

LETTERS OF JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE

EDITED BY RAYMOND M. BENNETT

This is the fourth and concluding article in a series of Froude letters edited by PROFESSOR BENNETT.

During his visit to the United States in the winter of 1872-1873 James Anthony Froude delivered a series of lectures on the "Relations between England and Ireland" at Cornell University. Among the undergraduate members of his audience was young Theodore Stanton, the son of Henry B. and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. "At the end of the course," Stanton wrote more than twenty-five years later,

we students serenaded him, and he good-naturedly responded with a speech, in which occurred this phrase:—"In England we would have made such a man as Ezra Cornell Prime Minister." I happened to be directly behind Mr. and Mrs. Ezra Cornell when this high compliment was paid to the founder of the University, and noticed that not a muscle of his plain face moved, though his wife looked up at her husband with a pleased smile.¹

This occasion—together with his "having applauded the lectures and the speech"—Stanton maintained, led to his brief correspondence with the historian during the years 1888-1894. At this time Stanton was living in Paris, where he acted as a representative and as an editor for several periodicals, both French and American. In this capacity he, from time to time, requested Froude to contribute articles to his publications: Froude's letters to Stanton in reply to these requests follow.²

¹ Theodore Stanton, "Some Froude Letters," *The Critic*, XXVII (1895), 399.

² Stanton included excerpts of Letters XXII, XXIII, XXIV, XXVI, XXVIII, and XXIX in *The Critic*, XXVII, 399-400, and of Letters XXIV and XXIX in "Some Froude Letters," *The Nation*, LXXIV (1902), 505.

XXII

5, Onslow Gardens, S.W.
Feb 7 [1888]

Dear M^r Stanton

The Articles of the Church of England say that "the condition of man after the Fall of Adam is such that he cannot of his own strength turn and prepare himself towards faith and calling upon God."³

How this may be I do not know or what the Fall of Adam has to do with it. But the condition of a poor man who has 70 years on his back is certainly such that he cannot after publishing a Book⁴ straightway turn & prepare himself towards writing letters in periodicals however excellent—or indeed towards writing anything at all.

I have nothing to say and therefore can say nothing. You must forgive me this time. Bye & Bye perhaps the spring's [*sic*] may begin to rise again—at present they are as dry as sand in summer.

I suppose that you sent Freemans contributions under a separate cover.⁵ The Postmaster at Salcombe⁶ must be studying them. They have not reached me, but will doubtless arrive in time.

Yours faithfully
J A Froude

XXIII

The Molt,
Salcombe.
August 14 [1888]

Dear M^r Stanton

Thirty years ago I should have answered your request with a hearty "Yes"⁷ and have done what I could for a cause which I then believed in. Belief however implies *hope* and old men, unless they are exceptional immortals, like Victor Hugo, have none. Perhaps I should not say *none* so absolutely, but old eyes are more on the far off horizon than on the immediate present, and for myself I prefer to look on.

³ Article X. "Of Free Will: The condition of Man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God." This letter was published in *The Critic*, XXVII, 399.

⁴ Froude's *Oceana, or England and Her Colonies* appeared in 1886 and his *The English in the West Indies, or The Bow of Ulysses* in 1888.

⁵ Stanton had also asked Edward Augustus Freeman (1823-1892), who was at this time Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford and who had for many years attacked Froude's historical work, for contributions to his journals. The Stanton Memorial Collection at Douglass College contains seven letters written by Freeman to Stanton concerning these contributions.

⁶ Froude's summer residence in south Devonshire.

⁷ Stanton had asked Froude to contribute a paper on republicanism. *The Critic*, XXVII, 399. Portions of this letter appeared there.

So far as I can judge the two characteristics of modern mankind, French, English or American, are levity and selfishness, and out of these qualities you cannot build up republics. The function of Radicalism in these days I conceive to be the burning up of rubbish. The grass will spring again bye & bye out of the ashes,⁸ but the burning process is disagreeable to me, however I may see it to be inevitable. The grass will not grow in my time nor can we guess what sort of grass it will be.

