

*Victorian Historical Consciousness—*  
Carlyle, Macaulay, Froude, and Lecky:  
A Review Essay

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Robert E. Sullivan, *Macaulay: The Tragedy of Power*. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2009. 614 pp. \$39.95

Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son. Architects of Imperial Britain*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2012. xxviii+389 pp. £35.99.

Zareer Masani, *Macaulay. Britain's Liberal Imperialist*. London: Bodley Head, 2013. xvi+272 pp. £20.00.

Ciaran Brady, *James Anthony Froude. An Intellectual Biography of a Victorian Prophet*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. xiv+500 pp. \$65.00.

THE VICTORIAN ERA MADE THE ENGLISH A HISTORICALLY conscious people. In *To Katanga and Back* (1962), Conor Cruise O'Brien remarked that nations are usually either “gloaters” or “brooders” (31) depending upon their identities as conquerors or conquered. Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have all raked up profit and pleasure from imperial pasts; but essentially, they have remained brooders. History permeated their folk cultures where England's popular historical awareness was handed down or handed over. There were local English pockets of brooding, such as Dorset and Somerset memories of Monmouth's defeat at Sedgmoor in 1685 that Thomas Babington Macaulay found in his research for his *History of England* (1848, 1855). One could also mention Nottingham and Yorkshire for Robin Hood, resurrected in *Ivanhoe* (1819) by Sir Walter Scott. Even there the nationalization of the folk

cultures was the work of the Scots Lowland folklorist, and the son of a Scots Highlander, and the implicit cultures of defeat were embedded in larger stories of victory (Sedgmoor as a prelude to the “Glorious” Revolution, Robin Hood grafted in to the return of the hero-king Richard).

Other examples spring to mind. Alfred Tennyson, professionalizing the Poet Laureateship as never before, won national status for the hero-king Arthur in his *Idylls of the King* (1859, 1869–72), inherited from Welsh remote ancestry in *Mabinogion*. In Ireland, vernacular Gaelic historical memory had clustered around the exiled Stuarts. In theory English settlers in Ireland should have been gloaters, but however adverse they were to Irish host culture, they brooded more than they gloated. They cheered the victory of the Boyne (1690), but brooded over the genocidal massacres of 1641 (the Catholic murders of Protestants, not the converse). Even the heroic survival of Protestant Derry when under Catholic siege lived more in horrific memories of near-starvation until Macaulay’s narrative of the relief, and even that was attenuated by the death of the Derry-born captain leading the ships of salvation

Victorian historical consciousness chiefly evolved in Scotland—remotely from David Hume’s *History of England* (1754–61) and professionally from the more scientific methodology of William Robertson (1721–93). There were also the novels of Scott and the massive essays of Macaulay that were published in *The Edinburgh Review* between 1825 and 1844. Historical consciousness burst like a thunderclap in 1837, when Victoria’s reign was inaugurated with the publication of Carlyle’s *The French Revolution*. However repugnant the partnership to their ghosts, both Carlyle and Macaulay taught the English how to read history and were far too much the children of their Scottish ancestors to impair their narratives by the omission of tragedy. If the English were to be gloaters, they were given enough on which to brood. They were the descendants also of story-telling and bardic traditions, to which the more Anglicized Macaulay seems to have been alert than the outwardly testily Scottish Carlyle. Both were well aware that their success lay in their ability to entertain, a necessity the ancient bards knew very well, and they knew their means of audience-capture demanded freedom from bardic

conventionalism and conservatism. They also were aware of the importance of humor: Macaulay's earliest published historical work appeared in *Knight's Quarterly Magazine* for 1823–24. He wrote up the French Revolution as a dispute between neighboring parishes and the Waterloo campaign as the synopsis of a poem in the style of the *Aeneid* supposedly written in AD 2824 by an Englishman born of a family of Chinese long settled in England and graduated from an African university. *Sartor Resartus*, of course, is a symphony in the key of laughter.

Unfortunately, the historians of Carlyle and Macaulay have not always shared either their humor, their imagination, or their talent. A recent group has zeroed in on Macaulay, proclaiming him as one of the chief progenitors of an imperialist consciousness. They single out *The Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842) as evidence of his reactionary views. Robert E. Sullivan pronounces solemnly that the "*Lays of Ancient Rome* did most to popularise the Indian Empire. . . . Macaulay's pastiches brought the imperial idea, dressed in toga and sandals and armed with a sword and shield, alive to his countrymen, especially to generations of schoolboys" (251–52). Professor Catherine Hall is equally dictatorial in her judgment: "Macaulay had whiled away many hours in India penning his *Lays of Ancient Rome*, another way of telling imperial tales" (250). The most noteworthy influence of India on the *Lays* was Macaulay's sense of Ganges-worship among Hindus and his shrewd use of it for Horatius's prayer to, faith in, and battle against the Tibur, Livy having mentioned the utterance of a prayer in the legend.

