

....In reading Mr. Charles Eliot Norton's *Early Letters of Thomas Carlyle* one should begin with the Appendix, which is the key to the publication, contains the reason for it, and a large part of the misapprehensions it is designated to correct. This Appendix is a running commentary on Mr. Froude's work, as editor of *Carlyle's Life and Letters*. It brings him to book at all points, and leaves him in a position from which it would seem impossible for him to be relieved without confessing gross carelessness. Mr. Norton's relation to this matter has been so fully and frequently explained in the public press that we assume it to be generally understood. The correspondence printed in this volume begins with a letter from his father, which "is apparently the earliest that has been preserved of the long correspondence between Carlyle and his family." It ends on the eve of his marriage to Miss Welsh, Oct. 17th, 1826. It includes a fair number of Miss Welsh's letters to him and of his to her. The bulk of the correspondence is with other persons. Mr. Norton's work as editor is limited to the choice arrangement and correct publication of the manuscript, with occasional footnotes explanatory or in sharp correction of Mr. Froude's mistakes, which are very curious. The singular quality of them is that they so often simply reverse the meaning, as, for example, in the letter to his mother, on page 109, Carlyle writes of "the affectionate concern which you express for me in that *brief* letter." Froude prints "that *long* letter." Mr. Norton fixes on him a long list of such inversions of the text. When he attempts to summarize, the case is worse because the inversions apply to larger matters, such, for example, as Miss Welsh's relation to Edward Irving, which, in the light of these publications, appears to have been grossly misrepresented by Froude. As it now stands there is nothing in it that reflects even the shade of a shadow on Carlyle or his wife. Mr. Irving does not appear as well. Mr. Froude is shown not only to have blundered as an editor, but, in judgment, is at fault in summarizing facts and in stating what the evidence shows. In this respect he seems to have acted the part of a bad friend and to have darkened the features of his portraiture unnecessarily. Neither in the case of Carlyle nor of his wife did love perform for them the much needed office of making their lives happy. There was in both of them an irritable Scotch temperament, and too little self-control for love to take its even course. But love was there in its purity and unselfish force, and such love as ought not to be shadowed by the specter Froude has invoked of the lingering of an old passion.