Will you kindly thank General Cluseret in my name for his two letters⁹ and tell him that his friend M. Brisbaum is unknown to me, nor have I any acquaintance in London who would be likely to find him?¹⁰ I have dropped out of all political circles taking no interest in any of them. I am contented to know that all sorts of people of whom I know nothing are working vigorously in their different ways. Out of their various efforts the future will bye & bye evolve itself, but of that future I can prophesy only that it will be very different from what any of us expect.

I will write to the General again when I have anything to say worth his attention. And I will try to make my handwriting more legible.

Yours faithfully
J A Froude

XXIV

The Molt,
Salcombe.
September 5 [1888]

Dear M^r Stanton

The *Deux Mondes* which you have kindly sent me reminds me that I have not answered your last letter. I am sorry to say that I can do *nothing* for you at present. At my time of life I can do but one thing at a time, and my hands are full.

M. Filon has taken a great deal of trouble about me, and tells me many things about myself and my history which I was not aware of.¹¹ It is well to

⁸ An echo of Carlyle's Phoenix theory.

⁹ Apparently Stanton became acquainted with Cluseret in the spring of 1888, for Cluseret's signed receipt of fifty francs received from Stanton "for a number of manuscript letters" is dated June 1st of that year.

¹⁰ Nor have I been successful in identifying Brisbaum.

¹¹ This paragraph and the postscript to the letter appeared in *The Critic*, XXVII, 399. Augustin Filon, who had served as a tutor to the Prince Imperial, the son of Napoleon III and Empress Eugènia, and who had accompanied him to England where he lived several years, published "Les Historiens Anglais: J.-A. Froude," in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, LXXXIII (Sept. 1, 1887), 68-103. In his concluding paragraph he wrote: "Le labeur de M. Froude—cet effort opiniâtre et désintéressé de quarante années—est-il donc un labeur perdu? Carlyle aurait aimé à porter sur un adversaire un pareil verdict. Je me garderai d'ne conclusion aussi arrogante et aussi dure. Ce n'est jamais en vain qu'un homme a mis au jour des milliers de faits, éveillé

know however what strangers think of one, and he seems to bear me no particular malice. I infer him to be a true believer in the Holy Catholic Faith and I am therefore the more beholden to him that he thinks no worse of me than he appears to do.

Cluserets book perplexes me.¹² I cannot undertake to find a translator for it. The present state of society may be rotten as he thinks it is, and may be all going to the Devil, but if the Devil is to come for it in the shape of Dynamite and the massacre of the bourgeoisie which he seems to recommend, I hope I shall be in another place before the visitation takes effect.

If your business brings you to London after the end of October (I stay here till then) I hope you will let me see you at 5 Onslow Gardens

South Kensington

Yours faithfully

J A Froude

M. Filon is strangely misinformed in his thinking that Carlyle proposed to the late Emperor to educate the Prince Imperial for him. He saw Louis Napoleon once before the Coup d'État but I shall be more astonished to learn that he held any communication with him afterward.¹³

des millions de pensées dans l'esprit de ceux qui l'admirent ou le combattent. Dans ses vingt-cinq volumes, M. Froude n'a pas mis seulement son propre talent, il y a reflété quelques traits de l'âme anglaise: l'individualisme religieux, la moralité brutale mais saine, la haine de l'étranger, l'orgueille granitique qu'aucune leçon n'entame, qu'aucune défaite ne corbe, et jusqu'à ces brusques accès de justice et de franchise qui préviennent le blâme et déconcertent la moquerie. A ce titre, il est, lui aussi, *a representative man*, c'est-à-dire un homme qui pense et parle pour beaucoup d'autres. Il vivra par les préjugés et par les passions qu'il a exprimés, et bon gré mal gré il faudra lui faire une place dans l'Histoire des livres et les idées au XIX^e siècle."

