in the hoarse voice of tumult, though very ill supported by their superiors, preserved us in so great peril." 11

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2 Shea, The English Ranke, 35.


4 Gooch, History and Historians, 374.

Nevertheless, in his approach and his methods, Hallam shares with Lingard a reputation for scholarly impartiality.

In contrast to these attempts to present history in a relatively reserved and scholarly way, the romantic elements of the age were at the same time finding expression in the historical novels of Walter Scott and the novel history of Thomas Carlyle; in the works of both men, events of the past were brought vividly to life in all the startling vibrancy and colour fully commensurate with the most romantic paintings of the day. Carlyle freely admitted his own debt to Scott, whose novels, he wrote, "have taught all men this truth..., that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state papers, controversies and abstractions of men."\(^\text{12}\) It was Carlyle's passionate desire to bring these living men violently before the reader in such a way that every vital detail would stand out in sharp relief; of his proposed work on The French Revolution he said, "It stands pretty fair in my head, nor do I mean to investigate much more about it, but to splash down what I know in large masses of colour that it may look like a smoke and flame conflagration in the distance."\(^\text{13}\) One contemporary of Carlyle's is said to have "remarked that while the figures of most historians were like dolls stuffed with bran, Carlyle's were so

\(^{12}\)Quoted in Hale, *British Historiography*, 36.

\(^{13}\)Quoted in Gooch, *History and Historians*, 302.
real that if you pricked them they bled." 14 Carlyle's approach to history was no less unique nor passionate than his portrayal of it: he saw in the affairs of men evidence of divine judgment upon them.

About a decade after the appearance of Carlyle's violently subjective French Revolution, Thomas B. Macaulay made his crowning contribution to English historiography with the publication in 1848 of the first two volumes of his History of England. The culminating work of a brilliant essayist, the History is justly celebrated for the sparkling clarity and flowing beauty of its style, rarely equalled and never surpassed by English historians. Macaulay's lofty approach to history is evidenced in the following passage from the first volume of his History:

Those who hold that the influence of the Church of Rome in the dark ages was, on the whole, beneficial to mankind, may yet with perfect consistency regard the Reformation as an inestimable blessing. The leading-strings, which preserve and uphold the infant, would impede the full-grown man.... The child who teachably and undoubtingly listens to the instructions of his elders is likely to improve rapidly. But the man who should receive with childish docility every assertion and dogma uttered by another man no wiser than himself would become contemptible.... Hence, that dominion, which, during the dark ages, had been, in spite of many abuses, a legitimate and salutary guardianship, became an unjust and noxious tyranny. 15

These were the modern historians to whose work and interpretations Froude was exposed during the formative years.

14 Gooch, History and Historians, 303.

of his life. Those years, as we have seen, occurred during a period of unusual subjectivity in historical matters. The Oxford Movement ensured that this would be particularly noticeable with regard to the events of the sixteenth century. Were the framers of the Reformation in England heroic religious innovators or time-serving politicians? During the middle years of the nineteenth century this question, in religious circles at least, was invested with extreme importance. From the time he was little more than a child, Froude had heard it asked, and answered essentially in the negative, by some of the most brilliant thinkers of the day. It was entirely characteristic of his independent mind that, even during the period when a sense of failure clung to everything he did, he never allowed his own judgment to be swayed by the outspoken opinions of his brother Hurrell and his friends. Their remarks about the Reformation's place in history had caused him to begin a private course of study which led him to quite different conclusions. The experiences during and immediately after his Oxford years tended generally to reinforce those conclusions, and his reading of Carlyle and the German historians of the day shaped his sense of what an historical work ought to be. Therefore, when the loss of his Fellowship left him without access to professional employment, and when he had taken on the responsibilities of marriage, his decision to try to make his living by writing was not an unnatural one; and his past experiences and personal inclination pointed naturally toward
the subject of history. Froude explains:

I felt able and anxious to direct myself on some special subject of serious consequence, and my earlier reading and my personal interest led me to the history of the English Reformation.16

The negative contribution of the leaders of the Oxford Movement to Froude's stance is indicated in his comments upon their view of the Reformation:

We had been told at Oxford that it was the most unfortunate incident which had destroyed the unity of the Church, that it had been a rebellion against a divinely given authority, that it was a schism promoted by corrupt and tyrannical princes carried out by unprincipled and priestly renegades. I had not believed this.17

At this point, however, it was less the Oxford Movement than the general impressions created by current historians about Elizabeth which most roused Froude's resentment. He writes:

According to Catholic writers, Henry VIII and Elizabeth had been monsters of iniquity, the Virgin Queen another Catherine of Russia, her private life disgraced by intrigues and amours, while the Catholics whom she had oppressed had been saints and martyrs.18

It was not only the Catholic historians who tended to support this view of the reforming Tudor sovereigns as autocratic tyrants; it seemed to Froude that, whether willingly or not, "even writers on the whole favourable to the Reformation described the English branch of it as a good thing badly done."19

17Ibid.  
18Ibid.  
19Ibid., II:312.
In September, 1828, Macaulay had published an article in the Edinburgh Review in which he clearly expressed the ambivalent attitude, half-grateful, half-ashamed, toward the Reformation held by nineteenth-century Protestant Englishmen:

...it was from Luther, from Calvin, from Knox, that the Reformation took its character. England has no such names to show; not that she wanted men of sincere piety, of deep learning, of steady and adventurous courage. But these were thrown into the background... A King, whose character may be best described by saying that he was despotism itself personified, unprincipled ministers, a rapacious aristocracy, a servile Parliament, such were the instruments by which England was delivered from the yoke of Rome.... Sprung from brutal passion, nurtured by selfish policy, the Reformation in England displayed little of what had, in other countries distinguished it, unflinching and unsparing devotion, boldness of speech, and singleness of eye.20

The great exception to such a view lay in the Protestant or Whig conception of Elizabeth's position as the symbol and architect of the modern era of progress. "Until the time of Froude Protestant historians were unanimous in their praise of England's Gloriana."21 And at this early stage in his career, Froude himself still shared their view. As he saw her in those days,

The figure of this solitary woman braving and ruling the tempest, surrounded by conspiracies, the special object of the hate of the Catholic world, and pursued in her grave by the foulest calumnies, made intelligible to me the enthusiasm with which she was worshipped by the noblest of her subjects.22


21 Code, Queen Elizabeth and Catholic Historians, 173.

22 Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:172.
He particularly took exception to such interpretations as Macaulay's essay on 'Hallam' and to remarks reflecting on Elizabeth's personal morals.

On the subject of the general merits of the English Reformation, Froude held views which were far from typical of the time. He could not agree with such a wholly negative interpretation as Macaulay's; as he explains:

My own impression about it was, that the Reformation was both a good thing in itself and that in England it had been accomplished with peculiar skill and success. The passions called out by religious controversy, which in France and Germany were the occasions of long and bloody wars, were controlled in England by the Government. I considered that on the whole the control had worked beneficially, and that those who condemned the repressive measures adopted towards the Romanists by Elizabeth's ministers had made imperfect allowance for the temper of the times and for the impossibility of tolerating opinions which led immediately to rebellion.

Thus, when Froude determined at last upon an historical work of serious proportions, he approached it with his basic plan and his preconceptions fairly clearly defined, as he has explained in the preface to the first complete edition of his History:

My original purpose was to confine myself to the reign of the great Queen for whom, looking to the spirit in which her Government had been conducted, I felt great admiration. The attacks of Lingard and others upon her personal purity I believed to be gratuitous and unjust. I intended as briefly as I could to undertake her vindication. With Cranmer and his companions, unwilling as I was to accept Lord Macaulay's judgement upon them, I had not proposed to meddle. I shared the prevailing views of the character of Henry VIII.

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24 Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, II, 312.

25 Ibid.
Froude and his wife were living at this time at Plas Gwynent, an idyllic country retreat in Wales. Their decision to move there had been made in order to provide Froude with the solitude and the leisure to undertake the profession of writing and to "ascertain whether I was really good for anything,"26 as he put it. He began an intensive reading program. "My time," he writes, "was my own. I must write to support myself, but I could find materials as I went along for the necessary articles in the vast range of details which would open upon me."27

He began with a study of Mary Stuart, reading on the subject "everything which in my Welsh solitude I could obtain a sight of,"28 shaping and moulding his opinions and meanwhile contributing for publication articles on Mary as well as on John Knox, Cardinal Wolsey and Mary Tudor. He noted to a friend:

The latter was very variously judged. Some people cannot get over my Justifying the killing of Beaton; some are disgusted at my doctrines of intolerance. Everybody is disgusted at something, but my comfort is in the variety of what is condemned: the censures seem to neutralize one another.29

It was evident that his bent for controversial writing was not lost on his readers, even at this early stage.

26Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I, 168.
27Ibid.
28Ibid.
29Ibid., I, 196.
As his study of the period progressed, Froude's sense of dramatic construction led him to feel that, to be covered completely, the story of the Reformation must begin considerably earlier than he had at first planned:

I found myself...unable to handle the later features of the Revolution without going back to the beginning of it. The coming of the Armada was the last act of a drama of which the divorce of Queen Catherine was the first... I was thus led first to study more closely, and then to undertake the narrative of the entire period between the original quarrel with the Papacy and the point at which the separation of England from the Roman Communion was finally decided.30

During these years Froude seems to have gained a healthy awareness of his own capabilities, and he approached with confidence and expectancy the formidable task he had set for himself. In 1853 he wrote to a friend, probably not altogether facetiously, "I am hoping, before three years are past, to have been spoken of in the Reviews as having 'taken a permanent place among our classic historians.'"31 A welcome indication of faith in his abilities, and one which alleviated one of his main concerns as a prospective author, was his acquaintance with the editor of Fraser's Magazine, John Parker, and his son. Several of Froude's articles had already been published in Fraser's, and Froude and the younger John Parker had early formed a close friendship broken only by the latter's untimely death in 1850. John Parker, Sr., had apparently been commissioned to find an author who

30 Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, II, 313.
31 Froude to Margaret Long, September 20, 1853. Quoted in Dunn, Froude, I, 196.
could, in his opinion, effectively deal with a body of manuscript material covering the period from the later years of Wolsey's administration to the end of Edward VI's reign. Parker seems to have felt that Froude was the man, and he undertook to publish a history of the period if Froude could write it. The end result was, of course, the publication of the first six volumes of Froude's *History of England*. 32

It quickly became evident to Froude that the material accessible to him in the remoteness of his "Welsh solitude" simply would not be enough; the sustained work he contemplated required consistent research in the libraries of London and of Oxford. Accordingly, with considerable regret, the Froudes took leave of their beautiful valley, Plas Gwynant, and moved in October of 1853 to a cottage in the north of Devon. From here, Froude could easily travel to London or Oxford by rail, or receive packets of books by the same route. While in London he spent considerable time at the home of the Parkers, where he made or cemented many lasting and valuable friendships, chief among them that of the Carlyles. Froude plunged immediately and wholeheartedly into his task, and by the spring of 1856 he had brought out the first two volumes of his *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth*, dealing with part of the reign of Henry VIII. He had relied heavily for these on the early Acts of Parliament available in the Record House in London, where, he writes,

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32 Dunn, Froude, I, 175; II, 281.
I found...a picture of the social condition of the English nation clearer by far than any book which I had read had furnished me. I found a minute and circumstantial account of the critical features of the reign of Henry VIII. These accounts had been tossed aside by general historians as the dishonest glosses of subservient politicians. They appeared to me when laid together to contain a clear, consistent and reasonable interpretation of the actions both of King and Legislature. I found that they formed in fact the skeleton or bony structure for a reconstruction of the history of the period.33

Froude had discovered during the three years he had spent studying and reading at Plas Gwynant that a very clear conception of the Reformation was developing in his mind which was to colour his entire approach to its history:

More and more I had become interested in the political aspect of the Reformation as distinct from the doctrinal. If it was a revolt against idolatry and superstition, it seemed to me still more of the laity against the clergy, and of the English nation against Papal supremacy.34

These were the battle-lines as Froude envisioned them at the outset, and he never saw a reason to change them. This approach explains his growing devotion to "the English nation," particularly to the individual vitality and daring of the seamen to whose efforts he gave so much credit. It also explains his tendency to rely as heavily as he did upon the Acts of Parliament and, later, upon the State Papers. As Froude's biographer, Herbert Paul, has observed of the emphasis upon the political:

That is the key of the historical position which he took from the first, and always defended. He held the Church of Rome to have been the enemy of human freedom, and of British independence. He was devoid of theological prejudice, and never reviled

33Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:199.
34Ibid., I:174.
Catholicism as Newman reviled it before his conversion. But he held that the reformers alike in England, in France, and in Germany, were fighting for truth, honesty and private judgment against priestcraft and ecclesiastical tyranny.35

It is important to understand this distinction between theological and nationalistic prejudice with regard to Froude's work, because he is so frequently accused of Protestant bias and thus has automatically been considered "anti-Catholic" in the dogmatic sense of that word. But it is impossible to see what Froude was trying to do if his bias is so narrowly defined. As Herbert Paul has correctly observed, "The real object of his attack was that ecclesiastical corruption which belongs to no Church exclusively and is older than Christianity itself."36

Froude is said to have remarked to a friend that "in his opinion the Reformation was mainly a protest against the vile habits of the clergy from the time of the popes downward [sic]."37 This is typical of him and explains a great deal about the nature of his entire approach to history and, for that matter, to life: it was what men did - how they behaved, not how they thought - that was of essential and dramatic importance to him. His basic disregard for doctrine is expressed clearly in his later reference to the Calvinists,

35Herbert Paul, Life of Froude (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons Ltd., 1905), 72.
36Ibid., 78.
37Dunn, Froude, I:8. I suspect that this may be a misprint and that it should read "the clergy of the time from the popes downward."
a remark strongly reminiscent of Carlyle: "the doctrine was never more than the dress. The living creature was wholly moral and political - so at least I think myself." It should be noted that, in seeing the Reformation as essentially political rather than theological (and in approving of it in that sense), Froude indicated his feeling of a need for balance which he feels could not have been supplied by a clerically-governed society. The events of the reigns of both Edward and Mary Tudor, as well as the history of religious wars in general, do, it must be admitted, provide a good precedent for such a view. Herbert Paul states,

Froude was an Erastian, holding that the Church should be subordinate to the State. True religion is incompatible with persecution. But true religion is rare, and the best modern security against the persecutor is the secular power.  

In the History, Froude uses this argument to support his approval of the acquisition by the State of the Church's wealth in 1536:

The subsequent history both of the Scotch and English Church permits the belief that neither would have been benefited by the possession of larger wealth than was left to them. ...the experience of three centuries has proved the singular unfitness of spiritual persons for the administration of secular trusts; and the friends of the establishment in England may be grateful that the judgment of the English laity ultimately guided them to this conclusion.  

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39Paul, Life of Froude, 73.

Froude was not the first historian to sense that politics, rather than religion in a doctrinal sense, was foundational to the events of the sixteenth century. A writer whose research in the State Papers was virtually contemporary with Froude's not only pointed out this distinction but indicated what he felt should be the historian's position with respect to it:

The Reformation may be considered under a double aspect, as embodying a system of doctrine and as representing a principle of action. With the former I have nothing whatever to do; the discussion of articles of faith does not fall within my province. But it is different with the latter. The facts evolved by the progress of the Reformation fall, like other facts, under the cognizance of the historical inquirer.41 Lingard adhered carefully to political realities in his History, for various reasons making a conscientious effort to avoid the doctrinal aspects of much of the conflict. And Macaulay had, in his History of England, actually gone so far as to refer to the Reformation as "a national as well as a moral revolt" and as "an insurrection of the laity against the clergy...."42 But Froude...provided the first full-scale 'political' interpretation of the Reformation."43

There were three major results of this stance taken by Froude, all of them clearly evident in the early volumes

43Fussner, Tudor History and the Historians, 56.
of his work. The first of these is that, by stressing the
liberating aspects of the Reformation, he places himself un-
equivocally in the camp of the Whig historians. His state-
ment that the Reformation was the most important event in
English history has probably been as widely quoted as anything
he ever said. But he saw it as a critical event in the broad-
est sense of the word, believing, as a modern writer has ob-
served, that from it "resulted the expansion of Britain and
the colonizing of three continents." He saw the Reformation
as a complete break with the medieval world, and he states in
the first volume of the History, "...the transition out of
this old state is what in this book I have undertaken to re-
late." In the third volume (published with Volume IV in
1858) he returns to this argument: "Beyond and besides the
Reformation, the constitution of these islands now rests in
large measure on foundations laid in this reign." This
reference to constitutional development by Froude is rare, and
even those most sympathetic to his work lament his failure to
deal more fully with it. Herbert Paul has written, "...it is
true, and a serious misfortune, that Froude took very little
interest in legal and constitutional questions." It does
constitute a gap in Froude's treatment of the period, and a

44Ausubel et al., Modern Historians of Britain, 54.
46Ibid., IV:538.
47Paul, Life of Froude, 162.
serious one, but it has been adequately filled by other writers, and many successful qualities in Froude's work derive from the fact that he did not write about things in which he "took very little interest" but in things which were of vital moment to him. His concern, as always, was with the people:

He had an instinctive sympathy with men of action.... For mere talkers he had no respect at all, and he was under the mistaken impression that they governed the country through the House of Commons. The history which he liked, and to which he confined himself, was antecedent to the triumph of Parliament over the Crown.

Froude's faith in the people of sixteenth-century England was probably compatible with his faith in the average man of his own day. In each case, he recognized and admired an inherent human goodness, but he felt the need of a firm guiding hand. Even in his own century, "He knew little, and cared less, about the House of Commons,... He despised the party system...." Critics of this aspect of Froude's work tend to blame the influence of Carlyle for it, and even the friendly Herbert Paul has charged that "short of making Carlyle Dictator of the Universe, Froude suggested no alternative to the ballot-box of civilised life."

The second major result of Froude's particular approach to the Reformation was that he placed himself in the position of the advocate of liberty; hence his History virtually descends on occasion to the level of propaganda, and it is by virtue of this that any claim to impartiality is foresworn.

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48 Paul, Life of Froude, 393.

49 Ibid., 370.

50 Ibid., 220.
In the following passage from the first volume, Froude indicates the dramatic heights to which his convictions can carry him:

...the time of reckoning at length was arrived; slowly the hand had crawled along the dial plate; slowly as if the event would never come; and wrong was heaped on wrong; and oppression cried, and it seemed as if no ear had heard its voice; till the measure of the circle was at length fulfilled, the finger touched the hour, and as the strokes of the great hammer rang out above the nation, in an instant the mighty fabric of iniquity was shivered into ruins.

As Herbert Paul notes, "He had a doctrine to propound, a gospel to preach," and this makes it very difficult for the reader to feel any of the sense of balance which should be a part of the work of a truly judicious historian.

Finally, Froude's conviction that the political salvation of the nation was the essential aim of the Reformation led him to adopt what he rather ingenuously refers to as a "qualified defense of Henry." Compared to previous historical accounts of that notorious monarch, Froude's defense is anything but qualified, and as one writer noted of his portrayal, "the burly figure looked awkward in wings and a white robe." Froude's unconventional attitude toward Henry originated quite early in his study of the Reformation period when he realized how popular the second Tudor monarch had been in

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52 Paul, Life of Froude, 72.
53 Dunn, Froude, II:313.
54 Leslie Stephen. Quoted in Hale, Evolution of British Historiography, 54.
his own lifetime. Even the divorce of Catherine of Aragon, contends Froude, was not unpopular:

...not only did the Parliament profess to desire it, urge it, and further it, but we are told by a contemporary that 'all indifferent and discreet persons' judged that it was right and necessary.