What "Horatius" and two of the other three *Lays* celebrate is the defense of Rome against conquerors respectively from Etruria, from the Latin cities, and from Greece, and only the last inspires imperial ambitions, doing so in the last verse. Macaulay certainly wanted to arouse the imagination of readers to appreciate the trouble being taken on their behalf by English officials in India, and he did so by writing essays on Robert Clive and Warren Hastings. His Indian biographer, Zareer Masani, notes that the *Lays* "consisted of four epic poems which aimed to reinvent the lost ballads and founding myths of the early Roman Republic" (172). If there is a cunning propaganda to further the imperial idea in India, it is curious that Masani, an heir to the India which was subjected to imperial ideas (presumably

including Macaulay's) should fail to see it. As for the other *Lay*, "Virginia" is a poem of class conflict, for the plebeians against their patrician oppressors.

In the introduction to the poem, Macaulay declares that the "Plebeians were . . . not wholly without constitutional rights. From an early period they had been admitted to some share of political power. They were enrolled each in his century, and were allowed a share, considerable though not proportioned to their numerical strength, in the disposal of those high dignities from which they themselves were excluded. Thus their position bore some resemblance to that of the Irish Catholics during the interval between the year 1792 and the year 1829" (8: 513). As with the Ganges, Macaulay drew inspiration and invited reflection on what he himself had seen. He had participated in the crusade for Catholic Emancipation, and had heard Daniel O'Connell in the House of Commons, even receiving his personal congratulations on an early Parliamentary speech of his own.

"Virginia," limited to "fragments," drew likes its fellows, on Livy's version of the story but also on memory of O'Connell (and indeed in his presence in the Commons when Macaulay and he were once more fellow-MPs in 1839-42), particularly in the speech of Icilius vainly seeking to prevent the teenage girl Virginia being abducted by "the varlet Marcus" (8: 520) on the plea that she is his slave. Actually he seeks to procure her as a sexual victim to the patrician Decemvir Appius Claudius, who for his own lust awards her to Marcus. Sullivan confuses Marcus and Appius, blithely reassuring his readers that Macaulay's verses sound like misogynistic kitsch. If Macaulay had written the words Sullivan claims he wrote, it would not merely be misogynistic kitsch, but misanthropic gibberish. To any reader familiar with the poem, it will be perfectly obvious that Sullivan has extracted a few individual lines, mixed them up with banal notes of his own, and whether aware of omissions or not leaves a wreck to which neither poetry nor prose could be labeled. The slightest sober look at it must make it clear that no person in his or her senses, however kitsch or misogynistic, could possibly have persuaded any reputable publisher in mid-nineteenth-century Britain to publish this, and to persuade the public to buy 100,000 copies in the next third of a century.

It should be a law with either historians or literary critics that before passing judgment on the historians and (other) literary creators in the past, that we should examine the verdict of some contemporaries with which we should feel ready to disagree to the utmost, but whom we should recall. Thus John Stuart Mill wrote of the *Lays*:

Mr Macaulay's prose writings had not prepared us for the power which he has here manifested of identifying himself easily and completely with states of feelings and modes of thought alien to modern experience. Nobody could have previously doubted that he possessed fancy, but he has here added to it the higher faculty of Imagination. We have not been able to detect, in the four poems, one idea or feeling which was not, or might not have been, Roman; while the externals of Roman life, and the feelings characteristic of Rome and of that particular age, are reproduced with great felicity, and without being made unduly predominant over the universal features of human nature and human life. (526)

Readers of this journal hardly need to be reminded of Mill's ill-fated aid to Carlyle on *The French Revolution*, but this judgment on Macaulay's *Lays* helps us to see why Carlyle consulted him. He knew the place of the imagination in the quest for the past and could say where Macaulay's experiment had its Carlylean quality. The French Revolution does not counterfeit Revolutionary or counter-Revolutionary Frenchness. We can say of the book: we are there, regardless of space or time.

Carlyle and Macaulay were present in Victorian England as moral, literary, and aesthetic exemplars, affirming progress (in Macaulay's case) or questioning and denying it (in Carlyle's). Yet both somewhat surreptitiously drew vitality from their non-English roots. In *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* in December 1842, Christian Johnstone rather astutely described the Macaulay of the *Lays* as having "assumed the part of the Macpherson of the Romans; though, in those fragments of poetry, and floating traditions of bards, which were certainly to be found in the Highlands of Scotland, the translator of Ossian possessed more materials ready prepared" (809). Macaulay as a jobholder in India demanded elimination of ancient traditions in languages unknown to him, the better to prepare the Indians of the future for unobstructed grasp of

equality with the ruling whites of the British Empire. The *Lays* gave surcease to Macaulay's own internal protests against the relentless modernization that he was determined to espouse. Such creative tension made Macaulay a great artist, though neither his Victorian nor his modern biographers have recognized this fact. His first biographer and his nephew George Otto Trevelyan assumed this Macaulay's greatness rested in his being as Whiggish as Trevelyan himself. Modern writers feel the need to suspect other agenda.