¹² This paragraph was published in *The Nation*, LXXIV, 505. The book referred to was Cluseret's *Mémoires* (2 vols.; Paris: Jules Lévy, 1887).

¹³ In a footnote (p. 93) Filon added: "M. Froude sait-il que, bien peu de temps après, Carlyle faisait offrir à Napoléon de diriger l'éducation de prince impérial? La proposition ne fut ni agréé ni même discutée à Chislehurst: l'empereur eut un mélancolique haussement d'épaules et ce fut tout." Writing to Charles Eliot Norton, Carlyle said of Napoleon III: "I never talked with him but once, at a dinner at the Stanleys', where I sat next him and he tried to convert me to his notions but such ideas as he possessed had no real fire or capacity for flame in them. His mind was a kind of extinct sulphur pit, and gave out a kind of smell of rotten sulphur." *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, I, 452-58, quoted by Wilson and MacArthur, *Carlyle in Old Age (1865-1881)*, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1934), pp. 277-78. But Froude recorded another meeting with the "Copper Captain," as Carlyle nicknamed Louis Napoleon: "Prince Napoleon had once spent an evening in Cheyne Row. Carlyle had spoken his mind freely, as he always did, and the Prince had gone away inquiring 'if that man was mad.' Carlyle's madness was clearer-sighted than Imperial cunning. He regarded the Emperor's presence on a throne which he had won by so evil means as a moral indignity, and had never doubted that in the end Providence would in some way set its mark upon him." Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London, 1834-1881* (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), II, 340.

XXV

5, Onslow Gardens, S.W.
Feb 21 [1889]

Dear M^r Stanton

I thank you for your kind offer, but my book must take its chance in the ordinary way. I can do no more than write it. If worth reading the world will read it. If not they will let it alone.

I have been much interested in Cluserets election,¹⁴ and in his views of the state of things in France which you have been good enough to send me. When you see him give him my best remembrances and good wishes.

Yours faithfully

J A Froude

XXVI

The Molt,
Salcombe,
Kingsbridge.
Sept 14 [1890]

Dear Sir

Your proposal has a certain temptation for me.¹⁵ The uncertain state of my health makes it impossible for me to make engagements in which I am to be bound to time, but to write occasional letters when I have something to say and feel able to say may not be impossible for me. But I must ask you first to explain to me the name and nature of the Journal in which the letters are to appear. I have no special politics. We are all going down stream. Liberals and Conservatives pulling on the opposite sides of the boat, but both in the same direction. But there are certain sympathies social & spiritual which determine when or where we are willing to take a turn at the oars. When I hear from you again I will give you a positive answer.

I have heard nothing of Cluseret for several years. I see his name from time to time, and am always interested in him. I conceive however that as there is no longer any real opposition to the general drift of things the age of revolution is over or at least suspended. Cluseret in the last book of his which I read seemed to have no hope of good from anything else, and therefore I have not cared particularly of what he might be about. Convey my good wishes to him if you have an opportunity

and believe me

faithfully yrs

J A Froude

Theodore Stanton Esq

¹⁴ In 1888 Cluseret was elected to the Chamber of Deputies to represent the workmen of Toulon, a post which he held until his death in 1900.

¹⁵ Except for the last sentence of the first paragraph, this letter appeared in *The Critic*, XXVII, 399.

XXVII

5 Onslow Gardens, S.W.
October 29¹⁶

Dear Sir

I did not understand from you that you wanted any immediate communication from me. You asked, I thought, for occasional letters when particular subjects rose on which I might have something to say.

There is nothing of this kind at present, and I myself have my own work to attend to. Perhaps you will let me hear more precisely what you wish me to do, and I can then tell you if I can do it

Yours faithfully
J A Froude

Neither Gladstone nor the Irish members have any distinct idea what they propose to do or even wish

XXVIII

The Molt,
Salcombe,
Kingsbridge.
May 10 [1891]

Dear M^r Stanton

The extracts from Horace Greeleys letters which you sent, amuse and surprise me.¹⁷ I am quite aware that the Chapter which he speaks of contains

¹⁶ This letter bears the note: "Written to me in 1890. Theodore Stanton."