He then goes on to contrast the attitude toward the divorce in Henry and Catherine's day with its reputation in his own time:

In the sixteenth century Queen Catherine was an obstacle to the establishment of the kingdom, an incentive to treasonable hopes. In the nineteenth, she is an outraged and injured wife, the victim of a false husband's fickle appetite.

Froude has based his case for Henry almost entirely on the concern of Englishmen over the uncertainty of the succession and their dread of a return to the horrors of the Wars of the Roses, barely fifty years past at the time of the divorce. Ever since those wars, Froude claims,

...a war of succession was the predominating terror with English statesmen, and the safe establishment of the reigning family bore a degree of importance which it is possible that their fears exaggerated, yet which in fact was the determining principle of their action.

It was therefore with no little anxiety that the council of Henry VIII perceived his male children, on whom their hopes were centered, either born dead, or dying one after another within a few days of their birth, as if his family were under a blight.

Contrary to popular nineteenth-century opinion, Froude represents Henry as a relatively faithful husband, by the royal

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55 Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century, 310.
57 Ibid., 10.
58 Ibid., 112.
standards of the day, and insists, probably correctly, that

...if his sons had lived to grow up around his throne, there is no reason to believe that the peace of his married life would have been interrupted, or that, whatever might have been his private feelings, he would have appeared in the world's eye other than acquiescent in his condition.59

As the little boys had failed to live, however, Henry's concern over the succession mounted; so also did his interest in Anne Boleyn (although Froude appears convinced that this attraction could, in the absence of political necessity, have been kept under control and his marriage, in spite of the personal tragedies, have been held together). But, "the interests of the nation, imperilled as they were by the maintenance of the marriage, entitled him to regard his position under another aspect."60

The genuine concern that, by having married his brother's widow, Henry might have committed a sin for which he was being punished by the death of his sons is one which Froude can understand, and he presents an interesting if unconventional picture of what the monarch's conflicting motives might have been in the circumstances:

...we may readily perceive how scruples of conscience must have arisen in a soil well prepared to receive them - how the loss of his children must have appeared as a judicial sentence on a violation of the Divine Law. The divorce presented itself to him as a moral obligation, when national advantage combined with superstition to encourage what he secretly desired; and if he persuaded himself those public reasons, without which in truth and fact, he would not have stirred, were

60Ibid., I:122.
those that alone were influencing him, the self-deceit was of a kind with which the experience of most men will probably have made them too familiar.\textsuperscript{51}

Froude's entire treatment of Henry is in the same vein. Throughout the long and tortuous procedure by which the Church of England was severed from that of Rome, Henry is made to seem the injured, or at least the innocent party. Wolsey was virtually the sole instigator and architect of the break with Rome, the rapacity of councillors combined with the odious profligacy of the monks to bring about the dissolution of the monasteries and the dispersion of their wealth, and so on. The whole attitude is one of defence and counterattack. Froude claimed, "My object... has been not to give a new version of Henry's character or anything else, but to rub off the modern picture, and exhibit the old one as it was painted by contemporaries."\textsuperscript{62} There can be little doubt, however, that in his effort to set the record straight Froude was guilty of a considerable degree of overcorrection. But when allowance is made for this it must be admitted that his revision of the picture was valuable to some extent. Since Froude's day, the concept of Henry as a bloated and lascivious monster has lost much of its credibility, having been tempered by a clearer concept of existing political realities, and Froude must be credited with having initiated the change. Another and perhaps


\textsuperscript{62} Letter from Froude to Cowley Powles, January 17, 1858. Quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:265.
more important consideration was raised by him concerning the relation of secular to clerical authority, though with some damage to his own reputation. One of his biographers has commented:

What can be pleaded for Henry, without paradox and with truth, is that he imposed upon Catholic and Protestant alike the supremacy of the law. Froude preached the subordination of the Church to the State; and while supporters of the voluntary principle regarded him with suspicion, adherents to the sacerdotal principle shrank from him with horror. 63

This passage indicates what one writer had in mind when he said, "It is a vulgar observation that the natural element of some men appears to be hot water. No English author of the century justifies this better than Mr. Froude." 64 Waldo Dunn agrees with this, commenting that

It was Froude's portion in life to please no one faction. Perhaps no better testimony could be offered to his ability to see all sides of a question than the fact that he saw enough and said enough on both sides of almost every subject which he treated to earn the ill will of the adherents of each side. 65

Whether he saw enough of both sides of Henry's character is a debatable question, but he did manage to irritate the experts. The reading public, however, was instantly attracted to his arguments, which suited their national pride.

63 Paul, Life of Froude, 91.


65 Dunn, Froude, I:3.
far better than the criticisms of earlier historians.

...the reign of Henry VIII, or at least the latter part of it, had never been so copiously illustrated before. The Oxford Movement, which treated the Reforma[tion] as a discredit[a]ble incident worthy of oblivion, had not much influence with the laity. Nine Englishmen in ten were quite prepared to glorify the reformers.... ...it was by no means disagreeable to find that a popular king was not a mere monster of iniquity.66

This popular interest was quickly reflected in the sales of Froude's first two volumes. He wrote with satisfaction that "the first edition was rapidly sold off; another was wanted by the winter."67 Froude also tells of one individual whose reading of the History brought particular pleasure, both to the reader and to the author:

...my father, now growing a very old man, was able to feel before he died that good might come of me after all... He had himself a large silent knowledge of English Church history, and was interested in the book itself. He was one--of the first to recognise that about Henry VIII I was probably right. He said that he could understand how the popular impression had grown up. Henry's reformation had been a lay revolt against the clergy. The clergy, Protestant and Catholic, had been allowed to write the history of it, and both had been exasperated against a Government which had forced the spirituality of both persuasions under the control of the State. This was infinitely delightful to me.... He lived to see my work continued into two further volumes and to learn the estimate which was formed of them, and he died with the sense that after all I might not prove unworthy of his name.68

While family, friends, and the public at large were praising Froude's work, the reviewers tended to view his novel conception of Henry with some caution and reservations. They

66Paul, Life of Froude, 106.
67Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:208.
68Ibid., 200-201.
were, however, well aware of their own unfamiliarity with Froude's source material, so, for the most part, their sharp comments against the defence of Henry were hedged with qualifying remarks. Although some of them expressed their disfavour with unnecessary shrillness, Froude managed in general to maintain a phlegmatic attitude toward such attacks, noting philosophically:

I have discovered throughout my literary career that a book never suffers from malicious attacks; that the more there are of them the more the public are convinced that where there is so much anger the book that provokes it cannot be without merit.69

In this instance the public bore him out, for he was also able to note, "The sales continued and even increased. I was acquiring a respectable reputation, which became evident to me first by the exasperation of the critics whose disfavour I had survived, and by other more pleasant testimonies."70

Through it all he continued to work and to write, and by early in 1860 the next two volumes were in the hands of the public, who devoured them eagerly. Froude's comments on these volumes are interesting, particularly with reference to his evident disappointment at not having been able to overturn any long-respected theories, as he felt he had done in the volumes on Henry.

Mary will turn out well, on the whole, and at least interesting; Edward - or Edward's time - in all senses deplorable. I shall keep generally so near the beaten road of opinion that I am afraid I shall be thought hopelessly stupid. Nothing new except details, and no particular paradox.71

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69 Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude.
70 Ibid.
71 Froude to William Long, December 25, 1858. Quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:272.
Volume V, dealing with the reign of Edward VI, treats Puritan extremists with great severity. It tends to point up the very real dangers faced by the country during the minority of a monarch, when control of policy becomes a prize to be won by ambitious nobles, and it does much to rehabilitate the reputation of the Protector, Somerset. Volume VI on the reign of Mary Tudor, in spite of some fierce comments upon the Smithfield fires and the excessive and (in Froude’s eyes) dangerous zeal of Reginald Pole, is a compassionate and perceptive treatment of a lonely, unhappy woman. Neither of these books represented such a deviation from the accepted view as the volumes on Henry had done or as those on Elizabeth were to do; but, as Charles Kingsley pointed out, the public learnt... - probably for the first time - to understand the deep discontent of Edward the Sixth’s reign, and the subsequent revulsion to Popery under Mary, on some human and natural explanation, besides the old one of the rage and malice of the devil and his imps.

The delineations of Somerset and Seymour, in Volume V, were as masterly in themselves as they were pregnant with causes for the course which affairs took during that confused reign. The delineation of Mary Tudor was, as it ought to be, even more carefully worked out, and with the most complete success. For the first time, people in general could see in that hapless Queen, not a monstrous fury, but a woman, whose deepest sorrows and blackest crimes sprang out of her own warped and maddened womanhood. If Mr. Froude had done no more for English history than the figure of Mary Tudor alone, he would have deserved the thanks of all who love truth.72

Just as the publication of the first six volumes of his History represented a milestone in his literary career,

that same year - 1860 - became a time of great and difficult changes in Froude's life. Shortly after the publication of Volumes V and VI, Charlotte Froude, who had been ill for some time, died. The loss of his wife was not only a terrible personal blow to Froude, but it left him with total responsibility for his three small children, and for the management of his home. The family had lived all these years in the country or in small towns, as Mrs. Froude had never enjoyed the city; now it seemed practical for Froude to settle with his children in London, where he could be nearer the source material for the work on Elizabeth, the original object of his historical interest. Within a year, he had married again, and the pieces of his life began to come together once more; by the end of 1863, Volumes VII and VIII had been published.

Before proceeding to a discussion of Froude's Reign of Elizabeth on the basis of its content, some words should be said about the original conception of the History as a whole, and about the changes in scope and construction which occurred before the final volumes were published. When he began work on the second half of his History, Froude decided to treat the story of Elizabeth as virtually a separate unit. As he explains in his preface to Volume VII:

I have made an alteration in the form of the book, for which I must request the indulgence of the public. The accession of Elizabeth is the commencement of a new epoch in the history of the Reformation. There may be persons who having gone so far with me, may not care to accompany me further; others may be inter-
ested in the later and brighter period, who may not
care to encumber themselves with the earlier volumes:
while the story therefore is continued without inter-
ruption, I have made the present publication the com-
mencement as it were of a second work.73

There was probably a technical reason for this change,
in that Froude was now working with a different publisher, Long-
man, Green and Company. The new arrangement was accompanied
by minor changes in the format: with the exception of a chap-
ter number and date of the narrative near the top of each page,
marginal notes are henceforth omitted; and across the top of
each page, instead of a summary comment about the text, is
written simply "History of England" on the left and "The Reign
of Elizabeth" on the right. Although The Reign of Elizabeth
more generally and properly appears as Volumes VII through XII
of the History of England, it was also published as an inde-
pendent work in six volumes, a fact which must undoubtedly lead
to confusion on the part of students.

The most significant change in the plan of the History,
however, was Froude's decision to close his narrative with the
year 1588. The original title, History of England from the
Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth, had been retained
through the publication of the first ten volumes; the last
two, when they appeared at the beginning of 1870, bore the
title ...From the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish
Armada. Froude's choice of parameters and his decision to
change them bear some explanation. There were probably two

reasons for beginning the account with Wolsey’s fall. First, the earliest papers in Sir Francis Palgrave’s possession, which formed the nucleus of the work, were apparently from about this time. Secondly, as Goldwin Smith accurately observed, “From that moment the cause of the Reformation and of the crown in England became one. The independence of the nation was at stake.” The decision to continue the narrative to the end of Elizabeth’s reign was originally based, no doubt, on what seemed at the time a logical point of conclusion. The growing realization of the overwhelming vastness of the material may well have influenced Froude’s change of plan. Reviewers of Volumes IX and X had begun to express concern over the length of time still to be covered between 1572, the last year discussed in Volume X, and 1603; and Froude must have shared their concern to some extent. As one critic wrote, “...Mr. Froude can scarcely hope at this rate to finish the reign of this most illustrious of English sovereigns. All we can hope for from his pen must therefore be a fragmentary and unfinished record.” Froude’s own explanation, however, indicates that his decision had more to do with the nature of the story he had set out to tell:

Chess-players, when they have brought their game to a point at which the result can be foreseen with certainty, regard their contest as ended, and sweep


the pieces from the board..........................
My object, as I defined it at the outset, was to
describe the transition from the Catholic England
with which the century opened, the England of a
dominant Church and monasteries and pilgrimages,
into the England of progressive intelligence; and
the question whether the nation was to pass a sec-
ond time through the farce of a reconciliation
with Rome, was answered once and forever by the
cannon of Sir Francis Drake.76

In this essentially dramatic conception of the
period and its struggles, Froude sees as primary the weak-
ness of England's international position; particularly after
the death of Mary had removed the assurance of Spain's sup-
port. In his view, England from Elizabeth's accession until
the defeat of the Armada was truly a beleagured isle, and
the reader is never for a moment free from the sense of ten-
sion engendered by this view. As Froude saw it, the situ-
tion was desperate in a political as well as a religious
sense, and it was this desperation which justified many of
the otherwise indefensible vacillations and equivocations of
English policy. To begin with, in the presence of formidable
and potentially rapacious neighbours, English ministers recog-
nized the need of internal stability, and accordingly, once
nominal peace with France had been attained early in 1559,
the issue of religion was immediately attended to. As Froude
points out, a return to Protestantism was by no means a pop-
ular move, but the change could be made with a degree of
safety because of mutual jealousy between France and Spain.
Froude quotes the Spanish ambassador as having written to

Philip upon the news of the attempted passage of the Supremacy Bill in 1559:

That she [Elizabeth] will confirm their hateful and vile measures there is no sort of doubt. . . .

[However] Religion will triumph at last; of that I am sure, for the Catholics are two-thirds of the realm; but I had rather the work was done by your Majesty than that it should lapse to the French.77

As the French were equally suspicious of Spanish intervention, the dangerous reformation could be accomplished with relative safety. With typical faith in the English concept of freedom, Froude implies that concern over foreign domination rendered popular Catholic resistance less formidable, for "to the great body of the English laity orthodox and unorthodox a foreign jurisdiction was essentially hateful."78 This attitude of Froude's is most significant; in his mind Rome and Catholicism were always inseparable from the idea of a foreign political domination, and his History cannot be understood without an initial recognition of that fact. Thus it is that he sees in the religious settlement of 1559 a political even more than a religious victory:

The revolution was complete. The organization of the country resumed the solid and secular character by which, under Henry the Eighth, in the words of the statute of supremacy, 'the realm was kept continually in good order;' and the interests of England were no longer to be sacrificed to the passions of religious partisans. The vessel of the State though heaving dangerously in the after-roll was again on her right course, and began slowly to draw away out of the breakers.79

78Ibid., I:66.  
79Ibid., I:81.
In emphasizing the security of England as the basic theme of his history of Elizabeth's reign, Froude continues his narrative from the same essentially political viewpoint which had dominated the earlier volumes. However, in this second half of the story he has, with true dramatic instinct, provided a focal point for the ensuing action. "Mr. Froude's view of history is tragic rather than epic," wrote one critic; "He traces the course of an idea, rather than the course of events." 80 Another reviewer has commented on the unfoldment of this tragedy, with some thought-provoking comments on the role envisioned by Froude for Mary Stuart. Noting that "...his so-called 'History of England' during this reign is far more a biography of the two Queens than a history of the country," 81 he goes on to say:

...it is one great merit of Mr. Froude's conception that he never allows us to lose sight of the captive queen. Her story is not, as in shorter and less ambitious histories of the time, told once and for all by way of episode, a tragical event forming merely one out of many such in a tragical case. It is a continuous underplot, something into which all other things must be made to fit. With Mr. Froude she and the Roman Catholic powers that gathered round her are the incarnation of all that is retrogressive, vicious, abominable; and it is obvious that the line he has taken of giving her no quarter enables him to work out this view with a strength and consistency which would not be otherwise so easy. 82

The comment on the "strength and consistency" of


82 Ibid., 521.
Froude's view of Mary Stuart is fully justified. Throughout the entire narrative he portrays her as virtually the personification of evil. No word of sympathy for her or for her position enters the account; her strong points - her beauty, her intelligence and courage, and her astonishing stamina - are pointed out only that she may be shown as a more subtle and dangerous adversary. The following quotation from Froude is typical; commenting upon Mary's protestations of innocence near the end of her life, he writes:

She was the old Mary Stuart still, the same bold, restless, unscrupulous, ambitious woman, and burning with the same passions, among which revenge stood out predominant. Hers was the panther's nature - graceful, beautiful, malignant, and untamable.83

If Froude was able thus to provide the focal point for all the evils of the reign, he had considerably more difficulty with his heroine. Although his work abounds with beautifully drawn sketches of character, neither Mary nor Elizabeth is portrayed to the reader's satisfaction. While Froude describes in detail the achievements and the charms of the Scottish queen, she never really comes to life. Aware of his need to maintain the symbol, he shrinks from revealing the woman. Elizabeth's portrait suffers in the opposite sense: try as he will, Froude cannot force the woman as he saw her into the symbol he requires; he is forced at last to elevate to that role the ministers of the crown, especially Cecil,
and the sailors and soldiers of the queen.

There is in Froude's entire rendering of Elizabeth a paradox which is difficult to explain. As early as 1853 he had published a lengthy article in Fraser's Magazine in defense of the personal morals of Elizabeth, whose reputation he felt had been slandered by early Catholic historians, and by later writers such as Lingard, who had quoted them, as he felt, indiscriminately. It was in continuation of this defense that he originally determined to begin a lengthy work on the period, and throughout the second half of his History he firmly maintains his initial conviction that insofar as her personal morals were concerned Elizabeth was above reproof. He becomes, however, an increasingly severe judge of her wisdom and statesmanship, until at last he finds himself forced to conclude "that the wisdom of Elizabeth was the wisdom of her ministers, and that her chief merit, which circumstances must divide with herself, lay in allowing her policy to be guided by Lord Burghley." Thus Froude placed himself once again in a position directly contrary to that of the critics. In the first part of the History he had struggled manfully to rehabilitate an acknowledged villain, and the reviewers strove as manfully to maintain the original verdict passed against Henry. With Elizabeth, Froude attempted to deflate the image

85 Ibid., 374.
of a virtual paragon, and the critics rushed at once to the defense and vindication of the Gloriana they had so long revered. Thus, while the volumes on the reign of Elizabeth represent less of a departure from accepted historical tradition than did those on Henry, they were, in their initial impact, scarcely less controversial.

One additional paradox might be noted: while Froude possessed a deep and sympathetic understanding of Mary Tudor, who was the symbol of devotion to the Catholic cause; yet to Elizabeth, the literal "child of the Reformation" and the nominal heroine of his history, he could never really relate.