Following gingerly in the wake of Sullivan's vulgar caricature of Macaulay as a precursor of twentieth-century liberal imperialism, Catherine Hall cautiously notes that Sullivan's "biography sees Macaulay as a deeply malign influence, a Janus-faced master of the universe" with a "sinister vision of progress that foreshadowed twentieth-century genocide" (xxvi). But she is quietly ready to glean what she can from his toxic harvest. She crops quotations barer than integrity will justify, for instance rendering Macaulay as terming the Irish slaughtered by Cromwell as "a band of malefactors and idolaters" when in fact he had quoted Cromwell as so terming them. In her typically humorless manner, she summed it up as a defense of "extirpation." Indeed, her sense of humor is so deficient that at one glorious moment she describes Macaulay's draft of the penal code in the following terms: "As for homosexuality, 'an odious class of offences respecting which it is desirable that as little as possible should be said,' the legislators wanted no excuse for public discussion on this 'revolting topic': a clear case of heads being buried in the sand" (235). "Every schoolboy knows" (to purloin Macaulay's famous phrase) that heads buried in the sand encourage homosexual attention elsewhere in the anatomy.

A sense of humor is essential to understand and write about a historian who used comedy among his weapons to apprehend the past. Scott was Macaulay's grand master in the creation of social history, as he was Carlyle's. It follows that the sources for social history are incomprehensible without a sense of humor, and that women are central to social history, as prepared by *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, and *Ivanhoe*, and as preached by Macaulay apropos the letters of Dorothy Osborne in his essay on William Temple. Carlyle is perhaps less soluble by this formula,

but he resembled Macaulay in making his primary audience a woman with whom his relationship seethed with laughter. There was a tragedy in it also, as in both cases—Carlyle with his wife, and Macaulay with his sisters—and Catherine Hall's book as a feminist critique is important, every subject requiring a feminist perspective, but unsatisfactory without humor, since otherwise as here, perspective is distorted by intoxication in the censorious. Unfortunately, Professor Hall's dislike of the Macaulay sours her book. She calls him "Tom" but in all other respects their relationship is implacably distant. In her introduction she announces "Women, Macaulay might have said, have nothing to do with history. *Macaulay and Son* shows that they do" (xxi). Of course, Macaulay would not have said that and the gratuitous, undocumented assumption that he would, leaves it open as to whether *Macaulay and Son* can show anything of any importance in relation to its subject matter.

It is both a strength and weakness of Hall's book that its appearance coincides with that of Masani's study of Macaulay and imperialism. Both authors agree that Macaulay is a liberal imperialist—Hall rightly extends the charge to Zachary Macaulay, though characteristically she misses his readiness to respect any enemy of slavery, from Byron to Pope Gregory XVI—but Masani is much more interested in the main practical creation of Macaulay's architecture, namely his own country of India. From his first involvement with India as a young MP, Masani's Macaulay was "vitriolic about the complex intrigues and corruption of Indian princes" (40). For Masani, Macaulay's achievement stood to the left of Mill's:

Mill wanted efforts to be concentrated on a small elite of Indians who were already scholars of Oriental Studies and through whom knowledge would trickle down to the vernacular-speaking masses. Macaulay, on the other hand, wanted to use English as the medium for giving as many Indians as possible a Western education, responding to the aspirations of a rapidly expanding middle class and eventually of the entire population. Though not explicitly stated in his *Minute*, his ultimate goal was of an Indian empire whose citizens, like those of Rome, would become equal partners of their British mentors, with English, like Latin, as their imperial lingua franca. Ironically, Macaulay, rooted in the

cautious Whig tradition, had come up with a vision far more egalitarian and inclusive than the linguistic elitism of his radical critic, John Stuart Mill. (112–13)

Hall's fragments of evidence designed to prove that Macaulay was a racist tend to break down when set against the straightforward arguments of Masani. He acknowledges that "Macaulay's view of Indians, or for that matter other subject nations of the British Empire, like the Irish, was unashamedly racist, to judge by today's multicultural standards. But it's easy to forget that he belonged to an age when it was the norm for most cultures, including those of the East, to believe in their own innate superiority." Masani then pinpoints what was unique about Macaulay's attitudes, specifically his "passionate belief in the duty of imperial rulers to govern in the best interests of the ruled." He shared this goal with Burke, though he never succumbed to what Masani refers to as the latter's "Romantic Orientalism" (144).

Hall insists that Macaulay's fondness for Homeric similes was distancing the Indians from their contemporary English. "Once again," she declares, "[Macaulay's essay on Warren Hastings] was a global story, set across human history as understood by Europeans. Benares was likened to post-Carolingian Europe; 'Hindoo' reactions to the hanging of Nuncomar [Nandekumar], 'the head of their race and religion,' were compared to those of devout Catholics in the Dark Ages 'seeing a prelate of the highest dignity sent to the gallows by a secular tribunal.' The sense of the distance between past and present, East and West, was most powerfully evoked at the impeachment of Hastings" (249–50). In fact, if Macaulay was trying to distance his readers from his subject, he quickly relinquished the effort, evidently thinking of the judicial murder of Archbishop St. Oliver Plunkett during the Popish Plot, since he compared Hastings to Lord Stafford, a Catholic victim of Titus Oates at the same time, explaining that Stafford would have been justified in taking legal action to the incriminate Oates.