¹⁷ Parts of the first two paragraphs of this letter were published in *The Critic*, XXVII, 399. Attached to this letter are the following paragraphs in Stanton's handwriting, copied from "Some Familiar Letters by Horace Greeley," *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, May 1891, and likewise quoted in *The Critic*: "You ask me as to a history of England since 1700. I think Lord Mahon's comes next in point to Macaulay's, but it is too stately and political. Yet I wish you wd. procur the 1st vol. of Froude and taste it. I read nothing but periodicals, and know very little; but I once took up Froude and read its best chapter,—a picture of English every-day life under Henry VIII, say about A.D. 1500,—and it delighted me. I tried to do something like it in the 1st chap. of my "American Conflict," but fell miserably short, for want of time and study and genius. If *you* read that chapter, you would not stop there but read more. I guess Elizabeth was never dealt with severely enough till brave Froude took her in hand; while he is even *too* hard on Mary Queen of Scots, demon though she was. I write from hasty snatches here and there, mainly in extracts given in reviews, but I feel sure that Froude will interest you. The first chapter assures me that he knows what history means." A second paragraph, dated March 8, 1872, from the Union League Club, New York, reads: "You are right in not choosing to revive the fearful memories of our late war; but sometime you will read Froude,—at least the opening chapter,—and then I want you to read the first chap. also of my "Conflict," so as to mark the difference b't. the work of a great historian and that of a little one. (I cd. have done better if I had not b[een] hurried.) The fact that I never looked into Froude till 8 yrs. after my Vol. I was printed will emphasize the

truths, but he is the last person who I could have expected to have found it out, in the storm of contempt and denunciation with which it was received in England.

I suppose it was *written* pretty fast, I do not recollect, but it contains the result of years of varied reading. I am now curious to see M^r Greeley's book which I hitherto never looked at. I knew him only by reputation, by his public speeches and by the scene at New York on the day of his funeral which I can never forget.

Barnum had dressed his house in the 5th Avenue from roof to area with lawn, and across the front was written in huge letters

It is Done¹⁸

Barnum himself is done also, but another Amurath will succeed him.¹⁹ The age is fertile in such births.

Yours faithfully

J A Froude

Can you throw any light on Steulbert's [?] affairs. I knew him well and was astonished.²⁰

XXIX

Woodcot,
Kingsbridge,
South Devon.

June 29 [1894]

Dear M^r Stanton

I can give you no help about Count Orsi. I had ceased to edit *Fraser's* in 1879, and Allingham who succeeded me is dead.²¹

coincidence in the scope and drift of the 2 chaps. But mine was dictated at a single sitting; his, I judge, was slowly elaborated as it shd. h[ave] b[een]. It is the best chap. of hist. that I ever read."

¹⁸ On the day of Greeley's funeral, December 4, 1872, clubs, public buildings, and private homes were draped with mourning, and "The residence of Mr. P. T. Barnum, No 438 Fifth-ave., was festooned with black and white muslin, and displayed the inscription 'It is done.'" *New York Daily Tribune*, December 5, 1872, p. 1.

¹⁹ Amurath III, the sixth emperor of the Turks, strangled all his brothers. His reign, 1574-1595, marks the beginning of the decline of Ottoman power.

"This is the English, not the Turkish court,
Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
But Harry Harry."—*Henry IV*, V, ii

I am indebted to a former colleague, Dr. Mary H. Scanlon, for directing me to this quotation.

²⁰ I have been unable to identify this point.