As he begins his narrative, Froude is impressed with what he sees as Elizabeth's similarity to her father - a factor sure to make her the object of his own approval. He quotes with pleasure the observation of the Spanish ambassador that "she had an admiration for the King her father's mode of ruling." In the early crises of her reign, notably the rebellion of the Protestant Lords in Scotland, Froude hastens to defend Elizabeth's enigmatic policies on his accustomed grounds of political necessity:

...the perplexity of a sovereign whose chief duty at such a time was to prevent a civil war, deserves or demands a lenient consideration.... If Elizabeth's conduct in its details had been alike unprincipled and unwise, the broader bearings of her policy were intelligible and commendable; her caprice and vacillation arose from her consciousness of the difficulties by which she was on every side surrounded.86

88 Ibid., VIII:271.
Before long, however, his disillusionment begins to appear.
Concerning what he considered to be a wasted opportunity in
Scotland, Froude remarks with exasperation on Elizabeth's
"incurable infirmity of purpose," \(^{89}\) and continues:

She could decide when she would have done better to hesitate, when it was a question of the exec-
ution of a few hundred poor men. Where her crown might be forfeited by uncertainty, she was paralyzed
by incapacity of resolution. \(^{90}\)

Froude's mention here of "the execution of a few
hundred poor men" refers to an incident which seems deeply
to have troubled him. In 1570, the rebellion in the northern
counties of England was put down with great severity. \(^{91}\) The
victims of the reprisals, however, were not the leaders (who
were reserved for trial in the courts in order that their
property might be legally seized by the Crown) but the poor
peasants whose chief crime in Froude's eyes had been to fol-
low their leaders. Moreover, according to Froude, such gross
inhumanity was not even politically defensible: no lessons
were learned, no moral taught; the only result was terror and
bewilderment. Such an act was entirely contrary to Froude's
sense of open, honest English justice, and throughout the rest
of his History he returns frequently and bitterly to it as his
denunciations of Elizabeth gather force. Writing later of Eliz-
abeth's hesitation to sign the death-warrant for the Jesuit


\(^{90}\) Ibid.

\(^{91}\) Ibid., IX:560-71.
Campian, Froude comments acidly:

She could order Yorkshire peasants to be hung in batches with undisturbed composure. She could read without distress of the wholesale slaughter of Irish mothers and their babes, but each death-warrant which she signed for a person that she had herself been acquainted with cost her poignant anguish.92

His opinion of Elizabeth's unwillingness to put an end once and for all to the machinations of Mary Stuart reveals even more vehement condemnation:

Her tenderness towards conspirators was as remarkable as it was hitherto unprecedented; but her unwillingness to shed blood extended only to high-born traitors. Unlike her father, who ever struck the leaders and spared the followers, Elizabeth could rarely bring herself to sign the death-warrant of a nobleman; yet without compunction she could order Yorkshire peasants to be hanged in scores by martial law.93

These passages are admittedly harsh, even for Froude; there are other references to Elizabeth's natural abhorrence of violence and to her moderate nature which tend to offset them. Nevertheless there is in such references as the above a hint that by this deed Elizabeth proved herself unfaithful to the English people and therefore forfeited her claim to be the heroine of his drama. Certainly she becomes less and less the object of his admiration as the History progresses. The convolutions and intricacies of her policies, once justified by him as necessary, become the results of a devious mind's workings: "To ask Elizabeth to deal plainly was to ask

93 Ibid., XII:560.
the winds to say from what quarter they were about to blow." 94

Froude condemns her for vacillation:

As usual, she could not resolve. She would not consent, she would not refuse. She lingered over her answer when the minutes were as drops of the life blood running from the veins of the Protestant cause.

She is guilty of unbelievable parsimony when the fate of the nation is in the hands of men desperately in need of provisions:

The greatest service ever done by an English fleet had been...successfully accomplished by men whose wages had not been paid from the time of their engagement, half-starved, with their clothes in rags and falling off their backs, and so ill-found in the necessaries of war that they had eked out their ammunition by what they could take in action from the enemy itself.......
The Queen...thought of nothing but the expense, and was only eager to stop the drain on the exchequer at the earliest possible moment. 96

Froude's greatest exasperation, however, and his greatest sarcasm, are reserved for the object of Elizabeth's affections. With the starving seamen still in his mind, he asks:

But did Elizabeth show no consciousness of the glorious work which had been done for herself and for the commonwealth? Was there not one of those illustrious sons of England on whom as his Sovereign she conferred the honours which were due from his country's gratitude?......................
The wreath of victory which her subjects had won for her they laid at the feet of their Sovereign; and that Sovereign with gracious condescension, bestowed it upon her Leicester. 97

Other typical examples of Froude's opinion of Leicester abound throughout the work: "It was true that he had neither charac-

95 Ibid., XII:417.
96 Ibid., XII:490-91.
97 Ibid., XII:496.
ter nor ability;"98 "Leicester, with the conspicuous incapacity which universally distinguished him...\"99 "Drake's ability was as conspicuous as Leicester's imbecility."100

Needless to say, the question of what Elizabeth saw in such a man was as perplexing to Froude as it has been to many historians then and later. Froude did, however, in the earlier part of his work, at least make some effort to understand it and to explain it, in terms which express a perception rare in his treatment of Elizabeth:

The Queen who had no one to guide or advise her selected her own friends; and in the smooth surface of Dudley's flattery she saw reflected an image of her own creation, which, because he devoted himself to her, she chose to believe that he resembled.101

Here, for a brief moment, Froude seems to have revealed that sympathetic understanding of the feminine mind which was so conspicuous in his treatment of Mary Tudor. It does not happen often in the case of Elizabeth, however, and Froude's failure to comprehend her is evident in such contradictory statements as "Love for Dudley Elizabeth probably did not feel"102 and "Elizabeth undoubtedly loved Leicester."103

Froude's almost total lack of sympathy for what may well have been the only vital attachment of Elizabeth's life may well have been largely because that attachment was so ob-

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99 Ibid., XII:368. 100 Ibid., XII:370.
101 Ibid., VII:86. 102 Ibid., VII:293.
103 Ibid., XII:497.
viously not in the national interest. As in the volumes on Henry, Froude sees the primary concern of the people as their fear of a disputed succession, and he explains that they were "feverishly anxious to see the Queen provided with a husband."

While he did not necessarily agree with it, he well understood the Spanish ambassador's contention that "all will turn on the husband which this woman will choose." It is indicative of Froude's general outlook that he remained sympathetic to the intricate matrimonial negotiations of the Queen only as long as he could see that there was some likelihood of a fruitful outcome, or as long as there was some political merit in the match. He seems on the one hand to have accepted Elizabeth's professed desire to remain celibate but on the other hand to have viewed with skepticism the idea that marriage would constitute a sacrifice for her. Unable to conceive that she could have had any fondness for d'Alencon, and sure that the latter was never more than a dupe, he comments, "She imagined, or pretended, that she now wished definitively to purchase economical safety by the sacrifice of her person."

Earlier, when negotiations with the Archduke of Austria had appeared to be nearing finality, and Elizabeth had clung to religious objections to extricate herself, Froude's comment

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106 Ibid., XI:437.
had been even more caustic:

Elizabeth was never so good a Protestant as when religious zeal could save her from marriage, and Leicester's suit was never listened to more favourably than when his pretensions might serve to interrupt another man's. 107

On the perplexing subject of Elizabeth's personal religious inclinations, Froude professes to be quite clear:

Religion to Elizabeth was a very simple matter. She had a common-sense perception of the relations between the world and its Maker. The detailed articles of creeds, sacramental mysteries, and other 'schemes of salvation'...were in themselves profoundly dubious to her.... she cared but little for the shades which distinguished Anglicanism from Catholicism, so long as there was no Inquisition to pry into men's consciences. ...whether men went to mass or went to church, so long as they fulfilled their duty as citizens, she regarded merely as a matter of form. 108

This essentially Erastian attitude seems pre-eminently sensible to Froude, and his general tendency is to defend it:

To the intelligent latitudinarian his principles seem so obviously reasonable that he cannot understand why they are not universally accepted. Elizabeth desired only a general peace, outward order and uniformity, with liberty to everyone to think in private as he pleased. What could any man in his senses wish for more?... So long as their subjects would conform to the established ritual, kings might well be satisfied to leave opinion alone. 109

In his admiration for this aspect of Elizabeth's policy, however, Froude is not altogether consistent, for his own strong Protestantism tends to reject her natural preference for the

108 Ibid., XII:123.
109 Ibid., XI:8.
older forms and traditions, and he sees her ultimately as resisting the inevitable victory of the Reformation:

Incurably convinced of her own supreme intelligence she would take no more of [Cecil's] counsel than such fragments as necessity enforced upon her, and these fragments, backed by the energy of a splendid nation, carried England, and Elizabeth with it, clear at last of the threatening breakers. ... the personal contribution of Elizabeth to the final victory of Protestantism, was but in yielding to a stream which she had struggled against for thirty years.110

There are two aspects of Elizabeth's character, however, which, even in the face of his deteriorating image of her, Froude continues to feel are above reproach; ironically both have been viewed far less charitably by many who are generally kinder to her than Froude. The first is her personal morality. What he had first proclaimed in print sixteen years earlier Froude continued to maintain as he neared the end of his final volume of the History:

After a brief alarm at the beginning of her reign, no intelligent layman in Europe suspected that there was anything seriously wrong between them [Elizabeth and Dudley].... ...Elizabeth was not a person who would have felt temptations to unchastity. Surrounded as she was by a thousand malignant eyes, she could not have escaped detection had she really committed herself, and that the evidence against her has to be looked for in the polemical pamphlets of theologians would alone prove that the suspicion was without ground.111

The other count on which Froude insists that Elizabeth was both blameless and consistent was in her dealings


111Ibid., XII:497-98.
with the Queen of Scots. He believes that in this regard her actions were highly impolitic, but he nevertheless feels compelled to defend her:

...the fairest feature in her history, the one relation in which from first to last she shewed sustained and generous feeling, is that which the perversity of history has selected as the blot on her escutcheon. Beyond and beside the political causes which influenced Elizabeth's attitude toward the Queen of Scots, true human pity, true kindness, a true desire to save her from herself, had a real place. From the beginning to the end, no trace can be found of personal animosity on the part of Elizabeth; on the part of Mary no trace of anything save the fiercest hatred. 112

Regarding Elizabeth's political sagacity, however, Froude is far less tolerant. She is in his eyes always the vain woman, attempting either with uncontrolled temper or from an inflated sense of her own wisdom to play a game in which she is beyond her depth. From these unfortunate and dangerous ventures Elizabeth and England are repeatedly saved by the unfailing wisdom of Lord Burghley and his able compatriot, Sir Francis Walsingham. Of Burghley Froude acknowledged to a friend, "He, it is more and more clear to me, was the solitary author of Elizabeth's and England's greatness." 113 Froude particularly admired William Cecil's "habit of looking everything in the face," 114 which he saw as a healthy antidote to Elizabeth's circuitous mental wanderings and self-deceptions.

113Froude to Lady Salisbury, October 16, 1864. Quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:309.
Far from directing, or even supporting Cecil wisely, Elizabeth seems to have blocked his policies virtually at every step. According to Froude:

Vain as she was of her own sagacity, she never modified a course recommended to her by Burghley without injury both to the realm and to herself. She never chose an opposite course without plunging into embarrassments from which his skill and Walsingham's were barely able to extricate her. The great results of her reign were the fruits of a policy which was not her own, and which she starved and mutilated when energy and completeness were needed.115

Actually, inconsistent and confused as Froude's feelings about Elizabeth are, there is undoubtedly a great deal of truth in the portrait he has drawn. Certainly the letters of ministers and ambassadors, from which he has quoted copiously as usual, reveal an identical sense of exasperation with her, and it is impossible to read about her or study her reign without concluding that she must have been complex and enigmatic in the highest degree. Froude's difficulty with Elizabeth throughout his History is typical of much of his work: while he professed to let the facts speak for themselves, he seems unable to do this with incidents or people he could not understand. In summarizing his work, Froude recommends about Elizabeth's relations with Mary Stuart the sort of advice which he frequently gave but seldom heeded:

...this, like all other questions connected with the Virgin Queen, should be rather studied in her actions than in the opinion of the historian who relates them.116

116Ibid., XII:561.
In spite of this suggestion, Froude has through six large volumes endeavoured to make explicit for the reader his own opinions about the Virgin Queen - here condemning, here defending, but growing ever more confused and frustrated. Perhaps it was a result of his own forthright nature that he had to share with his readers all of his own doubts and perplexities.

In spite of this major drawback, Froude's picture of the reign as a whole is a most successful one. Elizabeth's personality may have bewildered him, but among the almost hopeless meanderings of diplomatic and political intrigues he was completely at home. Working almost entirely from original material, Froude has managed to sift, sort and organize the letters, papers and memoranda of the period into a unified and, according to those familiar with what he was doing, an essentially accurate whole. John Skelton, Maitland's biographer, was well acquainted with the Scottish material on the period, and he paid tribute to Froude's excellent grasp of the subject:

"Only the man or woman who has had to work upon the mass of Scottish material in the Record Office can properly appreciate Mr. Froude's inexhaustible industry and substantial accuracy. His point of view is very different from mine; but I am bound to say that his acquaintance with the intricacies of Scottish politics during the reign of Mary appears to me to be almost, if not quite, unrivalled."

Herbert Paul relates that "John Hill Burton...concurred in

116 John Skelton, preface to Maitland of Lethington; quoted in Herbert Paul, Life of Froude, 172."
Skelton's view, and no one has ever known Scottish history better than Burton."\textsuperscript{117}

From the enormous mass of manuscript material in the Simancas archives, on which there was no expert prior to his day, Froude has managed to construct an incredibly detailed narrative which is, nonetheless, relatively easy to follow and alive with interest. The chief value of his revelations on this aspect of the period may well lie in his refreshing portraits of such stereotyped "villains" as Philip of Spain and the Duke of Alva, who appear in his pages not as psychopathic mass murderers but as essentially moderate men wrestling with perplexing political issues and endowed with quite normal human strengths and weaknesses. Though as with much of Froude's work the accuracy of detail is questionable, the overall picture has been generally accepted, and, as one modern writer has asserted, "the essential authoritativeness of the Elizabethan volumes remains."\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{117}Paul, \textit{Life of Froude}, 172.

\textsuperscript{118}Hale, \textit{British Historiography}, 55.
IV. INITIAL IMPACT OF PROUDE'S HISTORY; ITS IMPACT ON SUBSEQUENT HISTORIOGRAPHY

Proude once commented to a friend, on the occasion of the publication of one of his books, "I can form no conjecture of what the world will say. I find the kite rises equally well whichever way the wind blows, if only there is enough of it." Although it built to gale force only gradually, there was plenty of wind blowing as the published volumes of his History began to appear.

For obvious reasons, early critics were at something of a disadvantage in attempting to assess Proude's work on the basis of his sources, and generally speaking they were aware of their inadequacy. Even two years later, it was still admitted:

The untouched and unknown store of manuscripts in the Rolls House and other depositories of public documents, have given Mr. Proude a mass of new material so large that we cannot examine the truth of his narrative by referring to printed books. Whether he has exhausted all available manuscript authorities, and whether he has used correctly all that he has examined, we are utterly unable to say. His critics must, if they are honest, confess that he stands in an entirely different position from what they do.  

It is perhaps indicative of Proude's extreme sensitivity that he read into one early review, in the Christian

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1 John Skelton, The Table-Talk of Shirley (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1895), 150.

Remembrancer, "an emphasis of extreme censure," where essentially the article tends to substantiate many of his views; generally Proude felt critics to be "if not hostile, cold and supercilious." Perhaps, however, his sensitivity may have been the result of nervousness, for, as he has written, "the opinions of the reviewers were then of consequence to me, as I had my position to make." On the whole the critics tended to be gracious in their praise of his painstaking and conscientious research among recently released documents - research which all of them had admittedly to take on faith - and in their enthusiasm for his style, which one reviewer went so far as to describe as follows:

In favourable contrast to the wearisome glitter of Mr. Macaulay, and the harsh mannerism of Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Proude's style is clear and forceful. Incidents are grouped by him with picturesque effect; and whilst he writes with the earnestness of deep conviction, his narrative, even when necessarily brief, is remarkable for its precision.

Though not everyone agreed that his narrative was "necessarily brief," his style was universally applauded. Generally, too, the reviewers of the first two volumes tended to welcome the new framework in which Proude had attempted to set the momentous events of the early sixteenth century. A review in Fraser's Magazine, which could automat-

3Autobiographical fragment by J.A. Proude, quoted in Dunn, Proude, I:201.
4Ibid, I:200. 5Ibid.
ically be counted upon to venture its support, acknowledged that...

Mr. Froude has studied the king, his character and times in a much more intelligent and comprehensive spirit than any of his predecessors. He has both seen and shewn clearly that Henry's contemporaries did not regard him as an unredeemable monster; that on the contrary, the most earnest and vital part of the English people in that day went with their monarch.... We ascribe Mr. Froude's comparative clearness of vision on these points to his patient study of contemporary documents....

The Christian Remembrancer, less subject to the suspicion of self-interest, adds that Froude's approach is wholesome because...

...it has been too much the fashion to regard this period solely as one of ecclesiastical revolution, to consider it with the temper of theological partisans, and to work out a picture in accordance with preconceived theories. Historians have overlooked the state of the kingdom at large; or, touching upon it with reluctance, have turned to more exciting themes, and hurried to more interesting subjects - the sins and mistakes, the virtues and vices, with which times of revolution usually abound.

Negative comments tend to show a similar unanimity, and they fall rather neatly into three main categories. First and foremost among these, then as now, is the criticism that Froude's defense of Henry went too far. The reviewer for Fraser's Magazine notes with favour that Froude "has a strong faith in the genius and good intentions of the king," and acknowledges that "to a certain extent we agree with him."
Beyond that point, however, even Fraser's cannot support him:

We differ... in some respects from Mr. Froude's judgment of this crowned and anointed Bluebeard; and we regret that he has, in our opinion, somewhat weakened his case by his endeavors to make Henry but a ruler in all respects commendable, and a sire worthy of Elizabeth. 10

Other reviewers tend to deprecate Froude's view of Henry more strongly, of course - frequently with a biting sarcasm, but occasionally with a mocking humour which seems justly to rebuke Froude's excessive zeal:

It would have been well for Henry, says Mr. Froude, if he had lived in a world in which women could have been dispensed with; so ill he succeeded in all his relations with them. With men he could speak the right word, he could do the right thing; with women he seemed to be under a fatal necessity of mistake. If it would have been well for Henry, it would have been still better for the women. The mistake was a good deal more fatal for them than for himself; at least some of them may be pardoned if they thought so. 11

Perhaps the most telling criticism in these initial assessments of Froude's work comes in the well-balanced comments in the National Review, which seem to have risen above mere isolated attacks upon Froude's interpretation and endeavoured to explain it in more general and constructive terms of cause and effect:

He has taken up the cause of a most unpopular king, perhaps with a little of the unconscious satisfaction of one who feels guarded by the isolation of his position from being a commonplace copyist of others. There may be, arising from this, some exag-

10 Donne, "Froude's History", 32.
11 "Froude's History of England", Littell's Living Age 50 (Sept 27, 1856): 772.
geration of the extent to which his new materials have modified the grounds upon which prior judgments have been formed, and a disposition to consider himself more entirely removed than is actually the case from the arena of common opinion. After all his labours, our knowledge of the facts on which the estimate of the characters and events of that age must be based remains hardly altered in any remarkable particular; and it is in the interpretation of these ascertained facts, in the relative value assigned to particular classes of evidence, and in the inferential reasoning as to motives and justifications, that the novelty and importance of Mr. Froude's history will be found to consist.\textsuperscript{12}

The second general and valid criticism of Froude's early volumes (a criticism which like the first one continues to persist) is referred to by the same writer as an "exclusive adherence to certain sources of information to which his special historical theory assigns a somewhat excessive authority."\textsuperscript{13} This point is made more explicitly later on in the review:

Mr. Froude...often lays great stress on the statements of motives which are put forward in the preambles of acts of parliament, as if in them we were always dealing with the real reasons by which the national will was guided.\textsuperscript{14}

Fraser's points out the same weakness:

He gives the parliaments of the day credit for a sturdy independence of the sovereign's mandates; and he believes, moreover, that their acts embodied the sentiments of the better portion of the nation. The independence of parliaments may be estimated by the fact, that in no instance did they oppose the royal pleasure, whether he wished to be rid of a minister or a wife; and also by their occasionally receiving a hint, without pleading their privileges, that if they were not more speedy in voting what the king wanted, some of them should be shorter by a head.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12}"Mr. Froude's History of England", National Review 3 (July 1856):109.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 124.
We suspect that neither Henry nor his people had any very clear notion of the worth and dignity of the commons of England.¹⁵

The reader may at this point recall that, even as late as the 1850’s Froude himself seemed to have no such very clear notion either; it might further be pointed out that such a deficiency may well have led him to miss the vital difference even between the independence of Henry’s parliaments and those of Elizabeth, and thus—to assume that resistance in 1529 was as feasible as in the 1560’s.