Macaulay made it clear that the fate of Nandekumar disgraced British justice and that his record as a perjurer was wholly comparable to English examples from the recent past. The words "past and present" turn a useful key. In the book of the same title, two years after the publication of "Warren

Hastings” in 1843, carried out one of the neatest and strongest historical experiments yet made to bring the past before the eyes of the present. Carlyle pursued the same course as Macaulay had done in “Hastings,” and his aim was identical: to make the reader of the present feel the past. In Macaulay’s case the necessity to overcome the distance in space as well as in time made for another dimension of the same quest, to force his indifferent fellow-islanders to understand how it felt to be in India and to help them to fathom what Macaulay and at least some of his predecessors had been doing there.

Masani has no difficulty about placing Macaulay among the leaders of liberal imperialism, including Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, David Cameron, and Barack Obama. He digs deeper into Macaulay’s relevant rhetoric to make his case, and shows that his legacy is inseparable from his name being justly blessed by the former “Untouchables” of India who celebrate Macaulay’s birthday as that of their liberator. Hall’s fashionable anxiety to fill the cup of horrors chargeable against Macaulay misses the greatest horror of all: that his unhappy legacy has been the more effective because of the many good things he did and the enjoyable works that he wrote. Masani makes us realize this, in his quiet prose, and keeps his sense of humor in balance, reminding us that Macaulay “was full of praise for ‘that noble Afghan race’ who had settled in the adjacent region of Rohilkhand: ‘the only natives of India to whom the world ‘gentleman’ can with perfect propriety be applied.’” Masani comments, “What would he have made of the twenty-first century Afghan propensity for jihadism is hard to imagine” (145).

## 2.

Froude’s suitability as the biographer of Carlyle may have come about as a result of Macaulay. More specifically, Froude’s admiring review of *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (1876), edited by Macaulay’s nephew George Otto Trevelyan (1838–1928), seemed to qualify him to write the biography of the Chelsea prophet. Reviewing the book in June 1876 in *Fraser’s*, Froude began with tributes to Trevelyan and Macaulay that now read like a declaration of intent. We can be quite certain that Carlyle would have taken this view, however far his intent

to have Froude as his authorized biographer had finally crystallized. Ciaran Brady's recent contribution to intellectual history and to the history of historiography in the form of his biography of Froude is thoroughly reliable almost anywhere one searches. Brady cannot be blamed for leaving Trevelyan's edition of Macaulay out of the vivid, searching discussion of the Froude-Carlyle negotiations. But Froude's review provides a useful starting-point for a discussion of Brady's achievement.

Commenting on Trevelyan's veracity, Froude established his own credentials as a biographer:

No one detested unworthy biographical reticence more heartily than Lord Macaulay himself. 'Believing,' says Mr. Trevelyan, 'that my uncle, if he were now living, would have sufficient greatness of mind to wish to be shown as himself, I will suppress no trait in his disposition or incident in his career which might provoke blame or question. Such in all points as he was the world has a right to know him.' Acting conscientiously on this principle, Mr Trevelyan has produced a portrait as complete as the highest art could render it. For all time those who desire to know what Macaulay was will find him here, line for line, feature for feature, an exact image, from which nothing will hereafter have to be deducted on the score of a relation's partiality, nothing need hereafter be added to compensate for the artist's deficiencies. With instinctive good sense, Mr Trevelyan has refrained throughout from obtruding his own opinions upon us. Though Lord Macaulay must have been held up before him as a pattern of every excellence in his own early life, he never rushes on into extravagance in speaking of him. (675)

The great emotional crisis of Macaulay's life has been worked up by writers in the late twentieth century and beyond, that he was more involved emotionally with his two younger sisters, Margaret and Hannah, the latter being Trevelyan's mother. Here is what Froude took from Trevelyan: "His fondness for his sisters was the passion of a lover; for his sisters' children he had a father's tenderness" (676). This, it would seem, was Froude's contract as Carlyle's biographer, to write with Trevelyan's apparent frankness about his subject including peculiarities of his private life. The cards were on the table: but apart from

Froude and Carlyle (and Trevelyan) nobody was looking at that table when Froude began to publish Carlyleana.

In Brady, Froude has been more fortunate than Carlyle in finding a biographer who truly understands him without being blinded by either his strengths or his weaknesses. In his indispensable commentary on Froude in *The Victorian Age in Literature* (1913), Chesterton wisely remarked that “Carlyle’s direct historical worship of strength and the rest of it was fortunately not very fruitful; and perhaps lingered only in Froude the historian. Even he is more an interruption than a continuity. Froude develops rather the harsher and more impatient counsels of his master than like Ruskin the more romantic and sympathetic” (446). Froude’s hero-worship led him to venerate Carlyle’s weaknesses rather than his strengths, and took him in awkward directions, such as the “over-praising [of] Henry VIII.” But the Carlylean legacy was not entirely negative: “For the rest, like Macaulay, [Froude] was a picturesque and partisan historian: but, like Macaulay (and unlike the craven scientific historians of to-day) he was not ashamed of being partisan or of being picturesque” (447).