²¹ Records indicate that Froude edited *Fraser's Magazine* from 1860 until 1874 and that William Allingham continued in this position until 1879. Froude may have served as a consultant during Allingham's editorship. Longmans Green and Company, who published *Fraser's* and who lost their older records during an air attack on London late in

I am interested in what you tell me about Cluseret.²² He used to write to me sometimes. I should like well to hear what he thinks about the present phase of the revolution. My own opinion has long been that we are drifting toward military government again. I mean all of us, France England and America, too. Constitutional governments are too weak to deal with daggers and dynamite.²³ Your own people lynch the niggers for fear the courts should be too gentle with them. Carlyle said to me in 1871, "The people are saying to the Upper Classes, if you cannot mend this accursed state of society, by God we will destroy it and you, and ourselves too and so make an end."²⁴ Society does not mean to be destroyed just yet, and if free Institutions are in the way, will end them first.

If Cluseret can spare me half an hour I should value much a few words from him

Yours faithfully

J A Froude

My usual address *now* is Oxford to which I have drifted back in my old days. I am spending the summer in Devonshire.²⁵

1940, cannot account for any official association between Froude and their periodical after 1874. Allingham died in 1889.

²² Stanton published this and the following paragraph in *The Critic*, XXVII, 400, and this paragraph was also quoted in *The Nation*, LXXIV, 505.

²³ To Sir John Skelton Froude wrote on February 23, 1893: "What a time we live in! It is like the breaking up of the ice on the Neva,—great cracks opening, preliminary to the general split-up. Carlyle always said that the catastrophe of the Constitution was very near; and perhaps it is well that it should come now before the character of the people is further demoralised. But there will be a fine Shaking of the nations when the big central mass breaks up." Skelton, *Table-Talk of Shirley*, p. 218. And two months later he again wrote Skelton: "Let them do as they will with Ireland; it will be crushed down again before ten years are out, and I shall not be surprised if our Parliamentary System goes down along with it. Lord Derby once said to me that kings and aristocracies can govern empires, but one people cannot govern another people. If we have to choose between the Empire and the Constitution, I think I know which way it will be." *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20.

²⁴ On May 29, 1871, following the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune, Carlyle wrote to his brother John: "I am much in the dark about the real meaning of all these quasi-infernal Bedlamisms, upon which no newspaper that I look into has anything to say except 'horrible,' 'shameful,' and 'O Lord, I thank thee that we Englishmen are not as other men.' One thing I can see in these murderous ragings by the poorest classes in Paris, that they are a tremendous proclamation to the upper classes in all countries: 'Our condition, after eighty-two years of struggling, O ye quack upper classes, is still unimproved; more intolerable from year to year, and from revolution to revolution; and by the Eternal Powers, if you cannot mend it, we will blow up the world, along with ourselves and you.'" Quoted by Froude, *Thomas Carlyle*, II, 345-46.

²⁵ Following the death of Freeman in 1892, Froude was offered the Regius Professorship of Modern History at Oxford. On April 8, 1892, he wrote to Skelton: "The temptation of going back to Oxford in a respectable way was too much for me. I must just do the best I can, and trust that I shall not be haunted by Freeman's ghost." Skelton, *Table-Talk of Shirley*, p. 216. Although at first Froude enjoyed his return to the University,

To this letter Stanton added the following note: "I received this the day Carnot was buried. T.S."²⁶

he became dissatisfied with his Tuesday and Friday lectures on Erasmus, the English Seamen in the 16th century, and the Council of Trent primarily because he had no means of getting to know the students who flocked to his lectures. On June 22, a week before this letter to Stanton, he expressed his dissatisfaction with "the teaching business," which he felt was "unsuited altogether to an old stager like myself." He also asserted, "Education has gone mad, and is turned into a mere examination Mill," a tyrannical system from which he could not escape. *Ibid.*, p. 222. During the long holiday which he spent at Kingsbridge, his health became alarmingly worse; there on October 20, 1894—less than four months after the date of this letter—he died.

²⁶ Marie François Sadi Carnot (1837-1894) was elected fourth President of the Third Republic in December 1887. On June 24, 1894, after having spoken at a banquet in Lyons, he was stabbed by the Italian anarchist Caserio, and he died almost immediately. He was given an elaborate funeral in the Panthéon.