The Christian Remembrancer echoes the sentiments of other reviews on this subject, and carries them to even broader grounds, revealing an additional dimension to the argument:

Whether from a too rigid attention to his own theory, or from circumstances arising out of his distance from large libraries, Mr. Froude’s book, in our opinion, fails to give us a sufficient insight into the springs and workings of political and social life.

When a nation is in a ferment, the causes of action are oftener to be gathered from its accidental and indirect confessions than from its formal state papers. . . . from a neglect of what we may be allowed to call the undesigned sources of history, he has not sufficiently made apparent the hollowness of the whole fabric of ecclesiastical society, and the fearful consequences of that delay in the reformation of Church and State which had been, for at least two centuries, clamoured for from one end of Europe to the other.¹⁶

Froude’s zest for his material led him into a third policy noted generally by the critics as unfortunate:

¹⁵ Donne, “Froude’s History”, 32-3.
The interest of this book, it should be mentioned, is considerably marred, for general readers, by the large use the author makes of documents, state letters, acts of parliament, etc., in their original form. ... they are too largely drawn upon in a work of this kind; however excellent as materials towards composition, they cannot be so liberally introduced in the room and stead of composition, without proportionately impairing the artistic character of the history, and assimilating it to a compilation. 17

Froude's use of lengthy extracts from his sources is still being criticized today. Had some prescience but warned him of the trouble their presence in his work would shortly bring upon his head, he might well have abandoned their use at the outset; but at this early date no one had access to his sources to check his quotations for accuracy, and initial comments upon them were moderate. Fraser's alludes to their inordinate length but recognizes in them a redeeming feature:

...although he has devoted rather a large space to the events of a few years, we have seldom wished for curtailments or omissions. His work, indeed, is considerably lengthened by numerous extracts from the Statute Book. The diction of Acts of Parliament is seldom inviting to the reader, yet there is a raciness in the English of the sixteenth century that always arouses, and frequently rewards, attention... 18

Shortly after the appearance of Volumes III and IV in 1858, closing out the reign of Henry, Goldwin Smith's criticism appeared in the Edinburgh Review. Herbert Paul has described it as "an elaborate, an able and a bitter attack", by "the ablest of Froude's critics," 19 and as such it bears' attention. It is also significant because it deals with Froude's

17 "Froude's History", Living Age (September 1855): 774.

18 Donne, "Froude's History", 33.

entire coverage of Henry's reign. Where earlier reviewers had tended to treat Froude's work in a general or superficial sense, Smith endeavoured, not without success, to attack it in depth and in detail. After a smooth and complimentary beginning, the attack is begun with an oblique thrust at "the extended religious experience and converse which Mr. Froude has gone through in the course of his devious theological career," which, according to Smith, explains why "Mr. Froude does not possess the same advantages in dealing with questions of politics, jurisprudence, or political economy, as in dealing with questions of religious sentiment." While the criticism must be regarded as valid, the personal reference is both unmerited and unfortunate, and it tends to lower the tone of the remarks which follow. By proceeding to attack Froude on points of detail, Mr. Smith occasionally falls into a natural pitfall: his own cleverness leads him into excesses of expression which defeat his purpose and often weaken what would otherwise be justifiable observations. Two instances of this will perhaps suffice to suggest that the critic's motive may not always have been altogether impartial. In the first case, Smith refers to Froude as "approving with awful satisfaction the punishment of boiling alive" of one John Rouse, convicted of having poisoned some members of the Bishop of Rochester's household; whereas,


21 Ibid., 209.

22 Ibid., 234.
while Froude approved the conviction of Rouse for the crime, he recoiled in horror at the barbarity of the punishment, and clearly expressed his disapproval of it.23 In the other instance, Smith accuses Froude of feeling that "the miscarriages in Ireland were not caused by sending out incompetent men and starving the service. The fact is [here Smith quotes Froude] 'the country had exerted a magical power of transformation upon everyone connected with it.' 24 While Smith quoted Froude correctly, he has intimated that Froude would have disagreed about "sending out incompetent men and starving the service" and attributed all the evils in Ireland to "magical power". Froude, however, in spite of numerous misconceptions about Ireland, would have been the first to agree with Smith about the incompetence of British administrative efforts there. Hence it would seem that Smith's censures of Froude here are both somewhat wide of the mark.

This is not to say, however, that Smith's review was without significant merit. Many of his remarks, when shorn of their obvious sarcasm, are keenly perceptive and entirely justified. He takes Froude to task on each of the three major points mentioned by earlier critics, and he does so from a base of general knowledge far broader and deeper than theirs. Probably his most telling remark is that some of Froude's

23J.A. Froude, History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada, 12 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1870), I:309. (According to Froude's text, incidentally, the victim was not John, but Richard Rouse; John was of course John Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester.)

faulty economic judgments reveal "a want of knowledge of history beyond the period with which the writer is immediately concerned."\textsuperscript{25} Goldwin Smith had just been appointed to the Regius Professorship of Modern History at Oxford, a post which Froude had unsuccessfully sought, and it is easy to imagine how deeply this comment, bearing witness to the weakness of his early training in scholarship, must have hurt him.

The chief burden of Smith's attack upon Froude, and the one about which he seems most genuinely concerned, is explained in the following passage from his review:

...the great merits of Mr. Froude's work are defaced by a still graver defect..., and one which, unless he has the courage to eradicate it, will probably convert into a mere quarry for future historians that which might have been an enduring edifice of his own fame. This defect is a pervading paradox of the most extravagant kind........

Mr. Froude seems to have thought that it would be an unsatisfactory result of all his laborious researches, if they ended in furnishing him merely with a mass of new and interesting details,... or even with some important modifications.... Some great discovery must be made to reward adequately so much labour.... This discovery is...that Henry VIII...comes forth as a perfect king, while his supposed victims are converted into criminals...\textsuperscript{26}

The argument is reinforced on the final page of the article, where Smith laments "the extraordinary revolution which [Froude] has undertaken to effect in this period of English history," and encourages him "once more...to reconsider his Henry VIII if he wishes his history to live."\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Smith, "History of England", 211.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 252.
Waldo Dunn has written of Froude, "He was hardened to severe criticism, did not take it too much to heart so long as he felt it to be in good faith, and never allowed it to divert him from his course." On only two occasions did he feel impelled to publish a specific reply to charges made against him in print, and this review of Smith's was one of them. In it, he expressed particularly his desire to avoid controversy over details, for as he contended:

In the treatment of questions which turn on the interpretation of a series of complicated phenomena, little good is usually done by controversy. The controversialist is apt to lose sight of the broad bearings of his conclusions in contending for niceties which cannot be interpreted truly by themselves.

Refusing to retract a word of his defense of Henry, as Mr. Smith had invited him to do, Froude stated explicitly what he felt to be the undeniable grounds for that defense:

"At once and at the outset there lies before us the broad certainty that the religious crisis which convulsed Europe in the sixteenth century was surmounted by England with comparative ease." Without intelligent leadership at the head of the secular government, Froude claimed, this could not have been accomplished. Explaining, and attempting to justify, this view, Herbert Paul wrote, "If Henry had been what Catholic historians represented him, the mob would have pulled his palace about his ears."

\[\text{28} \text{ Dunn, Froude, II:303.} \]

\[\text{29} \text{ J.A. Froude, "The Edinburgh Review and Mr. Froude's History", Fraser's Magazine 58 (September 1858): 359.} \]

\[\text{30} \text{ Ibid.} \]

\[\text{31} \text{ Paul, Life of Froude, 106.} \]
Smith took up his pen once more in a rejoinder which was politely apologetic and even complimentary to Froude, but which held firmly to his position that "our main case against him is just: and that in bringing it forward as forcibly as we could, we have done no more than our duty...." 32

Froude saw no need to prolong debate by a reply. As Dunn explains:

The lines were sharply drawn. The issues were clear. Froude's work had now to stand on its own merits and confront a long succession of discriminating scholars. He was entirely willing to accept whatever the verdict might be. 33

In general, the volumes of the History dealing with Elizabeth created far less stir than had been occasioned by Froude's approach to Henry, and the critics seem by this time to have accepted Froude's work as possessing lasting merit. There are probably two main reasons for this. First, as one writer has said, with perhaps more than necessary vehemence:

When his judgment ceased to be perverted by the idolatrous worship of that equivocal hero of his own creation, his views became more consistent with the received opinions of history. 34

Another reviewer felt simply that "In the first two volumes of his History he sowed his wild oats of paradox." 35 Though Froude, who to the end of his life believed that he was right about Henry, would never have agreed with such assessments,

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33 Dunn, Froude, II:276.
34 Goldwin Smith, "History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth", Edinburgh Review 124 (October 1856): 476.
they probably contain a good deal of truth. Froude's opinions of Henry notwithstanding, it is quite likely that, as his research progressed, he may have gained a sense of dominion over his material, causing an initial feeling of excitement about it to give place to a greater and healthier sense of detachment. Such a process would no doubt have been wholly unconscious, and should not be construed to imply that Froude's earlier convictions about his material were less than genuine; but it could partly explain why his later work was directed into more conventional channels.

Secondly, Froude's volumes on the reigns of Edward and Mary were quite different, in important ways, from those on Henry. Volume V dealt far less with the promising but unfortunate young monarch than it did with the character of the realm and of the administration; hence its tendency to glorification or detraction of personality was automatically lessened, and it was easier to accept as a judicious historical work. The book on Mary, while fairly bubbling over with Protestant bias, was nevertheless recognized as a realistic and, in a human sense at least, a fair portrait of the Queen herself. Thus, perhaps, by the time the volumes on Elizabeth began to appear, much of the antagonism over Henry had receded into the background, and the critics were prepared to acknowledge that these new books were the work of an historian, not a pamphleteer.

Certainly the earlier volumes of Elizabeth's reign represented no startling departure from the path beaten by earlier historians. The public was already acquainted, through
Lingard, with "the irresolute and contradictory humours"36 of Elizabeth; and even Froude's assessment of her essentially Catholic outlook on religion was to some extent a restatement of Macaulay's view:

At the time of her accession, indeed, she evidently meditated a partial reconciliation with Rome; and, throughout her whole life, she leaned strongly to some of the most obnoxious parts of the Catholic system.37

Even Froude's treatment of Mary Stuart, though severe, was by no means a revolutionary one. A contemporary reviewer pointed out that

...our greatest historians, Robertson, Hume, Laing, Hallam and Sharpe Turner, have been persuaded of her guilt; and even the Catholic Lingard, though inclined to her side, has scarcely ventured to acquit her.38

Of the events of Mary's life after her marriage to Bothwell, the same writer has noted:

Mr. Froude's narrative of these events differs so little from other histories, that we need not dwell upon them. But he brings out into stronger relief the popular abhorrence of Mary Stuart's conduct, as well as the resources, the courage, and the energy of her character.39

This writer has also provided what is probably a very reasonable assessment of the first of Froude's Elizabethan volumes:

From an original history we necessarily gather many new impressions; but we are unable to affirm that our general judgment of the events and characters of this period has been modified by the perusal of this work. The greater detail, however, into which it enters presents a picture of them on a larger scale.40

38 Smith, "History of England" (October 1856), 470.
39 Ibid., 483.
40 Ibid., 509.
The chief objections of the critics to these volumes centered not on the facts of Mary Stuart's life, but on the degree of intensity with which Froude attacked her. One of them, writing in 1870 after Froude's work on Elizabeth was completed, concurred in Froude's verdict as to Mary's guilt, yet contended that "Mr. Froude's is the most bitter, the most vehement, and at the same time the most circumstantial attack ever made on the memory of Mary Stuart;"41 he adds that "he [Froude] regards every other question of the period through glasses stained with the colour which he has put upon this particular set of transactions."42

Another contemporary writer refers to Froude's use of new evidence against Mary "not with the calm temper of a judge, but with the fierceness of a bitter advocate,"43 and declares:

We cannot bring ourselves to believe that the spirit in which he treats this erring and unhappy queen will command the sympathy of his readers, or even their sense of rigorous justice. In a lawless age, in a half-civilised country, and surrounded by savage and treacherous nobles, who were guilty of every crime, she alone is singled out for vengeance. Who in that age was blameless?44

Carrying this argument to broader ground, this same reviewer claims that Elizabeth "had no right to meddle between Mary and her subjects,"45 and says of Froude's argument:

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42 Ibid., 507.
44 Ibid., 484.
45 Ibid., 488.
If Mary was guilty of the murder of her husband, he [Froude] maintains that Elizabeth and her ministers were justified in their treatment of her.... The issue raised by him is not, however, to be accepted until he is able to show that the Queen of England and her ministers were entitled to judge an independent Queen.... She may have been guilty, as we believe her to have been; but we are not, on that account, prepared to defend the conduct of Elizabeth. 46

Such an argument, while certainly plausible, must be said to overlook the fact that Froude did himself raise the issue of Elizabeth's right to judge Mary, and that in fact he claims Elizabeth was most unwilling to do so on that as well as other grounds. In fact, contemporary reviewers seem to ignore altogether the essential basis of Froude's argument: that, by having styled herself Queen of England, and by having refused to renounce her claim to Elizabeth's throne (as opposed to her claim to the succession) by ratifying the Treaty of Leith, Mary Stuart did in fact constitute the gravest threat to the security of the realm of England. Unless the validity of that particular argument is either proved or effectively dismissed, it would seem that all discussions of Elizabeth's handling of the matter are wholly irrelevant. And the critics appear to have been strangely silent on that point, preferring ironically the very type of emotional argument of which they declare Froude to have been guilty.

There are other rather isolated points raised in the reviews of the Elizabethan volumes; but with the exception of the issue of the Queen of Scots there is none of that unanim-

46 Smith, "History of England" (October 1865): 480.
ity which characterized the discussion of the early volumes. A writer for the Christian Observer feels that, in showing Elizabeth to have been severe with the Puritans, Froude displays a rather serious lack of knowledge of the times; that he "writes with too much levity on the subject of religious scruples in pious men;" 47 and that in his disapproval of the passage of the Thirty-nine Articles and other religious bills in 1571 he reveals "how little sympathy he possesses with one of the grandest, most salutary, and most amazing political changes (to say nothing of its religious aspect) which history records." 48 In spite of this, however, he regards Froude as "on the whole the best English historian we yet possess." 49

Another issue raised briefly by the critics is Froude's heavy reliance upon the correspondence of the Spanish ambassadors during the reign of Elizabeth. On the one hand, one claims "No people are so frequently deceived as ambassadors, agents, and spies in such an age." 50 On the other hand, another reviewer 51 supports Froude's elaborate explanation 52 of the peculiarly advantageous position of these men at this time, and of their access to information about the inner workings of the English government.

48 Ibid., 283-4.
49 Ibid., 283.
51 Smith, "History of England" (October 1866): 477-78.
Charles Kingsley, Froude's brother-in-law, wrote an understandably favourable review of Volumes VII and VIII for *Macmillan's Magazine* in which he does, in spite of all the praise, take exception to what he feels is Froude's overly-severe treatment of Elizabeth:

She came to the throne, as he shows, crippled on every side; by debts incurred by her sister..., ...by her inability to trust the statesmen who had brought England to the brink of ruin during her sister's and her brother's reign; ...by the knowledge that at least half of her subjects were Romanists...; ...by the intrigues of France and Spain...

Mr. Froude has seen all these excuses for her; but it is a question whether he has brought them before his readers with sufficient prominence.53

Kingsley feels also that Froude might have been more charitable regarding Elizabeth's feelings for Leicester:

Mr. Froude writes angrily and contemptuously of this affection toward Dudley; and there is cause enough for his so doing. He likes Elizabeth too well to allow her a licence which he can allow to Mary Stuart. But he should have remembered, that while Mary took that licence, Elizabeth did not.... it ought rather to raise her, than lower her, in our eyes to find her from her youth a true woman, capable...of deep and true affection. The key to Elizabeth's strange conduct during these early years seems to be...that she was honestly and deeply in love with a man who had been the friend of her youth, and the companion of her dangers; that she felt she must not marry him, while woman-like she could not give up the hope.54

It might be remarked here that no one ventured any manner of defense on behalf of Leicester against the scathing sarcasm of Froude's portrayal of him. He seems to have been universally regarded in that day as a reprehensible creature.


54Ibid., 218.
Froude's style is of course generally applauded once again by the critics, as is his prodigious industry. "Few authors", writes one, "have ever attained so brilliant a style as Mr. Froude, or shown more enterprise in searching for new information." Another praises the "originality with which the subject is treated," and "the authorities, hitherto unknown, which Mr. Froude has brought to light;" while a third credits him with "the infinite capacity of taking trouble." Above this chorus in praise of the new "authorities", one voice is raised in warning; it is that of Goldwin Smith, who published two reviews of Froude's Elizabethan volumes. Always on guard against Froude's enthusiasm, Smith writes of newly-discovered manuscripts:

The discovery of such treasures is apt to seduce the historian into an undue estimate of their historical value.... The reader, perhaps, is also prepared to receive too readily, as decisive, the testimony of witnesses so original and unexpected.... The authority of manuscripts is not to be taken as superior to that of printed documents: they may be more interesting, by reason of their novelty, but they are not more trustworthy; and they need a scrutiny even more careful, as they have not been exposed to the criticism of other writers.

Smith's criticisms of the later volumes show the same careful attention to detail as his reviews on the earlier ones.


but there is a striking difference in the whole tone of the later articles. Whereas in his denunciation of Froude's defense of Henry Smith was addressing (in his own mind at least) an overly-enthusiastic young upstart carried away with what he supposed to be a novel theory, in his final reviews he speaks with the genuine respect of one accomplished historian for another. This by no means implies that Smith agrees with all that Froude has written. He feels that, in the first Elizabethan volumes at least, Froude "endeavours to portray the Queen of England in the most favourable light," and that "no pains were spared to prove, with crushing force, the complicity of Mary Stuart" in the murder of Darnley. He notes in addition that "Mr. Froude nowhere claims the merit of judicial impartiality, nor does he care to weigh evidence in the calm and even scales which determine the value of conflicting testimonies and contested facts," and as before he laments the fact that Froude

never in these volumes so much as adverts to the internal administration of England during the reign of Elizabeth, nor does he notice any of the laws or events of the time unconnected with the plot of his drama. On the whole, however, Smith is well aware of the value of Froude's History, which "wants nothing in completeness to make it one of the most striking historical records in the

59 Smith, "History of England" (October 1866): 486.

60 Ibid., 479.


62 Ibid., 3.
language. He feels that Proude, having finished with Henry, has in these later volumes, "if he was less original, approached more nearly...to the higher aim of historical research - severe and simple truth."64

...he deserves the highest credit for the minuteness and extent of his historical researches, which have enabled him to add a large amount of detail to the record of events which have been incessantly canvassed for the last three hundred years.65

The outstanding merit of Proude's books lies, in Smith's view, in Proude's dramatic portrayal of characters and events. He is delighted with the figures of Cecil, Bacon, Murray, Alva and Philip, and he indicates that he is in essential agreement with Proude's characterizations of them all.66

As for the narrative itself, Smith feels that

It is not so much a picture as an historical play, in which the actors perform their several parts with a reality and truthfulness which the most graphic descriptions fail to convey.67

Writing of volumes XI and XII, and bearing in mind that they are the final ones in the History, Smith expresses a sentiment shared, no doubt, by most of Proude's readers: "The longer we travel in the company of Mr. Proude, the more unwilling we are to part from him."68

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64 Ibid. (October 1865): 476.