There is nothing craven about Professor Brady either. He began his book publications with a study of Elizabeth’s governors of Ireland. Now Froude was an archivally based historian, not Rankean in extent, nor sharing Macaulay’s voracious enthusiasm for chapbooks, doggerel, old games, and any other form of social history source, but getting his teeth into ancient documents with all of the evangelism of Carlyle chasing Cromwell. Being a wise man, Brady differs from too many of his contemporaries in carefully attending to what nineteenth-century historians had to say about the past. Immunizing himself from the panegyrics and diatribes of the period, he found much in his research that was both intriguing and inspiring. Brady worked at assessments of Irish historiography in the intervals of teaching at Trinity College Dublin, very much the new order of Irish lecturers of Catholic stock finding their havens in Trinity which up to the 1960s was almost entirely Protestant in its teachers and students. He came to Froude as a fellow-historian despite emanating from the ethnic group Froude regarded as hopelessly anarchistic, superstitious, and mendacious, much as Froude’s friend Charles Kingsley did.

The Brady entrance to Froude is a professional one, and it is in a fellow-historian that Froude wins his greatest scribe. The task has been daunting, with so much of Froude's papers and autobiographical fragments having vanished after use by his rapturous but panegyric previous biographer, Waldo Hilary Dunn. Brady has had to range far afield, and read several versions of much of Froude's published writings with whatever manuscript sources still survive. In contrast, Macaulay and Carlyle biographers have classic editions of their correspondence thanks to the efforts of Thomas Pinney, and of the Duke-Edinburgh editors. Froude's need to answer Macaulay (with covert support from Carlyle) expressed itself first of all in a chapter of *The History of England* (1856–70) on the "Social Condition of England in the Sixteenth Century." While encumbering himself with generalizations several stages beyond Macaulay and Carlyle, Brady rightly keeps his main focus on historical ideas, though at times his approach resembles Froude's biography of Carlyle in its almost blinkered limits to the man while making little of his contemporaries (Carlyle and John Henry Newman are the two great exceptions, and Brady's *Froude* must head any list of secondary works needed to observe how Carlyle took hold of disciples). Brady has left psychological data and queries to his predecessors, including Julia Markus, Dunn, and Herbert Paul, all of whom still need to be consulted in order to flesh out Froude's family and friends. But Froude himself comes spectacularly to life, and for all of Brady's austerity, and Froude's complex doubts about Brady's ethnicity, the biography is sympathetic as well as sensible.

Froude's earlier brush with Roman Catholicism through his dead brother Richard Hurrell Froude (1803–36) and more profoundly, through Newman, left him permanently affected by despair and obsession. His own internal life borders on sado-masochism. Apart from his ideological critics, Froude had a unique genius for attracting hostile reviewers. In responding to them, he lacked either Macaulay's or Carlyle's zest for combat. Although Brady's initial point of departure into Froude scholarship seems to have been their common fellowship as historians of Tudor England, he must quickly come to terms with Froude subsequent foray into *The English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* (1872, 1874). Froude invited hostilities by

his haunted sense of determinism in the book. The Welsh, he declared, had the decency to be conquered by the English and the Scots the decency to refuse to be conquered, but the Irish did not have the decency to do one or the other:

Everything which she most valued for herself—her laws and liberties, her orderly and settled government, the most ample security for person and property—England's first desire was to give to Ireland in fullest measure. The temper in which she was met exasperated her into harshness and at times to cruelty; and so followed in succession alternations of revolt and punishment, severity provoked by rebellion, and breeding in turn fresh cause for mutiny, till it seemed at last as if no solution was possible save the expulsion of a race which seemed incurable. (1: 13)

In one respect this was counter-productive to a vast extent. The denial of any answer save the expulsion of the “incurable race” was a delight for the Fenians, the IRB, the IRA, and all other physical force extremists. It all depended which was the “incurable race” you meant. So the toiling masses in the USA read snippets from Froude pirated in their fighting weekly *The Irish World* from 1870. Froude came to the USA and lectured it only to find proof of how effective politically the “incurable race” had made itself. In December 1879 and January 1880 Froude tried to alert the Americans to the dangers of migrant Irish popery in his “Romanism and the Irish Race,” and its leading accolade was from the future Home Ruler leader Charles Stewart Parnell, crusading for the Irish Land League in his mother's native USA, as he quoted from Froude's polemic when addressing the US Congress in early February 1880. For Froude's Irish history was too honest to limit its demon figures to the Irish Catholics. He also pin-pointed abuse in English government of Ireland. Brady might have picked up on this connection, rather than relying on an academic, unspecified allusion to Parnell's reading of Froude.

Parnell of course enjoyed himself when he quoted Froude against Froude: once again, sense of humor is the key. One example of it occurred when he and Gladstone had concluded their alliance in favor of Home Rule, and Parnell was staying at Gladstone's country house at Hawarden. Parnell remarked that he knew no Irish historian, whereupon Gladstone lectured

him on the subject for hours. That was in 1889; in 1885, Parnell himself had given a very thorough lecture on Irish history in Cork. Clearly the idea of the greatest political leader in the United Kingdom lecturing the Irish Home Rule leader on Irish history gave Parnell immense entertainment. He had few books on Irish history in his own library at Avondale, County Wicklow, but Froude's *The English in Ireland* was one of them. Froude appealed to the conservative rather than to the liberal mind.