66 Ibid. (October 1865): 510.

67 Ibid., 511.
Among the historians of Froude's day, the chief opponents of his interpretation of the sixteenth century were members of the so-called "scientific" school of historians. These men were, like Froude, caught up in the transition from one concept of historical writing to another; they tended toward the newer approach, and found fault with Froude because they felt that his literary approach to past events necessarily represented a sacrifice of the detailed accuracy which to them was becoming all important. It is unfortunate that E.A. Freeman, the chief mouthpiece of this school, was so disposed to vitriolic attack, because a reasoned and measured debate on this development would have been most useful to subsequent historiographers. In the following passage, Freeman gives what is probably the pith of the scientific school's argument against Froude's type of history:

If history means truth, "...faithfully reporting what contemporary sources record, and drawing reasonable inferences from their statements, then Mr. Froude is no historian." 69

John Richard Green, Freeman's friend and partner in the war against Froude, made an accusation which, from the point of view of the social historian, appears a valid one. In a letter to Freeman, Green noted that Froude had "written a history of England with England left out." 70 As has been seen, other historians and critics have deplored Froude's

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69 Quoted in Ausubel et al., Modern Historians, 49.

failure to dwell in detail on internal legal, economic and social developments of the period. But in fairness to Froude it must be pointed out that the bulk of the original material on the basis of which he had been commissioned to undertake his work was of a diplomatic and primarily international character, and that Froude did not set out to write a history of life within the realm. While it is certainly true that very little has been said by him about the specific problems or life of the common Englishman, he does represent the real hero of Froude's story, the ever-reliable backbone of the nation in its march from darkness to light.

Beyond the narrow and somewhat isolated debate over historiographical trends in the mid-nineteenth century, it is interesting and worthwhile to examine ways in which Froude's interpretations have been handled in later works on the period. While time and further research have borne out many of the criticisms of early writers about his work, subsequent scholars seem to have treated Froude with relative kindness. Even as regards his work on Henry which has admittedly, in the words of a modern writer, "been rebutted"71, there are significant indications that Froude's labour over Henry may not have been entirely in vain. Waldo Dunn states that, in general, "time has been working in his [Froude's] behalf",72 and cites espec-


72 Dunn, Froude, I:3.
ially Professor A.F. Pollard's comment in 1905 that

It may be remarked, that there is inadequate justification for the systematic detraction of Froude's History which has become the fashion. He held strong views, and he made some mistakes; but these mistakes were no greater than those of other historians, and there are not half a dozen histories in the language which have been based on so exhaustive a survey of original materials.73

It must in fairness be noted that subsequent research has proved that Froude's mistakes were more serious than Professor Pollard could then have known,74 and also that his own view of Henry VIII as a "political innocent" has been superseded;75 but Pollard was a recognized authority at the time, and as such his defense of Froude is noteworthy.

Generally speaking, the historiography of Henry VIII since Froude's time has tended to establish a position somewhere between that of nineteenth-century Catholic historians and that of Froude. John Bowle wrote, in 1964:

Too many historians have portrayed Henry VIII as a monster, either of good or of evil. Both the eloquent Protestant genius of Froude, who created a father-figure for the Reformation, and the detestation of Catholic writers, provoked by the rift he made in Christendom, must give place to a cooler appraisal of an intelligible character in an intelligible situation.76

If some allowance be made for the fact that Froude (recognizing himself as something of a pioneer in the business

73 Albert Frederick Pollard, Thomas Cranmer (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1905), viii.
74 See for instance Andrew Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude" Cornhill Magazine (February 1906):251-63.
76 Ibid.
of interpreting Henry in a favourable light) was undoubtedly attempting in his books to forestall anticipated opposition, it is possible to see in his treatment, if not the foundation of a sound interpretation, at least the germination of a climate in which Henry could later be reassessed more realistically. In the early pages of his biography of Elizabeth, Sir John Keane has included some references to Henry which sound quite close to Froude's point of view. He contends, in words very similar to Froude's, that Henry "had borne with Catherine of Aragon as long as there was any hope of a prince, and in all probability would have borne with her till death if she had produced his heir."77 And, regarding the sincerity of Henry's concern about the famous 'texts in Leviticus, Neale wrote:

In an age accustomed to see the visitation of God in plague or death or in the collapse of a flimsy floor under a convenicle of heretics, it was neither hypocrisy nor undue sensitiveness in Henry to associate his wife's misfortunes with the wrath of God.78

While J.J. Scarisbrick, one modern authority on Henry VIII, never refers specifically to Froude in his work, his portrayal of Henry does tend in a number of instances to bear out Froude's views as opposed to those of earlier writers. He, too, believes that Catherine could have survived the threat of Henry's passion for Anne Boleyn had she been able to produce an heir to the throne,79 and he states further that:

77 J.E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth (London: Jonathan Cape, 1934), 14.
78 Ibid.
the divorce...was therefore due to more than a man's lust for a woman. It was diplomatically expedient and, as some judged, dynastically urgent. As well as this, it was soon to be publicly asserted, it was theologically necessary...

As to this "theological necessity", Scarisbrick's contention that Henry was genuinely self-deceived is not inconsistent with Froude's view:

More than most, he found it difficult to distinguish between what was right and what he desired. Certainly, before long he had talked, thought and read himself into a faith in the justice of his cause so firm that it would tolerate no counter-argument and no opposition, and convinced himself that it was not only his right to throw aside his alleged wife, but also his duty - to himself, to Catherine, to his people, to God.\(^{31}\)

However, Scarisbrick does not feel (as Froude does) that Anne Boleyn was unquestionably guilty, or that the verdict of the peers was necessarily an independent one. He remarks cynically that, because of Jane Seymour (whose name he first links with Henry's as early as 1534) and other reasons, "...Anne had to go. If there were nothing wrong in the marriage itself there must be something in her living of it."\(^{32}\) Scarisbrick does add, however, that "Henry, of course, believed in her infidelity."\(^{33}\)

There is, not surprisingly, no mention of the idea, voiced by Froude, that Henry's indecently hasty marriage to Jane was the result of Parliament's concern about an heir, but Scarisbrick does mention, in his discussion of Henry's third marriage, the urgency of the succession issue in the public mind.\(^{34}\) His treatment of the Reformation Parliament, moreover,

\(^{30}\) Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII*, 152.
\(^{31}\) Ibid.
\(^{32}\) Ibid., 340.
\(^{33}\) Ibid., 250.
\(^{34}\) Ibid., 350-51.
conveys a sense that, rather than bullying it into obeying his demands, Henry merely supported and encouraged an already existing feeling:

This upsurge of anticlericalism, long pent up, was immediate and spontaneous. Henry did not create it. He had no need to. He merely allowed it.

Finally, Froude's view of Henry's popularity in his own day is in no way contradicted by Scarisbrick's opinion:

Henry was a huge, consequential and majestic figure. At least for some, he was everything that a people could wish him to be.... By the end of his long reign, despite everything, he was indisputably revered, indeed, in some strange way, loved. He had raised monarchy to near-idolatry. He had become the quintessence of Englishry and the focus of swelling national pride.

In fact, when it is acknowledged that Froude was guilty of carrying his defense to extremes, the main difference between his view and this modern one seems to be of degree rather than of fact, or perhaps of a tendency too frequently to interpret Henry's motives too favorably. The most telling point against Froude's influence as an historian of Henry lies in the fact that, in Scarisbrick's extensive and scholarly bibliography of primary and secondary sources, Froude's History of England does not appear.

Among Elizabethan scholars of the twentieth century, Froude's name appears with interesting frequency, and for a variety of reasons. Hilaire Belloc, whose religious views were obviously widely divergent from Froude's, and who therefore

85 Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, 250-51.
86 LXXI, 506.
could not have agreed with his interpretations, nevertheless pays tribute to the strength of Froude's convictions and expression:

...it was the peculiar virtue of Froude that he touched nothing without the virile note of a challenge sounding throughout his prose. He chose the hardest wood in which to chisel, knowing well the strength of his hand.  

Belloc comments that "we must rejoice that there was once in modern England a man who could sum up the nature of a great movement.... He possessed to an extraordinary degree the power of synthesis."  

J.B. Black, whose book The Reign of Elizabeth forms part of The Oxford History of England, comments as follows in his lengthy bibliography:

Among modern works pride of place must be given to Froude's History, the most brilliantly written and the most complete for the period it covers...; but it requires to be checked both in fact and in inference by more recent research.  

Modern biographies of Elizabeth tend to give her considerably more credit for political sagacity than Froude was willing to do. This is certainly the case with J.E. Neale's biography, now regarded as the authoritative work on Elizabeth. Neale's extensive research has led him to justify what Froude termed unpardonable parsimony on Elizabeth's part on the basis


88Ibid., xvii.

either of economic necessity or of administrative inequities. Neale's treatment of the Scottish lords, (who, according to Froude, had been shabbily treated more than once by Elizabeth) is brief and explained simply in terms of Elizabeth's "following her own bent" and deciding for peace with Scotland. No element of betrayal is implied; it was a simple victory for Mary Stuart. Neale's account of the trial of Mary in England is brief, and once again Elizabeth is acquitted of conscious duplicity. The general approach appears to be that Elizabeth genuinely wanted to preserve Mary's life and restore her to her throne, but that her ground was necessarily uncertain because she could not divine the true humour or the trustworthiness of the Scottish lords. This of course is a direct departure from Froude's view.

On the subject of Mary Stuart's threat to the peace of England, however, Neale's account is more consistent with Froude's interpretation than might have been expected from early criticisms of the History:

After so many disappointments and so many years of captivity, she could still declare that she would not leave her prison save as Queen of England; and despite the danger into which plotting had led her, she persisted in the habit, intriguing everywhere and with everyone who could serve her interests, pledging herself to the Pope, to Philip II, to the King of France, to Elizabeth, and all simultaneously, with complete lack of scruple.

90 Neale, Queen Elizabeth, 290, 293.
91 Ibid., 136.
92 Ibid., 171.
93 Ibid., 258.
94 Ibid., 277.
Neale feels, as Froude did, that Mary Stuart's display of Catholic martyrdom was consciously contrived, and less than sincere:

She sat down to make her last appeal to the world and posterity in eloquent and impassioned letters. She was playing her last act, still without scruple. Her declarations to the Pope, though written in the solemn, confessional mood of death, are, some of them, sorry lies. And yet there was a sound instinct in the presentation of herself as a martyr for the Catholic faith. The Catholic struggle in England had been personified in her. She wanted to die in that role.94

In contrast to the impassioned tone of Froude's account of the same incident, Neale's calm and dispassionate narrative is almost unsettling. He goes on in the same tone to pass judgment on Mary's execution:

Its justification was the subsequent history of the reign. The Catholic cause lost its peculiar menace, as the obvious heir to the throne was now James of Scotland... Any reasonable hope of a Catholic rebellion in England vanished, for when it came to fighting Spaniards - as it was to do in future years - all men were Englishmen.95

These ideas, and even these words, are startlingly reminiscent of Froude. And yet there is one essential difference: while entirely in line with Froude's view of the facts and circumstances of Mary's story, Neale's account shows her, not as the incarnation of all the evils of Catholicism, but simply as a product of, and an extremely skillful participant in, an intensely charged and diplomatically unscrupulous age. Much of the excitement of Froude's narrative is missing, but Neale's work bears the stamp of the objective historian.

94Neale, Queen Elizabeth, 277.
95Ibid., 232.
While Neale never refers to Froude, in his work on Elizabeth, A.L. Rowse seems almost bound by his partisanship for the Queen to a specific rebuttal of Froude's estimate of her. He has written:

The nineteenth century... was distinctly unfavourable [to Elizabeth's memory].... We all know the monstrously unfair verdict that Froude pronounced at the end of his great book, because she did not come up to his idea of a simple Protestant heroine....

Rowse continues with his own definition of the particular type of heroism displayed by Elizabeth:

She was much too subtle for that, and had a far more difficult and intellectually exacting role to play; she was above all things a politician, determined to rule. And how she ruled, what a triumphant success she made of it!97

In spite of such eulogistic language, Rowse is able to agree with Froude that Elizabeth was "often dilatory, uncandid, obstinate, hesitant, sometimes impossible."98 But this, he avers, was due less to personal foible than to political necessity:

But sometimes it would have been fatal to precipitate a decision, and it became a habit to postpone difficult decisions. Undoubtedly she had luck, but I cannot but think that failure to appreciate her position is due to want of political understanding.99

As for charges of willful parsimony or financial mismanagement, Rowse declares:

So far from what Froude thought and many have repeated, the financial achievement of the government was among the greatest of the reign, for it was upon that that all the rest depended.100

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97 Ibid., 14.
98 Ibid., 271-72.
99 Ibid., 272.
100 Ibid., 312.
There is something in Rowse's passages on Elizabeth which faintly recalls Froude's opinion of Henry; perhaps it should be a source of gratification to know that, in these modern days of cool heads and objective assessments, passion and partisanship have not altogether vanished.

In his work, England Under the Tudors, G.R. Elton describes Elizabeth's connection with William Cecil in terms which, though ambiguous, tend to parallel Froude's in many respects:

The two had much in common. Both were by nature secular, holding religion to be a matter of conscience which need not interfere with affairs of state.... Both were naturally cautious.... Cecil's mind was eminently judicious; he could never have committed a rash act. But if in this he was rather drabber than the brilliant queen, he...was free from her besetting sin of dilatoriness and her incurable fear of responsibility. Indeed he suffered much from her...the insidious pangs of seeing things go wrong because the queen would not make up her mind.101

Elton then goes on to indicate that many of the questions long debated among historians of this reign have still to be answered: "Whether queen or minister was responsible for the great success of the reign is not at present a question we can answer. Those who should know come to different conclusions...."102

There is some indication that, among the most authoritative historians, Froude's work, if not his specific interpretations, is coming back into favour. In 1958 Neale defended

102 Ibid.
Froude against a writer who had taken pains to criticize Froude's inaccuracies of detail; Neale contended that these constitute a "venial sin." 103 As he reminds us:

In these days we hold by an exacting historical method, but it would be lamentable if that robbed us of a sense of values. Froude was a great literary artist. He felt the rhythmic possibilities of sixteenth-century prose and made occasional alterations in his quotations that lent an incomparable melody to them. 104

As for Froude's amendments, loose use of quotation marks and other lapses in matters of detail, Neale feels that

It was... the fault of another age of historians than our own, and cannot be judged fairly by recent standards. Nor is it serious, once we recognize that Froude is not to be trusted to quote his documents verbatim. 105

Mindful of Froude's more grievous faults, however, Neale writes, "...if in using his documents the historian inverts or deflects the sense, that cannot be excused. Unfortunately, Froude did...." 106 However, according to Neale, it has yet to be determined "how extensive was Froude's serious offense," 107 and the individual who successfully undertakes to do this will "have performed a valuable service." 108 The obvious implication of such a remark is that Froude's work is still of sufficient value to students of the period to make such an effort not only worth while, but "valuable".

104 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid., 86-7.
108 Ibid., 87.
Tending to corroborate this opinion is Conyers Read's entry in the 1959 edition of his Bibliography of British History, Tudor Period. Read regards Froude's History as 'the classic for the period, from the fall of Wolsey to the defeat of the Armada and one of the great masterpieces of English historical literature. Based upon very wide research in English and continental archives. Not accurate in detail and coloured throughout by a strong anti-catholic bias, but invaluable.'

Neville Williams, whose The Life and Times of Elizabeth I appeared in 1972, apparently concurs with this view; in his relatively brief select bibliography of general works on the reign, Froude's work is the first one listed, with the comment that it is 'the most detailed narrative.'

There is a final significant aspect of Froude's History which should be noted with regard to its value to the student of history: to the present time it remains 'the only detailed survey by a single hand of one of the two most critical periods in [English] history.'

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111 George Peabody Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), 313.
V. ASSESSMENT OF FROUDE'S HISTORICAL METHOD: HIS STYLE AND BIAS

No historiographical study of Froude could do justice to the subject without entering the controversial arena of his accuracy. Even a slight acquaintance with his sources indicates the validity of charges against him on this score; and a study of various critics, even those who admired him most, reveals that no one is inclined to deny them. Four significant questions are then raised. First, how could a serious student like Froude have come to be so careless? Second, to what extent do these errors actually affect the reliability of Froude's work as a whole? Third, to what extent did the particular difficulties associated with Froude's unpublished source material explain or justify such errors? And finally, is there any indication that Froude's mistakes stemmed from an intent to stretch his facts to fit his particular theories?

There were several factors in Froude's early experience which may explain his tendency to carelessness in details. The first had to do with the approach to scholarship taken by individuals under whom he studied as a boy. Of his first teacher of Greek he later wrote:

He was not accurate; but the Greeks and Trojans delighted him. He flung himself into the combats of Gods and men with as much eagerness as if he had been one of the warriors. He found in the small me a partner in his enthusiasm....before I was eleven I had read all the Iliad and the Odyssey twice over.... I was...
content to follow the story, skimming over the difficulties which my teacher perhaps had as little mastered as myself.\footnote{J.A. Froude, autobiographical fragment, quoted in Waldo Milary Dunn, James Anthony Froude, 2 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1903), I:27.}

After his dreadful experience at Westminster School, Froude was sent for a year to a tutor near Oxford who, it may be remembered, tended to foster this same inclination to a romantic appreciation of events, rather than a scholastically precise attention to details.\footnote{supra, 12.} His years at Oxford, with their personal upheavals, did little to rectify this lack in Froude's educational background. Of that period he writes, "My studies, such as they were, had no scholastic value. I read merely because I liked it, skipped over the difficulties, and paid small attention to the niceties of scholarship."\footnote{Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:48.} He was always aware of his deficiency, but apparently he learned eventually to live with it. Many years later, after the publication of a particularly critical article about his work, he wrote to his daughter, "I have to expect the worst which my own carelessness in trifles can bring upon me."\footnote{Froude to Margaret Froude, February 27, 1879. Quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:461.}

A second consideration which may have contributed to this tendency was the breadth of Froude's sphere of activity. Unlike some historians who, by choice or by temperament, isolate themselves from the shifting currents of the world around them, Froude seemed to be involved in everything: he was always actively engaged in all manner of outdoor sports, and was always
apparently aware of what his family was doing; while writing his History he was also engaged for a time as editor of Fraser's Magazine, a job which required a broad acquaintance with contemporary issues; and throughout his life he kept up a voluminous correspondence with an ever-widening circle of friends, and was always unstinting in his willingness to spend time with those who needed his help. In 1858, as the manuscripts for his third and fourth volumes were being set into type, he dashed off a letter to a friend in which he reveals something of the pace at which his life generally moved:

I put off writing till this morning, when I believed I should have a quiet hour or two. But, alas, the even toil 'does not divide the Sunday from the week'! A dose of proofs has had to be attended to, and here I am sitting down twenty minutes before dinner... Sometimes the printers go too fast, and as I am writing over... to keep pace with them, there comes a point when I feel as if I had been running up a hill. I have been only out of breath, but I have mistaken it for being done up.5

Finally, whatever deserved reputation Froude acquired for inaccuracy was damagingly compounded by his having been an approximate contemporary of Edward Augustus Freeman. For several years that exacting self-appointed judge of historical standards carried on a vituperative campaign against Froude in the columns of the Saturday Review. Though no less an authority than Conyers Read has termed Freeman's attacks "virulent and unmerited,"6 they have unquestionably done Froude's reputation considerable damage.

Shortly after Froude's death, several writers endeav-

5Froude to Cowley Powles, quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:265.
oured, in separate articles, to define and explain the nature of Froude's errors. Without exception, they were mystified. One of them attributed the difficulty to "a truly morbid proneness to misquote documents and to misconceive language," and remarked on the strange habit of inaccuracy, looseness of reference, of misquotation and misconception with which Froude has been charged. He systematically alters the punctuation, words, and phrases; drops out whole sentences, paragraphs and pages; rewrites passages in his own words, and tacks bits of passages together into new sentences.

Another writer noted a "strange perversion of authorities" and a "marvellous transformation which a statement often undergoes during its passage from the original writer to Froude's pages."

Andrew Lang, a third critic, who had studied Froude's sources thoroughly, comments more specifically:

Comparison with his history proves that the transcript [Froude's own] of the Spanish original document may be right, when Mr. Froude's quotation from it is all wrong. We may conjecture that he did not always compare his history in manuscript or in print, with the transcripts... or with the original papers... hence arose the mistakes into which he certainly fell more frequently than any other historian of his calibre. He had an unfortunate habit of publishing, between marks of quotation, his own resume of the document. In doing so he would leave out, with no marks of omission, passages which he thought irrelevant, but which might be all-important to the sense.

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8Ibid., 383.
10Andrew Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude", Cornhill Magazine (February 1906): 254.
A most interesting example is cited as indicative of the way in which apparent trifles can lead to a serious, if unintentional, misrepresentation of the facts as they actually occurred. "In one case," Lang avers, "Mr. Froude caused a very grave scandal about Queen Elizabeth:

He printed a letter from the Spanish Ambassador..., heading it... 'September 1550'. Mr. Froude then left out a large part of the letter, with no indication of omission, and made the writer say 'on the third of this month' - September - 'the Queen', Elizabeth, said so-and-so. "After my conversation with the Queen', Cecil spoke to the ambassador about Lord Robert Dudley's design to poison or otherwise take off his wife, Amy Robsart. We necessarily presume this talk of Cecil's to be of September 3 or 4. 'The day after this conversation',...say September 5, 'the Queen told me that Lord Robert's wife was dead, or nearly so, and begged me to say nothing about it.'

The inferences of these remarks, dated as it would seem so early in the month, are grave indeed for Elizabeth:

...Amy died, by murder or accident, on September 8, so here is Elizabeth telling the Spanish Ambassador that Amy is dead just a day or two before Amy's neck was broken, and the day after Cecil has announced that Amy is to be killed... The natural inference is that Elizabeth had guilty foreknowledge of a murder.12

However, says Lang, "The idea is false,"13 and he goes on to lay the responsibility for our serious misconception entirely at Froude's door:

Mr. Froude had left out much of de Feria's [the ambassador's] letter without telling us of the omission. He had introduced into it part of a passage of a much earlier letter, and when the Spaniard said 'on

11Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude", 255-56.
12Ibid., 256.
13Ibid.
the third of last month' (August), he mistranslated the words 'on the third of this month' (September). Thus good Queen Bess is brought under strong suspicion, which could have been easily avoided had Mr. Froude compared the Spaniard's letter afresh with his own printed version of it. The transcript of the original Spanish letter, in Mr. Froude's possession, was correct; his printed version of it was oddly incorrect.\textsuperscript{14}

The tone of these last two sentences indicates clearly that Froude is under no suspicion whatever of deliberate misrepresentation. This is borne out by other instances where his mistakes have militated directly against his own theories. Near the turn of the century, a writer claimed that he once detected, in a preface of Mr. Froude's to a book with which the introducer was thoroughly in sympathy, repeated errors of quotation or allusion which actually weakened Mr. Froude's own argument - cases where he made his own case worse by miscitation.... There is probably no historian of anything like his calibre in the whole history of literature who is so dangerous to trust for mere matters of fact, who gives such bad books of reference, who is so little to be read with implicit confidence in detail.\textsuperscript{15}

An additional contributing factor to this strange inclination of Froude's may have been the fact that he wrote his History of England during a period which might be called a crossroads of historical research. This was noted by a contemporary reviewer of Froude's History, who commented as follows upon the phenomenon as he recognized it and upon the grave difficulties it presented to the historian:

We are...inclined to cut the gordon knot by asserting that the age of complete histories of great modern nations is past, and that we must expect henceforward to deal with detailed monographs and summary dissertations. .... The historic fanta-

\textsuperscript{14}Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude", 256.

sies' of the public mind are at present, at least, too self-conflicting to be easily blended in an authoritative canon.

We want, in fact, in easy combination, a well-indexed dictionary of facts, a judiciously-harmonized gallery of ancient and modern pictures, and a systematized code of political and social morality. While we make these great demands of the historian, we do not give him even the chance of approval which he might derive from unity of opinion and wishes among his censors. We have ceased to have a national creed on the prominent events of our history. 16

The research of a modern historian has proved this contemporary observation to have been an accurate one:

The age of the great multi-volumed narratives by individual historians has passed; Froude, Macaulay, Stubbes [sic] and Gardiner were nineteenth-century giants.... In the twentieth century historical analysis has shaped our understanding of Tudor history far more than narrative synthesis. Single-volume texts emphasizing interpretation have replaced the great narratives because professional historians have recognized the need for progress reports on their own efforts to rebuild historical foundations. 17

Froude was thus chronologically in a position very difficult for an historian, particularly for one of his particular talents. The nature of the material with which he was so gratuitously provided ensured that he would attempt to base his work upon an unprecedented mass of unpublished and uncatalogued documents; at the same time, his own nature and his unusual talent for writing made "narrative synthesis" the inevitable manner of his presentation of his material. One


modern specialist in historiography has noted that "Froude closes the age of the amateurs." Because of the nature of his material, it might as fairly be said that he attempted to open the age of the professionals. In this ambiguous position, he faced the combined demands of the reading public and of the critical historians, a dilemma which might have confounded even a more exacting scholar than himself. Andrew Lang, whose judgment of Froude's errors must be considered as well-founded as any, has noted the particular difficulties he faced:

The popular historian must be as free from uncertainties and hesitations as Macaulay. It does not matter if he is fair or not; whether he is accurate or not does not signify.

The professors, on the other hand, ask for scientific history. You must read, mark and copy out on cards every scrap of manuscript bearing on your period. You must brood over these cards, and subject them to a process by which all human interest in human beings of the period is exhausted. Your accuracy must be meticulous and you must not be humourous, or eloquent, or pathetic, or sympathetic, while you must shun being readable as you would the devil. No man can serve these two masters—the public and the professors.

Froude endeavoured to serve both these masters, the one by his unsurpassed narrative style and zest for adventure; and the other by what Lang calls his "conscientious enterprise, an enterprise so long deferred by the indolence of his predecessors." It is perhaps inevitable that he fell into so many inaccuracies of detail; it was certainly inevitable that he would be severely criticized for having done so.

18 George Peabody Gooch, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), 316.

19 Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude", 251.

20 Ibid., 261.
One modern writer has made the interesting observation that even in the pages of the History itself it is possible to note the effects of this transitional environment:

Iironically, Froude’s use of evidence did in a sense become more scientific as his narrative proceeded. He relied increasingly on source materials and on growing supplies of them. He worked prodigiously in the public records... and the British Museum, and among the Spanish archives in Simancas.

Even as Froude was working, the manner of writing history was turning from the literary to the academic. The growing documentation of his last volumes reflects it, and his reception in Oxford when he returned there as professor in 1892 symbolizes it. The young don who had been rejected because of his ideas was brought back because of his facts....

The nature and availability of his original source materials had much to do with the finished History as produced by Froude. As has been seen, the State Papers of the period were just being made available for the use of students. The efforts to organize the vast accumulation of documents had been under way for over a century. Between 1725 and 1800 Collectors and Transmitters of the Papers were appointed; during the second half of the eighteenth century appointments were made to an additional office of Methodizer of the Papers and Records. But problems inevitably arose:

The ostensible object of the new system, namely to ensure the regular transmission of the contents of the Secretaries’ Offices to the Paper Office, seems to have been completely lost sight of at an early date. The practical effect of the change was that the Transmitter’s Office, which became the headquarters of the

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'Methodizers', got possession only of such modern papers as were spontaneously transmitted to them, and transmitted these when required for reference to the ministers of the Crown, by whom they were not in all cases returned.\(^{22}\)

The system was obviously in need of reorganization, and by 1830 Record Commissioners had been appointed, and their first Report on the Record Commissions and re-organization of the State Paper Office was published in that year. "The amalgamation of the State Papers with the Records in 1848 was completed in 1852 by the transfer of the whole collection to the Rolls Office."\(^{23}\)

The Keeper of the Records at the Rolls House, Sir Francis Palgrave, contacted Froude through John Parker at some time during this period to say that Froude might make use of "a large collection of copies of documents, hitherto unpublished and unknown, which were then at the Chapter House at Westminster."\(^{24}\) In addition, Robert Lemon was in the process of editing a series of the State Papers of Henry VIII, to which Froude was also to have access. After examining the lot, Froude felt that he would have within his hands sufficient substance with which to produce a worth-while work on the period. Palgrave's papers appeared of particular value. Froude discovered that:

\(^{22}\)Hubert Hall, Studies in English Official Historical Documents (New York: Burt Franklin, 1908), 41.

\(^{23}\)Ibid., 121-22.

\(^{24}\)Autobiographical Fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:175.
They referred to the opening years of the English Reformation, to the late administration of Wolsey, and to the action of the Parliament which was called upon the great Cardinal's fall. They threw a new and vivid light on the political features of the time which had been hitherto the most obscure.

With the help of these, I decided that I could go on and produce a book which would be worth writing.25

The reference to "copies of documents" raises the question of the actual nature of the material with which Froude had to work. Such copies could have been made anywhere from the early sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, and the difficulty of their transcription for Froude would have been proportionate to the age of the copy. Obviously, if he were supplied with recently prepared manuscripts, on sheets of new paper, his job would have been relatively easy and his capacity for mistake minimized. If, on the other hand, he had to struggle with papers actually three hundred years old, and written in the hand and characters of the sixteenth century (blurred by age and often made nearly illegible by damage from fire and dampness), his task would have been monumental indeed and his tendency to error more explicable. Although it seems that Froude has nowhere specifically cleared up this riddle for the twentieth-century reader, there are several indications in his writings and those of his biographers and critics that the latter conditions were more often than not the case. Froude makes many references in the footnotes of his History to "MSS badly damaged by fire", etc., which would seem to indicate familiarity with original documents; but in fact they do not actually prove this, because it is to be assumed that any worthwhile modern

25 Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn; Froude, I:175.
copy would have included this type of information, which would accordingly have been incorporated into Froude's note.

Certainly the information available to Froude was not the object of immediate and popular appeal to other historians, for, as one modern writer points out:

...before World War I relatively few historians actually spent much time working their way through the bundles of parchment and paper in the Public Records Office.26

While there may have been many reasons for this, it seems likely that no easy path had been beaten out by translators, palaeographers and editors for the casual student.

Froude's own comments on his research are ambiguous on this point, probably because he felt such details either were unimportant or were common knowledge, but his casual comments do give some hints that he may have been familiar with the originals themselves. In 1874 he wrote, at least half in jest, to his daughter Margaret, "I wish I knew whether Sir Thomas Hardy meant to resign the Keepership of the Rolls.... Dizzy would perhaps give me that if I asked for it."27 While not to be taken seriously, such a remark might indicate that Froude felt himself qualified for the job. While working on Carlyle's reminiscences, he is said to have commented that Carlyle's handwriting during the last years of his life "became harder to decipher than the worst manuscript I have

26 Pussner, Tudor History, 51.
27 Quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:339.
ever examined, indicating that he must have examined some pretty bad ones at some time. On occasion, while doing re-
search, he wrote to friends mentioning that he had made copies of certain passages of particular interest to them, but this again proves nothing, for Froude's copy might simply have been made from another modern copy. He does make the remark in the Preface to the first complete edition of his History that "I have only this to say in my defense, that nine-tenths of the materials which I have used are in manuscript, and therefore difficult of access."  

Herbert Paul has made several references to the serious and determined approach to research made by Froude. He notes, rather startlingly, that "none of his mistakes were due to carelessness," and adds, "They proceeded rather from the multitude of the documents he studied and the self-reliance which led him to dispense with all external aid." Elsewhere he writes, "no historian ever prepared himself more thoroughly for his task than Froude." And again:

Every chapter bears ample proof of laborious study. Froude neglected no source of information, and spared himself no pains in the pursuit of it.... Nine-tenths of his authorities were in manuscript. They were in five languages. They filled nine hundred volumes. Excellent linguist that he was, Froude could hardly avoid falling into some errors.... He kept no secretary, he was his own copyist, and he was not a good proof-reader.

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28 Paul, Life of Froude, 333.
29 Quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:313.
30 Paul, Life of Froude, 113.
31 Ibid., 67.
32 Ibid., 78-9.
Paul's admission that Froude "was not a good proof-reader" may well come closest to the heart of this riddle. It can, of course, be argued that from an overwhelming mass of new and wholly unorganized material Froude was, after all, looking for the makings of a good story and might naturally therefore be less concerned with the fine details of punctuation and proper marks of omission while transcribing his own copies from the originals. Such an argument is unquestionably strengthened by the passionate nature of Froude's approach to the sixteenth century in general; and these factors do account for a plausible explanation of discrepancies between the originals and Froude's own copies. On the other hand, however, there remains Andrew Lang's contention that most of the mistakes occurred, not in the original transcription from the archival material, but between Froude's copy and his manuscript or between his manuscript and the final printed version. It seems most likely then that, having made his copies accurately in the first place, Froude became caught up both by the excitement and pace of his own narrative as he was writing it and by the demands of the printers that he meet their schedule, and that therefore he failed to check, or at least to check carefully, the details of his story as he had set it down. The explanation would seem quite consistent both with Froude's own temperament and with the conditions under which he was writing; but if these damning errors could have been all but omitted by the simple device of employing a competent proof-reader, it seems a tragic waste of the reputation of an apparently creditable scholar.
At any rate, Waldo Dunn corroborates Paul's testimony to Froude's laborious research:

In historical work, he employed no assistants. He himself read and copied thousands of manuscripts, many of them almost illegible, some in cipher to which he had to discover the key. He made his own translations of such things as the dialogues of Lucian and the letters of Erasmus.33

Both Paul and Dunn seem to have written their biographies with the intent to do for Froude something of what Froude had done for Henry, and their spirited defense of him often borders on idolatry; still, there is no reason to assume any falsification of facts in either case, and their remarks indicate clearly the Herculean nature of the task performed by their hero. A less interested account of the difficulties, and probably the most conclusive of all, is given by Andrew Lang, who, as has been seen, had made himself well acquainted with Froude's source material:

His industry was colossal, and he worked not by means of our new printed copies of State Papers (not always to be trusted) but among manuscripts, English, French, Scots, Latin, Spanish, written in the most nefarious of all known forms of handwriting - that of the sixteenth century.... Permitted by the Spanish Government to read the documents in their archives, papers ugly and dusty and difficult,...and having access to the secrets of Cecil's manuscripts at Hatfield, and with the Record office and British Museum open to him, Mr. Froude was behind the scenes of Queen Elizabeth's reign as no historian had ever been. His diligence is not to be questioned.34

With this unanimous testimony to his diligence, we must leave the subject; the question of why so careful and

33 Dunn, Froude, I:4.
34 Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude", 252.
thorough an historian was so prone to obvious mistakes must remain something of a mystery. It should be noted, however, that in preparation for this paper, I compared with corresponding letters in the Calendar of State Papers (Foreign) every footnote in the seventh volume of Froude's History for which such a letter was available; in upwards of two hundred such comparisons I found numerous minor errors - one or two words out of order, or reference to a date which was off by one or two days - but only one instance where Froude's inaccurate rendering materially altered the sense of the documents as shown in the Calendar, and that one instance was a change not necessarily consistent with Froude's own thesis. And this comparison was based on the assumption, not necessarily correct, that in every case where two accounts differed, Froude's was the wrong one. Although these errors are unfortunate and not to be passed over lightly, they seem generally to have been matters of detail only and not sufficient in themselves to render Froude untrustworthy on matters of fact.