He also had unexpected perceptions not always evident to himself, which perhaps explains his association with his rival W. E. H. Lecky who first published his *History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century* as part of his *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1878–90) and then in five separate volumes. Gladstone's reading of Irish history was chiefly indebted to Lecky (1838–1903). Lecky himself was an Englishman in Ireland, which is to say an Irish Protestant of landlord stock. His Irish history, specifically undertaken to refute Froude, was one of the most ethnically generous acts ever undertaken by a historian. He described the sufferings of the native Irish, the Gaelic-speaking Roman Catholics—the aborigines as Macaulay saw them—and made it abundantly clear that their petty, vindictive, and sometimes even mindless persecution stemmed from Lecky's own people. It was the regime that Macaulay thought worse than actual extirpation. It is probable that this was the most damning of all the refutations suffered by Froude. Yet Lecky and Froude remained friends throughout and frequently met each other at Carlyle's home. They were two of the only three friends to accompany Carlyle's body on its last journey to Scotland, and they were united in their opposition to Home Rule, regardless of Gladstone's quotations from one and Parnell's from the other. It says a lot for them, in sharp contrast to Carlyle and Macaulay, but then while Froude and Lecky were great historians, neither was a genius at the level of Carlyle and Macaulay.

3.

The first meeting between Froude and Carlyle was ensured by James Spedding (1808–81), first cousin of Froude. The meeting preceded Carlyle's Irish journey of 1849, according to Froude; Brady puts it afterwards with no alternative source, and the dates do not suit: Carlyle was in Scotland after the Irish trip.

Brady cites the first reference to Froude in the Duke-Edinburgh *Collected Letters* (Thomas to Jane, 3 April 1849), though here and elsewhere he leaves out the volume number, rather unhelpful given that the edition has now reached volume 41. Brady might have quoted the passage, since it asserts the interested condescension that would mark the association begun two months earlier: "Froude, [Arthur Hugh Clough] tells me, is now with young [Charles] Kingsley;—has £100 a-year, father an Archdeacon of something, with landed property for his eldest son [Robert Hurrell Froude]—; this heretic F. is for the "German universities"; what can he do there? Get into Bruno-Bauerism, and the bottomless Pool" (*CL* 24: 6–7).

In his biography of Carlyle, Froude recalled the sage at the time "studying without much satisfaction the Life of St. Patrick by Jocelyn of Ferns in the *Acta Sanctorum*," which "is as much a biography of a real man as the story of Jack the Giant-killer" (*Life in London* 3: 458). Was the intrusion of the Giant-Killer by Carlyle or by Froude? It seems appropriate to either, since neither was likely to approve such professional disrespect for the great. Brady deduces appropriate conversation between Carlyle and Froude, who dreamt of writing a life of St. Patrick himself when doing his short biography of St. Neot for the then still Anglican John Henry Newman and his *The Lives of the English Saints* (1843–44) series. *The Life of St. Neot* (1844) stretched the reader's imagination almost as far as did Jocelyn, since Froude gratuitously identified the almost mythical Neot with an Anglo-Saxon Prince Athelstan, a theory Brady points out "found no support in the extant early lives and had been wholly discredited twenty-five years previously by Gorham" (103). Presumably St. Neot was not invoked at the inaugural meeting between Carlyle and Froude, but as Froude's apprenticeship, it invites more attention from Carlyle scholars. Did it suggest that Froude as a biographer of Carlyle was haunted by his own hagiographical past and felt honor-bound to show that his work made no claims for Carlylean sanctity?

Brady devotes welcome attention to Froude's first magazine outlet, *The Oxford and Cambridge Review*, whose two-year life (1845–47) breathed in the thickest of High Anglican incense. It was the venue for Froude's first tribute to his new mentor Carlyle, a review of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845)

in the April 1846 issue. Brady claims that the piece is “laudatory of Carlyle’s style and purpose, but unremarkable except for the approval it gives to Carlyle’s justification of Cromwell’s actions at Drogheda” (116). Brady misses the crucial point here that in the essay, Froude out-Cromwelled Carlyle by a considerable distance. Froude ignored what Carlyle had quoted Cromwell as writing on 12 September 1649: “I offered mercy to the Garrison of Tredah, in sending the Governor a Summons before I attempted the taking of it. Which being refused brought their evil upon them” (*Works* 7: 55). Froude also ignored the context of the siege. At Drogheda, Cromwell was facing a force led by Sir Arthur Aston (1590–1649), a veteran Royalist commander seasoned in the Thirty Years’ War. Any weakness that Cromwell showed here would have given fresh heart to the Royalists enraged by the execution of Charles I and ready to take the field in Scotland with Charles II. No surrender guaranteed no mercy. An obscure High Anglican monthly journal was hardly likely to inspire mass Irish Catholic sentiment (nor is there reason to believe that Carlyle ever saw the review), but however limited his audience, Froude’s carelessness added its falsehood to the black legend of Cromwell in Ireland.