35This particular instance involves a correspondence between the Earl of Pembroke and the Duc DeVendome in November-December, 1558, regarding the possibility of a separate and secret peace being negotiated between France and England. Any such peace would have constituted treachery on the part of England, which was bound by treaty not to conclude peace without the concurrence and approval of her ally, Spain. It is noted in the Preface to the Calendar of State Papers (Foreign), Vol.II, that "Pembroke opened the correspondence by a letter of which no copy has been discovered, but the general import of which may be ascertained from the reply which it elicited." In the reply, dated December 3, 1558 (State Papers I:63, p.20) the Duc thanks him (Pembroke) for his good intentions and offices in promoting a peace between the two realms, in which he asks him to persevere. Froude seems to have missed, or perhaps not have had access to, evidence of Pembroke's original letter; his rendering of the story (History of England VII:31-33) indicates that these secret negotiations were initiated by Henry of France rather than by the English. In light of Froude's
Froude has frequently been criticized not only for his use or handling of primary source material, but for his choice of secondary material. His unquestioning reliance on Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* is probably the most notorious example, but it may perhaps be argued here that he was only doing what all "amateur historians" since the time of the Reformation had done in writing from their particular side of the argument, and that Froude's use of Foxe was probably not much worse than Lingard's use of Nicholas Saunders, with which Froude himself had earlier found fault.\(^{36}\)

Froude's decision to accept without question the authenticity of the Casket Letters has also been a source of condemnation, and it does seem that in this regard he allowed himself to be overly swayed by his biases, and particularly by his absolute conviction that Mary Stuart was "a bad woman".\(^{37}\) However, it might be pointed out in Froude's defense that the question of the Casket Letters' true origin has never been conclusively cleared up, and that Froude acknowledged their controversial character in his text and gave a full and detailed account of subsequent and vehement passages condemning Elizabeth for treachery on later occasions, there is no reason to feel that Froude had anything to gain by blaming the French in this particular case. The mistake may therefore be considered innocent, though a sufficient oversight to alter the sense of the narrative. It does give a good indication, however, of the complexities of detail with which Froude was involved, and it would be an exemplary historian indeed who could assert with truth that in such circumstances he would have been entirely free from error.


his own reasons for having elected to accept them. 38

Among the secondary sources of which Froude made
the most extensive use in his History are the Cotton Manu-
scripts, Stow's Chronicle, and Camden's History. In his book,
The Historical Revolution, F. Smith Fussner has taken great pains
to acknowledge the scholastic integrity of each of these men,
and hence to endorse them as reliable sources for subsequent
historical scholars. Of Sir Robert Cotton he has written:

He must surely have impressed those who knew him
well as a conscientious scholar, who respected evi-
dence, and who was not the slave of other men's opin-
ions.... Cotton was able to further the cause of
scholarship precisely because he knew how to administer
his library professionally.... 39

Although "in all matters of religion, Cotton was an Erastian, who
put his trust in rational principles...," 40 and could perhaps
on that basis be considered to have furthered Froude's own
prejudices, Fussner relates an incident which would seem to
offset such criticism:

Edmund Bolton, the Catholic historian and poet,
write to Cotton to solicit his favour; and, in prais-
ing Cotton's generosity, observed truly enough, that
'we that are privy to the truth of things, do also
know that without your assistance it is vain to pre-
tend to weighty work in the antiquities of this kingdom.' 41

Fussner does not hesitate to attribute the same degree
of reliability to the work of Stow. He observed that "Stow was
too careful a historian to make statements that he did not think

39F. Smith Fussner, The Historical Revolution (New York:
40Ibid., 137.
41Ibid., 143.
he could prove with sound evidence, "42 and declared that, "It has been shown that Stow realized that facts must be established, that they do not exist simply because one finds them in so-called authorities."43 In addition, "Stow was an intelligent observer, with a trained eye for detail."44 Fussner pays tribute to his scholarly detachment on religious matters as well:

Stow's interests were secular, notwithstanding the fact that he had a simple and dignified religious faith, which seems to have made him tolerant of all decent men. He was intolerant only of those who practised intolerance in the name of zeal for religion.45

Finally:

The fact that Camden and Dugdale and countless other good historians turned to Stow for enlightenment, and depended upon him for particular facts should dispel the notion (if it is still held) that Stow was a mere compiler and arranger of antiquarian notes.46

In the case of William Camden, Fussner admits to a greater degree of partiality, acknowledging that "what Camden could not do...was to rid himself of his preconceptions,"47 but notes nevertheless his value to students of the period:

[Camden] accepted the moral, political and religious assumptions upon which the Elizabethan state was founded. Whoever wants to understand those assumptions will want to read with care Camden's historical works.48

Although it may be that, in the interests of true im-

42 Fussner, The Historical Revolution, 218.
43 Ibid., 223.
44 Ibid., 248.
46 Ibid., 228-29.
47 Ibid., 231.
partiality, Froude could have used other sources and given less credence to some that he did use, probably the worst that can be said about him in this regard is that he was a product of his times. Certainly in one sense he was following a line of research highly commended by at least one eminent twentieth-century scholar:

Interpretations and theories of a past period, in the long run, will not be judged by their agreement with our preferences or with those of like-minded persons, but in their accordance with the available texts and documents of the period which we are trying to describe. 50

Of the notorious battle (if such a word is appropriate for so one-sided a conflict) between Freeman and Froude, little need be said. No reputable authority on English history can be found today who will justify Mr. Freeman's attack on Froude; and the very fact that Froude tended throughout the lengthy episode to ignore the whole thing is evidence that it really amounted to very little. 50 It is perhaps fair to Mr. Freeman, however, to note that, though allowances must be made for his particular temperament, he genuinely believed that his attacks were justified; in fact, had he been able better to control himself, he might have provided very useful criticism, for his remarks, how-


50 The extremes to which Freeman's almost apoplectic temper about Froude led him are almost comically pointed out in the following extract from "Last Words on Mr., Froude", quoted by Waldo Dunn (Froude, II:462): "Mr. Froude's way of quoting is so reckless that, even when he is right, he looks as if he were wrong. I have therefore to confess that, in one case, I thought he was wrong when he turned out to be right; but I also submit that he had done his very best to look as if he were wrong...."
ever exaggerated, were not without foundation. An article written the year after Froude's death discusses the controversy in an objective manner, and makes reference to Freeman's "warm sympathies and strenuous love of right, which, however warped in their action by prejudices, invariably underlay [his] views."\(^{51}\) The writer notes as well, however, a "curious mixture of wide learning and great mental activity with an almost total indifference to many sides of human life and thought,"\(^{52}\) which led to an "inability to see that a man may fail on one point and yet not be unscrupulous on all."\(^{53}\) Thus, he feels,

...the whole constitution of Freeman's mind rendered him unfit to do justice to Froude. To Freeman, subtlety of any kind, whether in the good or the bad sense of the word, was repellent... and a complex mind like Froude's, with its curious mixture of cynicism and earnestness, scepticism and enthusiasm, was to him a sealed book.

Nor were Froude's special merits - the careful arrangement and just proportion of his work, his keen sense of the need of making his story an artistic whole - qualities which Freeman could duly appreciate.\(^{54}\)

Freeman's sincerity, however, and the essential correctness of his view, are not to be doubted, for he was

rightly or wrongly, endeavouring to expose a habit of mind and a method of dealing with authorities, which must, in its very essence and nature be the parent of errors... it is difficult to read any extensive portion of Froude's work, where one is acquainted with original authorities, and not feel that, if references are to be thus used, we should be better without references at all. Probably... Froude would have admitted that... What a historian should give his readers [Froude might have said] is not accuracy of detail, but truthfulness of impression.\(^{55}\)

\(^{51}\)Doyle, "Freeman, Froude and Seeley", 281.
\(^{52}\)Ibid., 282.
\(^{53}\)Ibid., 286.
\(^{54}\)Ibid., 297.
\(^{55}\)Ibid., 297-99.
Central to the basic differences between Freeman and Froude is the whole question of truth and of the historian's responsibility to maintain it in all aspects of his work. Historical accuracy is one thing; it is a skill which may be learned and developed through practice and through attention to detail. Historical truth is an altogether different thing, having to do with ethics and morals, and even more particularly with the conscious or unconscious devotion of an author to certain ideals far more general than the actual period about which he is writing. It has been shown that for various reasons, excusable or otherwise, Froude's historical accuracy was curiously underdeveloped. No one, however, not even his worst enemies, has ever accused him of deviation from a sense of historical truth as he saw it.

Perhaps in nothing were Froude and Carlyle more closely united than in their firm conviction that, above everything else, a man must be honest with himself. Throughout his life Froude repeatedly made his own path more difficult by adhering to what he felt was right rather than to what was accepted or popular. The two most significant examples of this, and the two directly responsible for the most troubled periods of his life, were his resignation of his Fellowship and Deacon's Orders in 1849, and his decision in his later years to tell the world exactly what kind of man Thomas Carlyle had been. Froude "was not a man to be put down by clamour. He was sustained by the fervour of his convictions."56 Those who knew him well stress not only the

56 Paul, Life of Froude, 209.
fervour, but the absolute sincerity of those convictions.

John Skelton has written of him,

He had a very high standard of right and wrong.
He hated all shams, religious, literary, political.
The casuistry of the rhetoricians, the sophisticated
make-believe of the worldly ecclesiastic, he could
not abide....

But he was at least equally demanding of himself in this re-
gard. As Skelton recalls,

I honestly believe that he never penned a line
which, so far as he was concerned, the world was not
welcome to read. His opinions might change - as they
no doubt did; but he wrote always with the most abso-
lute sincerity.

Andrew Lang, even while commenting on the confusing in-
accuracies which mar Froude's _History_, reminds us that Froude
placed copies of his numerous extracts from the Spanish Archives
in the British Museum "as a guarantee of his good faith (which
no sane man can doubt)...."

In fact, it was this very dedication to his own sense
of what was right which has paradoxically given rise to the
charges of bias which will forever cling to his name. This dif-
ficulty adheres in some degree to every historian, as a modern
historiographer has pointed out:

Every historian makes use of some theory of ex-
planation or causation, even though he may never state
it explicitly, or attempt to defend it. Nevertheless,
every historian, at nearly every stage of his inquiry

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57 John Skelton, _The Table-Talk of Shirley_ (Edinburgh:
William Blackwood & Sons, 1895), 121.

58 Ibid., 123.

59 Lang, "Freemøn vs. Froude", 254.
must decide what is relevant to his purposes, and such
decisions will reflect in part the psychological and
intellectual biography of the historian.\textsuperscript{60}

This automatically leads to a paradox, as this same writer
explains:

The paradox of historical method is that it does
not compel agreement. In order to reach agreement a-
bout the causes of any event, historians must be able
to agree on what is and what is not relevant evidence,
and relevant theory. The empirical evidence of docu-
ments cannot by itself compel such philosophical agree-
ment. That is why the history of historical method must
take into account the beliefs and attitudes of the indi-
vidual historian with regard to ultimate philosophical
and religious assumptions.\textsuperscript{61}

With specific reference to the period with which Froude
dealt, it has been noted,

These divergent views \[between Catholic and Protes-
tant\] are mainly the result of presupposed ideas, either
political or religious, that have directed the writing of
the history of Elizabeth and her times.\textsuperscript{62}

Of Froude's presupposed ideas no reader of his History
can have any doubt. As Herbert Paul has written, "From a con-
escientious obedience to truth as he understood it, and a resolute
determination to present it as he saw it, he never wavered."\textsuperscript{63}
Waldo Dunn quotes with approval the following indication of
Froude's unwavering convictions in this regard:

'The human intellect', he wrote in 1881 'will
never voluntarily part with truth which has once
been communicated. It hates lies which come to it
armed with terror in the place of argument.'\textsuperscript{64}

\textsuperscript{60}Fussner, \textit{Historical Revolution}, xx.
\textsuperscript{61}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63}Paul, \textit{Life of Froude}, 79.
\textsuperscript{64}Froude, "The Oxford Counter-Reformation", quoted in Dunn, \textit{Froude}, I:10.
There have been others, however, who see such conviction as a less than desirable quality in the intellectual makeup of an historian:

His [Froude's] whole treatment...is saturated with statements of what he thinks about the facts. It is impossible to unite coherent history of great movements without some 'theory'; and Froude avows that he begins his history with a theory, works it out with a theory, and concludes with a theory....few historians have ever laid down theories of characters and events in more emphatic lines, or have laboured more zealously to defend them.**

Coming to his work as he did with his preconceptions so clearly defined, Froude ran straight into a paradox. On the one hand, he was wholly committed to his own conception of truth and right; but on the other, he was broad enough in his outlook to be fully awake to, and in fairness it must be said tolerant of, those who genuinely held differing beliefs: In attempting to explain Froude's position in such a dilemma, Herbert Paul writes, "Froude was an ardent lover of truth, and desired nothing so much as to tell it. But it must be the truth as perceived by him, not as it might appear to others."** Then, as if in an effort to substantiate Froude's position, Paul quotes in a footnote from Newman's Grammar of Assent:

Shall we say that there is no such thing as truth or error, but that anything is true to a man which he troweth? and not rather that 'truth there is, and attainable it is, but that its rays stream in upon us through the medium of our moral as well as our intellectual being?'**

**Harrison, "Historical Method of Froude", 381-22.
**Paul, Life of Froude, 111.
**Ibid., 111n.
Precisely because of his deep convictions and almost painful sincerity, this whole concept of absolute and relative truth was a matter of great complexity in Froude's mind, and led to an apparent inconsistency of thought. Charles Kingsley's daughter, known best by her pen-name of Lucas Malet, sensed the roots of this inconsistency. In endeavouring to describe her famous uncle, she wrote that he was a man apparently contradictory, almost inconsistent, because of his profound reverence for essential truth, and unsparing effort to arrive at it. Ironic toward opinions and toward the appearance of human actions, because he realized the immense variety of possibilities surrounding everything we say and think, or think we think, and everything we do.58

As an historian, Froude seems on occasion to become almost hopelessly entangled in his conflicting approaches to truth, and consequently he often seems to be arguing against himself. On the absolute side, he "could not be indifferent to the moral side of historical questions, or accept the doctrine that every one is right from his own point of view." 69 He insisted that

One lesson, and only one, history may be said to repeat with distinctness; that is that the world is built somehow on moral foundations; that in the long run, it is well with the good; in the long run it is ill with the wicked.70

And again that

No one can thrive upon denials: positive truth of some kind is essential as food both for mind and charac-

58 Quoted in Dunn, Froude, I:ix.
69 Paul, Life of Froude, 399.
ter. Depend upon it that in all long-established practices or spiritual formulas there has been some living truth.... The eternal truths and rights of things exist, fortunately, independent of our thoughts and wishes, fixed as mathematics, inherent in the nature of man and the world. They are no more to be trifled with than gravitation.71

And yet, he was at the same time almost painfully aware of the difficulty of ascertaining any absolute truth from historical facts as transmitted from one age to another. It was, no doubt, on this basis that he feared and opposed the concept of a science of history. He perceived clearly that facts "come to us through the minds of those who recorded them, neither machines nor angels, but fallible creatures, with human passions and prejudices."72 He goes on to elaborate his concern in his oft-quoted analogy:

It often seems to me as if History was like a child's box of letters, with which we can spell any word we please. We have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those which do not suit our purposes.73

Quite early in his life he had become aware of this difficulty in arriving at some sense of absolute truth, and there is an air of disillusionment in his observation that

Even ordinary history, except mere annals, is all more or less fictitious; that is, the facts are related, not as they really happened, but as they appeared to the writer; as they happened to illustrate his values or support his principles.74


73Ibid., 1.

Even in the pages of his History, Froude continues to wrestle with the complexities of this dilemma, and to give an indication of what he feels, after all, the historian's solution must be:

The philosophy of history which resolves events into the action of organic and necessary laws, conceals from us the perplexities of the living instruments by which these events were brought about. We see what actually happened; we imagine that we discern the causes which determined the effects; and, in assuming a necessary connection between them, we smile at the needless fears, we ridicule the needless precautions, of kings and ministers.... By a subtle process of intellectual injustice, we connect the after-experience of facts into principles of reasoning which would have enabled us to foresee those facts....

'Knowledge of the result, a wise man once observed, 'has spoilt the composition of history.' A just moral appreciation of conduct is made impossible by it. The remedy, so far as there is a remedy, is to look wherever we can through the eyes of contemporaries.75

If any historian has ever sought to look through the eyes of contemporaries, it was Froude. This was, no doubt, partly a result of natural excitement over the discovery of so much material written in the words of his dramatis personae themselves, but it was also a result of Froude's particular conception of what good history ought to be. He felt that the essence of history was to be found in good drama, and for his inspiration he looked to Shakespeare's history plays, where, he claimed, 'the most perfect English history which exists is to be found.' By this he meant that Shakespeare kept near to the facts as he found them, letting the characters speak as the chronicles said they

had spoken, and did not try to moralize or philosophize about the deeds he was narrating.\textsuperscript{76}

Froude stated this conception clearly in his own words:

> Whenever possible, let us not be told about this man or that. Let us hear the man himself speak; let us see him act, and let us be left to form our own opinions about him. The historian, we are told, must not leave his readers to themselves. He must not only lay the facts before them - he must tell them what he himself thinks about those facts. In my opinion this is precisely what he ought not to do.\textsuperscript{77}

In the preface to his History, he explains that he has tried to adhere to his standard:

> I have desired to enable my readers to form their own opinions rather than to intrude mine upon them; and I have allowed the principal actors, therefore, to unfold their characters and motives in their own language.\textsuperscript{78}

While it could hardly be said that Froude consistently refrained from intruding his opinions upon his readers, or from telling them what he thought about the facts, probably no historian has been more conscientious in setting before his readers the facts as expressed in the words of the men and women of the sixteenth century. To this desire may be traced his excessive zeal for quoting at great length extracts from letters, a practice criticized by many. But that his intentions in this regard were not beyond the province of good historical

\textsuperscript{76}Hale, British Historiography, 53.

\textsuperscript{77}Froude, Short Studies on Great Subjects, II:29.

\textsuperscript{78}Quoted in Dunn, Froude, II:313.
writing is shown in the following observation by a specialist in historiography:

The past offers little escape or refuge from the present; it is the reality of a once-present life that forms the subject matter of history. The great writers of history have been creators and artificers, not merely recorders and clerks for bygone generations.79

Froude was unquestionably at his best when dealing with individual human actions. It is his depiction of character which gives life to his works. As one writer has correctly pointed out about the History, "The chapters on economic and social life are not well fused with the rest."80

This is particularly true of the first chapter of the History (devoted to a general discussion of the Middle Ages), which is as night to day when compared with the rest of his work, precisely because he is dealing not with people but with generalities.

Certainly Froude's dramatic portrayal received full support from the nature of the events which shaped the period with which he was concerned. For the dramatist, the sixteenth century was made to order. As an early reviewer of the History wrote,

His subject has all the importance of a grand national crisis, in which the strongest influences which affect humanity were struggling for the mastery. It was an age of great men, of quickened thought and expanded intelligence.81

79 Fussner, Historical Revolution, xiii.
81 Margaret Oliphant, "Mr. Froude and Queen Mary", Blackwood's 107 (January 1870), 105.
Of course, no one sensed this more clearly than Froude, or viewed its possibilities with more excitement. This excitement is revealed in his remarks to a friend regarding the culminating events of his narrative:

The concentrated interest of the reign lies in the period now under my hands. It is all action. I shall use my materials badly if I cannot make it as interesting as a novel. 82

Few historians have been so endowed with the ability to supplement contemporary accounts with their own intuitive grasp of character. It has been noted by one writer that

Mr. Froude had...a remarkable gift of seeing vividly at a glance, and of describing lucidly a wide and complicated situation in European politics.... In the drawing of characters, many of them extraordinary results of the political and religious welter, Mr. Froude was at once skilful and laborious. We may differ from his verdicts now and again, but his are living portraits. 83

An outstanding element of Froude's dramatic narrative, one that is immediately evident to the reader, is that it is never forced. While he may have laboured long and hard over the acquisition and arrangement of his facts, his capacity to portray those facts was as natural to him as breathing:

An artist he could not help being, for it was in his blood. Once his fingers grasped the pen, they began instinctively to draw a picture. ...when he had studied a period he saw it in a series of moving scenes as the figures passed along the stage. 84

There has perhaps been a tendency, particularly among Froude's contemporaries who favoured the "scientific" approach

83 Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude", 252-53.
84 Paul, Life of Froude, 93.
to history, to underestimate the value of good narrative to historical writing. But not all men, in the nineteenth century as in the twentieth, have been aware that, to be of any general value at all, a work of history must live in the minds of its readers. In this area Froude is unsurpassed.

It was not just the excellence of his style - easy, supple, colorful without ever becoming turgid - but the range of his story and the directness with which he brought it home to the reader which prompted so critical a man as Leslie Stephen to say, '...if I want to know something of the Elizabethan period, I can nowhere find so vivid and interesting a narrative.'

Whatever else the critics may have said about Froude, they are unanimous in praise of his style. As with his grasp of the dramatic and his ability to delineate character, this was not a contrived art but a wholly natural talent. John Skelton, a close friend for many years, who was in frequent correspondence with him, pays tribute to this:

He wrote with surprising ease; and the sunshine or storm of the moment was reflected in his letters as in a glass. His 'verbal magic' was not an accomplishment but a natural grace; Carlyle might hammer away painfully at his Frederick in the Valley of the Shadow, but Froude, however lofty or however lowly the theme, was never embarrassed; and the rhythmical rise and fall, the musical flow, of his written words was as noticeable in familiar epistle as in finished 'study'.

Much of Froude's early popularity at least was due almost entirely to this ease of expression, with which, even in the midst of the most convoluted intrigues, the reader is entirely relaxed. Froude was entirely himself when writing,

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25Hale, British Historiography, 55.

26Skelten, Table-Talk of Shirley, 209.
and because there was no stuffiness in him, the reader feels that he is in the presence of a friend, with whom he may agree if he likes, but who, whether he agrees or not, will always give him his honest impression of the story he is relating. "He was the master of a style commoner amongst essayists or novelists, than historians, and it spoke to all." 97

Even in his harsh review of the early volumes about Henry, Goldwin Smith acknowledged with pleasure "the beauty of certain sentimental and poetical passages which are scattered, not too lavishly or inappropriately, through the work." 98 Such passages adorn every volume, sometimes coming upon one so suddenly as to be almost breathtaking; they are for a moment all-consuming in their impact, and they leave an indelible impression upon the memory. In the following description of the final preparations of the Armada, with its hints of impending tragedy, we can almost literally feel the sun and the breeze as, transported back in time, we stand watching on the shore:

The scene as the fleet passed out of the harbour must have been singularly beautiful. It was a treacherous interval of real summer. The early sun was lighting the long chain of the Gallician mountains, marking with shadows the cleft defiles, and shining softly on the white walls and vineyards of Coruna. The wind was light, and falling towards a calm; the great galleons drifted slowly with the tide on the purple water, the long streamers trailing from the trucks, the red crosses, the emblem of the crusade, shining bright upon the hanging sails. The fruit boats were

97 Elton, Survey of English Literature, 139.
98 "History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Death of Elizabeth", Edinburgh Review 106 (July 1858): 208.
Froude's sense of imagery is often highly poetic, as in the following beautiful passage vividly describing the repulse of the English at Leith:

The dying Mary of Lorraine had been carried from her bed to the walls of the Castle to watch the fight. As the sun rose out of the Forth, she saw the English columns surge like sea waves against the granite ramparts, and like the sea waves fall shattered into spray.

With the accurate perception of long acquaintance, John Skelton has noted in Froude's remarkable style "the expression of, what may be called, intellectual emotion." A man like Froude, writing on such a topic, could scarcely fail to be deeply involved with his subject. It is indeed this "intellectual emotion" which gives his works their almost startling vitality; in it lies also the explanation of that quality which, more than anything except his inaccuracy, sent his detractors into a rage. His obvious and all-pervading bias was, in the words of one critic, "the dominant cause of all the trouble."

Among those concerned with things historical, there are two schools of thought. On one side is the argument that

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90 Ibid., VII: 232.
91 Skelton, Table-Talk of Shirley, 309.
92 Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude", 252.
"in strident advocate of his race, his country, his party or his church, has a claim to enter the temple of Clio." 93

In the other hand, Froude himself contended that

When historians have to relate great social or speculative changes, ... they do but half their duty if they merely relate the events. In our estimate of the past, and in our calculations of the future, in the judgments which we pass upon one another, we measure responsibility, not by the thing done, but by the opportunities which people have had of knowing better or worse. 94

If an accurate impression is to be gained of this important aspect of Froude's work, two factors must be understood. The first is that in Froude's mind the terms prejudice and conviction were almost interchangeable and were not necessarily considered by him as qualities to be avoided. He wrote:

I am accused of being a prejudiced man...and it is true. A good stiff prejudice is a very useful thing. It is like a rusty weather-cock; it will yield to a strong breeze, but it does not go veering about with every little puff of wind. 95

Turning once more to Skelton for enlightenment, we learn something of Froude's sense of conviction:

Of a certain politician he [Froude] wrote to me long ago, that he was 'a man of the believing temperament, without a single conviction that can stand a strain;...his own vital convictions were never lightly shaken. 96

Many years earlier, as a young boy meditating upon and trying to sort out for himself the larger issues of life, he had gleaned, from Bishop John Pearson's *Exposition of the Creed*,

93Gooch, *History and Historians*, 111.


96Skelton, *Table-Talk of Shirley*, 123.
certain ideas which did much to shape his views on the nature of belief:

One piece of instruction I gained from Pearson: the distinction between believing and believing in. When we believe we think something is likely, but we are not certain about it. ... the evidence is imperfect, and we may be wrong. We believe in either persons or principles of which we are absolutely convinced. ... mere belief is always attended with doubt, and even conscious doubt. To believe in may imply an equal imperfection of evidence. What we believe in, others disbelieve in, and either or both may be wrong, but it is a real state and absolutely excludes doubt. 97

If this is what Froude had in mind when he talked about believing in the Reformation, it goes far to explain his approach. As Herbert Paul notes, "The idea that an historian was to have no ideas of his own, or that, having them, he was to conceal them, never entered his mind." 98 Paul continues:

Froude wrote with a definite purpose, which he never concealed from himself, or from others. He believed, and he thought he could prove, that the Reformation freed England from a cruel and degrading yoke.... 99

To the end of his life Froude retained this sense of conviction, and he never ceased to state it with perfect frankness:

I do not pretend to impartiality. I believe the Reformation to have been the greatest incident in English history; the root and source of the expansive force which has spread the Anglo-Saxon race over the globe, and imprinted the English genius and character on the constitution of mankind.... 100

97 Autobiographical fragment, quoted in Dunn, Froude, I: 42.
98 Paul, Life of Froude, 74.
99 ibid., 79.
100 Quoted in Hale, British Historiography, 54.
There is certainly nothing subtle about Froude's bias; he is writing his History to prove the rightness of the Reformation, and his aim could not have been stated more clearly. On the surface, this would seem to disqualify him automatically from recognition as an historian. On the other hand, however, the very fact that his prejudices are so pronounced is, in a sense, a saving grace, for it virtually invites the judicious reader to discount it and to draw from the intense and vital narrative the very essence of the Reformation climate. Although no sane student of the subject would attempt to defend Froude's bias on the above lines, they do perhaps argue with merit against rejecting the work in its entirety on the basis of this one grave fault.

A chief difficulty caused by Froude's slanted approach has been expressed as follows:

Froude's method...begs a constant tendency, from which he is certainly not free, to write in a half-controversial fashion, with a sort of underlying reference to supposed opponents. One feels that the writer is not simply telling his tale according to the evidence, but that he is emphasizing certain sides of it, because he suspects that those for whom he writes have a bias in the opposite direction... 101

If this controversial attitude creates a disquieting sense of tension, some of Froude's more violent outbursts are even more distracting. The chief objects of his particular enmity were the Catholic Church (in what he regarded as its repressive, superstitious or degrading aspects), Mary Stuart (as the symbol of all that threatened English liberty), and,

101 Doyle, "Freeman, Froude and Seeley", 298-99.
in his later volumes especially, Elizabeth herself. A typically cutting example of his attitude toward the Church of Rome is evidenced in his discussion of a particularly bad day for the Armada:

It was the eve of St. Lawrence's day, Philip's patron saint, whose precious shoulder bone he had added to the treasures of the Escorial. But St. Lawrence, though he might save his worshippers' souls in the other world, seemed to want either power or will to aid them in the present.102

Equally vehement is Froude's expression of his dislike of Mary Stuart, of whose death he speaks as follows:

...she was leaving the world with a lie upon her lips. ...if in any sense at all she was suffering for her religion, it was because she had shown herself capable of those detestable crimes which in the sixteenth century appeared to be the proper fruits of it.103

Elizabeth fares little better, in spite of the fact that she was on the "right" side:

Her vanity was as insatiable as it was commonplace. No flattery was too tawdry to find a welcome with her.... Her entire nature was saturated with artifice. Except when speaking some round untruth Elizabeth never could be simple. Her letters and her speeches were as fantastic as her dress, and her meaning as involved as her policy. She was unnatural even in her prayers, and she carried her affectations into the presence of the Almighty.104

Whatever may have been Froude's reasons for feeling that such sentiments were justified, their expression in an historical work is both unnecessary and unfortunate, and they

103 Ibid., XII:341-2.
104 Ibid., XII:553-9.
have, needless to say, done his reputation as an historian far more harm than good.

As has been pointed out before, it is important to avoid limiting Froude's bias to "anti-Catholicism", not because that would be to judge him unfairly (his detractions of Catholicism are indeed frequent and bitter), but because such a limitation would miss the entire foundation upon which he attempted to construct his History. It has been noted of Froude that "he is passionately, fanatically, exclusively English," 105 and it was impossible for him to see the Reformation from any other viewpoint. For him the grand and overriding issue was always English liberty, and both the Catholic Church and Mary Stuart suffer in his pages less because of intrinsic dislike on his part than because of what they symbolized to him. He has stated at one point in his History, regarding the divorce of Queen Catherine, "I speak of the question as nakedly political," 106 and this approach he endeavours to pursue throughout. With regard to the Catholic Church, his feelings are most clearly revealed in his attempts to show, rightly or wrongly, that that body constituted a threat to national sovereignty, and that those who espoused its cause beyond the inner sanctum of their own consciences were guilty not of heresy but of treason. It is a fine line that Froude has

105 Gooch, History and Historians. 314
drawn, and it has been highly criticized, but in his mind it was entirely genuine. Of the Jesuits sent into England in 1581 and 1582, he has written:

Priests, commissioned by the Pope, had stolen into the realm to seduce subjects from their allegiance... They pretended that they had been sent by their superiors to inform men's consciences on points of religion, but their real object was to win them to allow the Pope's authority, that 'when they should be thereto called,' 'they might hold themselves warranted to take arms.' The priests might colour their proceedings with professions of devotion in religion, but the Queen's duty was to maintain the peace of the realm, to prevent the torrents of blood which were always shed in civil war, and she had a right therefore to impeach their practices by sword and law. Many of her subjects entertained and openly professed opinions which were not those of the Established Church, but being loyal to her Majesty and ready to resist any foreign force, though sent by the Pope himself, they had not been interfered with. 107

It is the same with Mary Stuart: Froude allows himself to praise her courage, her cunning, and her high spirits, but for him she is the virtual embodiment of all evil, not for her Catholic faith (about which Froude had serious doubts) but because of the threat she represented to England. Of her journey from France to Scotland to claim her throne in 1561, he wrote:

...she was going back among them to use her charms as a spell to win them back to the Catholic Church, to weave the fibres of a conspiracy from the Orkneys to the Land's End, prepared to wait; to control herself, to hide her purpose till the moment came to strike; yet with a purpose fixed as the stars to trample down the Reformation and to seat herself at last on Elizabeth's throne. 108

Froude's conviction that the Queen of Scots constituted the gravest of threats to the freedom and security of England never wavered. After recounting the details of her execution, Froude states without hesitation:

...the political wisdom of a critical and difficult act has never in the world's history been more signally justified. It cut away the only interest on which the Scotch and English Catholics could possibly have combined. It determined Philip upon the undisguised pursuit of the English throne, and it enlisted against him and his projects the passionate patriotism of the English nobility, who refused to be tempted, even by their creed, to betray the independence of their country.... The entire Catholic organization, as directed against England, was smitten with paralysis; and the Queen found herself, when the invader arrived at last, supported by the loyal enthusiasm of an undivided nation.109

By way of comparison, Froude's own concept of religious toleration, quite apart from the political colour which he throws over the events of the Reformation era, has been simply stated in the pages of his History:

Where we see piety, continence, courage, self-forgetfulness, there, or not far off, we know is the presence of the Almighty; and, as we look around us among our living contemporaries, or look back with open eyes into the history of the past, we see... that God is no respecter of 'denominations', any more than he is a respecter of persons. His highest gifts are shed abroad with an even hand among the sects of Christendom, and petty distinctions of opinion melt away and become invisible in the fulness of a larger truth.110

Any attempts thus to qualify or to explain the source of Froude's biases must not be construed as efforts either to deny or to defend them. Not by any stretch of the imagination

110 Ibid., III:363.
can Froude's *History* be considered judicious or impartial. He frequently makes determined efforts to be fair to those individuals on the "wrong" side for whose genuine faith and courage he has great respect, and he often attempts to explain, by way of defense, the extreme difficulties of conscience into which the loyal Catholics of the sixteenth century were placed. But these are isolated facts which in no way affect his pre-conceived conclusion. His mind was made up, his verdict determined, and his sentence passed before he picked up his pen to begin his work, and such a shortcoming in an historian can scarcely be defended. It can only be noted that his prejudices are so extreme as to be virtually self-defeating, and that it may thus be hoped that this most serious fault in his work is prevented from overshadowing its other great merits.
VI. CONCLUSION

In the introductory chapter to this paper, several questions were raised regarding Froude's work which are of general interest to the student of historiography. To some extent they have all been dealt with in the pages of this paper, but it may be helpful to consider them specifically at this time. The first concerns the value of historical writing which is obviously partisan in nature, and also what should be sought and what avoided in attempting to make use of such material. The second has to do with the relative importance of "accuracy of detail" as opposed to "truthfulness of impression". And the third deals with the relative merits of the scholarly and the literary approaches to history.

With respect to the value of reviewing controversial questions from opposite points of view in an effort to maintain a balanced assessment, the following words of a twentieth-century writer are to the point:

No student should base his conception of such controversial themes as the Reformation and the French Revolution on a single writer or a single book, for in some spheres where our deepest feelings are involved full agreement is too much to demand.

This admonition must be to some extent qualified when applying it to a work so obviously biased as that of Froude, but it is

\[1\] supra, 156.

\[2\] C. P. Goode, History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century (Boston: Beacon Press, 1935), iii. (First published in 1913 by Longmans, Green, and Company.)
a valid point. It would seem that the challenge to today's students of the Reformation is to construct, or to develop, such foundations of critical scholarship and such standards of accuracy for themselves that they will be alert to the dangers inherent in a work such as Froude's; but at the same time to develop such an appreciation for the vitality of the past that they can benefit fully from vivid historical writing.

If the passion of historians for their subject is too completely removed from their writing, the result is an account which may be wholly accurate but which has a coldly clinical air about it. Such reasoning was the antithesis of Froude's approach, and it needs to be guarded against as surely as does the opposite tendency to write with too much feeling. It has been noted that "the source of Froude's influence and the source of his power is that beneath the attraction of his personality and the seductiveness of his writing there lay a bedrock of principle which could not be moved." Whatever we may say or think of Froude's opinions, it cannot be denied that he wrote as he was guided by his convictions, and that in so doing he met the opposition of that quasi-liberal type of thinking which shuns all conviction as narrowness, and which attacks earnest expression as contrary to its "principles". Froude's example provides an important lesson for the present day, when relativism is as grave a danger for society as it was in the nineteenth century. To attempt to regard the present or the past

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from a viewpoint based upon no principle at all is at least as unrealistic as to view it with too strong a sense of conviction. Because history is essentially the story of human beings, it cannot afford to become too clinical, and writers like Froude, in spite of all their faults, have played a part in preventing its becoming so.

The relative merits of correctness in minor matters as opposed to an accurate overall impression constitute a dilemma, which no one represented better than Froude. It has been shown that he wrote at a time particularly difficult for the historian, because it was a period of transition from the literary to the "scientific" approach to historical writing. The difficult questions raised, and by no means answered, by his History are, how can one write a history sufficiently exciting and alive to attract a wide readership, without sacrificing the highest qualities of scholarship? Or, put the other way around, can one maintain the highest standard of historical accuracy and still be interesting enough to be read by anyone but other scholars? Froude's example may well be the reason that few, if any, historians since his time have attempted to travel both these roads at once. One writer, keenly aware of Froude's difficulty in this regard, devised an ingenious solution to the problem:

What we need is a man of genius like Mr. Froude, to search and to write a history; and then that history must be revised and corrected by seventy scientific historians, after which the man of genius rewrites his book, this time impeccably.4

4Andrew Lang, "Freeman vs. Froude". Cornhill Magazine 93 3rd s., 19 3rd s. (February 1905), 263.
In the absence of such a utopian solution, however, more than one educator has felt that the overall impression is the more important factor. One has written:

From an educational point of view, I should consider that Froude was a better historian than Freeman; just as I should consider it more important that a boy should care for Virgil than that he should be sure to have the best text.

Percy Stafford Allen has voiced the same point of view in his appraisal of Froude's work on Erasmus:

...for a vivid and penetrating sketch of Erasmus' attractive personality, you cannot do better than turn to the pages of Froude... No Life of Erasmus can approach Froude's for sympathy and insight and understanding. The outlines are boldly and truly drawn... and the reader feels throughout that he is reading of a real man.

With regard to the third question, the value of high literary quality in historical writing was clearly brought out by a nineteenth-century critic of Froude's work:

There is more to be said for literary form in historical composition than the present generation is wont to allow.... all compilations of original research not fused into the form of art remain merely the text-books of the special student, and are closed to the general public.... Now, it is the public which history must reach, modify and instruct, if it is to rise to the level of humane science and be more than pedantic antiquarianism.

Froude's particular success in this regard is noted by the same writer:

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6Percy Stafford Allen, Erasmus: Lectures and Wayfaring Sketches, 60, quoted in Dunn, Froude, 1:8.

After all, it is the function of a historian to make known what he knows, to write so that what he writes shall be read and remembered. And thus it has come to pass that, in spite of his blunders, his partisanship, and his curious delusions, Froude's History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada is familiar to the whole English-speaking world, whilst Hallam and Stanhope, Freeman and Stubbs, the Rolls and Camden Series of Chronicles, their learned editors and judicious compilers, are familiar only to special students.

It is of course no longer true that Froude's History is familiar to the whole English-speaking world, but it is probably equally true that the need for good literature in historical writing has never been more urgent than at the present time, when so many students in the entire course of their formal education encounter little if any exposure to good historical literature, and when so many of them feel that the subject of history must necessarily be dry and uninteresting. For his potential contribution to this field alone, Froude's work is certainly worthy of revival. And even more valuable qualities have been noted in his work:

He chains our interest, brings us face to face with living men and women, leaves on our memory a definite stamp that does not fade, gives our brain much to ponder, to question, to investigate for ourselves. The result is that he is read, attacked, admired, condemned. But he is not put upon the shelf, and he will not be put upon the shelf.9

In the light of such commendation, it would unquestionably benefit the student of today to take Froude off the shelf once again:

8Harrison, "Historical Method of Froude", 376.
9Ibid., 375.
There is a final factor which should be noted regarding Froude's contribution to Reformation historiography. Herbert Paul has written that "Froude's achievement was marred by his too obvious zeal for upsetting established conclusions and reversing settled beliefs."10 While this point is certainly a valid one, it should be noted that, as in the chemical process of fermentation there is a resulting purification of fluids, so in stirring up settled beliefs, when those beliefs are not altogether correct, there is a resulting purification of the intellectual atmosphere. Such a process, with all its attendant unpleasantness, was going on in England in the 1840's and 1850's; Froude, in applying the same irritant to the historiography of the sixteenth century, brought into focus a debate which has done much since his time to endeavour to achieve a sense of balance. In this alone, his contribution to subsequent historiography is immeasurable. A sensitive man, Froude undoubtedly suffered greatly as a result of the conflict he initiated; but he was also strengthened in much the same way that the study of Reformation history has been strengthened by the scholarly controversy he helped to introduce.

10Paul, Life of Froude, 76.
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III. UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

VITA AUCTORIS

I was born in the City of Evanston, Illinois; at the age of seven I moved to Atlanta, Georgia, where I lived until 1955, when I left home to attend Principia College, from which I received the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1959. While I was attending College, my family had moved to Toronto, Ontario, where I joined them after graduation. I was married in 1962 to Ronald Beer; our two children, Stephanie and Douglas, were born in 1964 and 1967. In 1970, we moved to Windsor, Ontario, where in 1974 I returned to school at the University of Windsor to begin work as a part time student on my Master of Arts Degree.