The review gave ominous promise that Froude could not be trusted as copyist for all of his reverence for Carlyle’s “keen sagacity in discriminating between truth and falsehood, and such resolute, sustained diligence in forcing a path through the latter, to get at the former.” Froude concluded, “[W]e feel ashamed to offer Mr Carlyle so faint an acknowledgement as thanks for what he has done” (227). Froude had better reason to be ashamed. He began by making a mess of Carlyle’s Greek, continued with misquotations from the text, and culminated with a clumsy paraphrase of his master’s delicious Poe-like satire on the nature of historical research and “all this Rushworthian inarticulate rubbish-continent.” Carlyle’s “ever-deepening Dusk of Gods and Men” was Froudeianized into a quasi-Wagnerian “ever-deafening dusk of gods and men” (231). Brady, with so much of his book still ahead of him, cannot be faulted too much for failing to winkle out this innocent treachery. But the review begins a literary apostleship of which Oscar Wilde was probably thinking when he wrote in 1887, “Every great man nowadays has his disciples, and it is usually Judas who writes the biography” (*Court and Society* 378).

With consummate skill and elegant commentary, Brady takes us through Carlyle's impact on Froude, literary and personal, and dissects the form it took, making this the classic volume on how Carlyle influenced a disciple. Froude would always be the exemplary case for such a study, partly by making it unavoidable to Carlyleans, however much they might dislike him. But here the obvious is crisply charted, and the profound implications of the relationship are thoroughly mined. It is all done so well that it is easy to forget that Brady is a much more reliable biographer than Froude, and that his portrait of Froude is subtle and complex whereas Froude's portrait of Carlyle is vivid and crude. Brady cajoles where Froude bullies, but they resemble one another in focusing so clearly and firmly on their subject that minor characters tend to get short shrift. Brady uses his near-500 pages to such effect that we must believe a plea of insufficient space for an analysis of Froude and his intellectual allies, opponents, and rivals.

The ideal sequel of this magnificent book would transform our understanding of how Victorian Britain came to terms with Carlyle and with the writing of history from the false dawn of St. Neot to the apotheosis of Froude by his inaugural speech at Oxford, with his subsequent denigration by his opposite number Lord Acton in Cambridge. Brady has given us Froude's life and works; what we now need is the response of his contemporaries. Acton denounced Froude above all for being so Carlylean, but as David R. Sorensen brilliantly demonstrates elsewhere in this journal, Acton was far closer to Carlyle than he pretended. The positions among this group of historians were never as fixed as appearances suggest. Politically, Macaulay and Acton were both Whigs, but neither are so firmly Whig in historical interpretation as W. E. H. Lecky, whose loyalties to Carlyle were deep. Lecky survives chiefly as an essential historian for the student of eighteenth-century Ireland, where he initially won credentials for a very severe review of *The English in Ireland* in the January 1873 issue of *Macmillan's Magazine*. It is not the least of Froude's accomplishments that he turned Lecky from being a polemicist, essayist, and minor poet into a historian equal to Froude in stature, and superior to him in accuracy.

Lecky's response to Macaulay, Carlyle, and Froude was richly agnostic. Macaulay had given Victorian England a national myth

turning on the Protestant cause in 1688–89, but he was much more anxious to affirm constitutionalism than Protestantism. There were anti-Catholic moments in his writings, as well as anti-anti-Catholic ones. For all of the author's purposefulness, Macaulay's work was subject to his romantic intoxication by whatever he was writing at a specific point. Froude, who had spiritually come far closer to Catholicism than either Carlyle or Macaulay, lived the bulk of his life as the burnt child dreading the fire after his near-escape from Rome and Newman. The pain of his near miss was compounded by the fact that he had been excommunicated by his own father and (for a time) by his own College when his hostile attitudes became identified with a rejection of Anglicanism. The national myth that Froude then spun was far more fiercely Protestant than anything in Macaulay. Moreover, it followed Carlyle in demanding heroic contours for its major figures. Carlyle demanded heroes, but considered English politics after Cromwell a barren soil, unworthy of serious research. Froude would have Henry VIII, William Cecil Burghley, Ireland's John Fitzgibbon, Earl of Clare—and Carlyle. Above all, Froude's heroes must believe in the supremacy of force.

It is worth linking Lecky's critical comments on Carlyle and Froude in his review of *The English in Ireland* to the broader debate about Irish Home Rule in the 1880s. For example, in a withering comment Lecky observes that "it is a melancholy, and indeed a humiliating fact, that some of the most ardent eulogies of the policy of destroying certain forms of religion by the sword have come from men whose own opinions on these matters are notoriously heterodox or lax" (246). Elsewhere Lecky remarks that "[n]o system can strike more directly at the root of all that is noble and generous in human nature than this deification of success, this worship of force as the incarnation of right, this hatred of all that is weak and of all that is unsuccessful." The corruption engendered by such attitudes was painfully visible in the historical writings of both Carlyle and Froude: "It has led one great and venerable writer to make Frederick William a hero, and to become the eulogist of the invasion of Silesia, and the partition of Poland, while he speaks with contempt of the philanthropy of Howard, and of all the noble efforts that have been made to break the fetters of the slave. It has made another

great writer, the panegyrist of Henry VIII, the apologist for the use of judicial torture, and the author of one of the most uncompromising defenses of religious persecution it has ever been our fortune to pursue" (247).

Brady bestows an invaluable page on Lecky's "devastating reviews" (266) of Froude's *The English in Ireland*, and as always directs the reader to learned and instructive brief bibliographies for further study. Perhaps in his potential future study of Froude and his intellectual world, Brady might dig farther and find more. Like the authorities that he cites, he is over-conscious of Froude's and Lecky's ultimate agreement against Irish Home Rule in 1886, but their journeys there were very different. Froude travelled along his usual route, deploring any idea of giving Irish Catholics power within or without British rule. Of the grand swathe of Victorian intellectuals publicly denouncing Gladstone's proposal of a Parliament for Ireland, Froude must have been the most predictable. Despite the vehemence with which Carlyle could denounce anything and anyone, the Carlyles drew opponents together in their hospitality. One need only consider the friendship of the two great historians of Ireland ripening under Carlyle's improbably ecumenical roof, literally culminating over his dead body.

But Lecky was no convert to Froude. His first essay in Irish history, *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland* (1861), consisted in its earliest form of some anonymous biographical sketches, and finished with an eloquent and in many ways apposite denunciation of the new and formidable power of the Roman Catholic priesthood in Irish political life. If anything Lecky's hostility to the latest epiphanies of Irish nationalism burned with a resentment more personal than Froude's. Lecky could see his own Irish Protestant ruling class swept away into future oblivion, with Catholic clerical leadership apparently usurping what the English in or out of Ireland would regard as the natural leadership of landlords. In his 1903 preface to the much larger, greatly revised and drastically censored final edition of *Leaders*, Lecky declared that Froude "had led the way" (1: xv) to archival research in the Irish State Paper Office, but the characteristic generosity masked a double meaning. Froude's *The English in Ireland* roused Lecky's anger and sent him in the same direction, to produce a fairer, and indeed saner, version of Irish history.

His attempt to do justice to Irish Catholics was chivalric. He denounced Home Rule not consecutively but concurrently with his publication of successive volumes intended to vindicate the ancestors of the people he dread being given self government. And it is to Froude that we owe it! But in Froude, Lecky saw what Froude did not, that the arguments on the legitimacy, indeed the necessity, of force for England to control Ireland were readily adaptable by Irish and Irish-American nationalists eager to justify their own violence. Punch caricatured Daniel O'Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell as Frankensteins letting loose Irish terrorism of their manufacture. Lecky more wisely saw that the real Frankenstein was Froude's *The English in Ireland*.

Where were Carlyle's sympathies in this debate between Froude and Lecky? One might assume that they would lie with Froude and his gospel of force, and so Lecky assumed. But Carlyle had warmed to the Young Irelanders John Mitchel and Charles Gavan Duffy (who had their own differences), although he might happily argue with them—and the adverb is crucial. As Kenneth J. Fielding has memorably demonstrated, Carlyle's cultivation of them ran afoul of Froude's insistence that liberal Irish writers simply encouraged Irish incorrigibility.<sup>1</sup> That after Carlyle's death two conflicting versions of his Irish tour of 1849 came out from Froude and Gavan Duffy, symbolized the division between Carlyle in theory and in practice. Carlyle's most direct influence on Froude's historical writing was on *The History of England*. In his conscientious anxiety to avoid cannibalization of matter by Froude's reputable earlier biographers, Brady leaves aside Carlyle's valuable comments on Froude's drafts of the *History* as given by Herbert Paul in his *Life of Froude*. As a result, he misses an important opportunity to illustrate the gaps between Froude and his mentor.

The opening sentence alone in Carlyle's commentary would be worth reprinting in every English newspaper at the present day—a depressing reminder that England admired Carlyle but read Froude in greater quantity. Notes Carlyle: "Item, for *symmetry's* sake (were there nothing else) is not some outline of

<sup>1</sup> See Kenneth J. Fielding, "Ireland, John Mitchel," and David R. Sorensen, "A Very Strange Plant."

*spiritual* England a little to be expected? Or will that come piece-meal as we proceed? Hint, then, somewhere to that effect? Also remember a little there was an Europe as well as an England?” (80–81). Paul even noticed national differences leaving Carlyle wasting his critical sweetness on the desert air. Of Froude’s description of the English volunteers at Calais as “the finest people in all Europe’ . . . nurtured in profuse abundance on ‘great shins of beef,’” Carlyle responded: “This . . . seems to be exaggerated; what we call John-Bullish. The English are not, in fact, stronger, braver, truer, or better than the other Teutonic races; they never fought better than the Dutch, Prussians, Swedes, etc., have done. For the rest, modify a little: Frederick the Great was brought up on beer-sops (bread boiled in beer), Robert Burns on oatmeal porridge; and Mahomet and the Caliphs conquered the world on barley meal” (82). On the second chapter of Froude’s *History*, Carlyle maintained Scottish distaste for English parochialism: “Would it not be better to specify a little what Martin Luther is about, and keep up a chronological intercourse, more or less strict, with the great Continental ocean of Reform, the better to understand the *tides* from it that ebb and flow in these Narrow Seas?” But Froude had more hold on English loyalties. Paul commented on this advice that “a history of England loses identity if it becomes a history of Europe” (86). On the contrary, Carlyle rightly insisted, “there was an Europe as well as an England” (81), and English history was always part of the history of Europe.

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