"like wildfire through London." At the close of the previous year he had published his long pamphlet on *Chartism*, it having proved unsuitable for its original destination as an article in the *Quarterly*. Here first he clearly enunciates, "Might is right"—one of the few strings on which, with all the variations of a political Paganini, he played through life. This tract is on the border line between the old modified Radicalism of *Sartor* and the less modified Conservatism of his later years. In 1840 Carlyle still speaks of himself as a man foiled; but at the close of that year all fear of penury was over, and in the following he was able to refuse a Chair of History at Edinburgh, as later another at St. Andrews. Meanwhile his practical power and genuine zeal for the diffusion of knowledge appeared in his foundation of the London Library, which brought him into more or less close contact with Tennyson, Milman, Forster, Helps, Spedding, Gladstone, and other leaders of the thought and action of the time.

There is little in Carlyle's life at any time that can be called eventful. From first to last it was that of a retired scholar, a thinker demanding sympathy while craving after solitude, and the frequent inconsistency of the two requirements was the source of much of his unhappiness. Our authorities for all that we do not see in his published works are found in his voluminous correspondence, copious autobiographical jottings, and the three volumes of his wife's letters and journal dating from the commencement of the struggle for recognition in London, and extending to the year of her death. Criticism of these remarkable documents, the theme of so much controversy, belongs rather to a life of Mrs. Carlyle; but a few salient facts may here be noted. It appears on the surface that husband and wife had in common several marked peculiarities; on the intellectual side they had not only an extraordinary amount

but the same kind of ability, superhumanly keen insight, and wonderful power of expression, both with tongue and pen; the same intensity of feeling, thoroughness, and courage to look the ugliest truths full in the face; in both, these high qualities were marred by a tendency to attribute the worst motives to almost every one. Their joint contempt for all whom they called "fools," *i.e.* the immense majority of mankind, was a serious drawback to the pleasure of their company. It is indeed obvious that, whether or not it be correct to say that "his nature was the soft one, her's the hard," Mrs. Carlyle was the severer cynic of the two. Much of her writing confirms the impression of those who have heard her talk that no one, not even her husband, was safe from the shafts of her ridicule. Her pride in his genius knew no bounds, and it is improbable that she would have tolerated from any outsider a breath of adverse criticism; but she herself claimed many liberties she would not grant. She was clannish as Carlyle himself, yet even her relations are occasionally made to appear ridiculous. There was nothing in her affections, save her memory of her own father, corresponding to his devotion to his whole family. With equal penetration and greater scorn, she had no share of his underlying reverence. Such limited union as was granted to her married life had only soured the mocking-bird spirit of the child that derided her grandfather's accent on occasion of his bringing her back from a drive by another route to "varry the shane."

Carlyle's constant wailings take from him any claim to such powers of endurance as might justify his later attacks on Byron. But neither had his wife any real reticence. Whenever there were domestic troubles—flitting, repairing, building, etc., on every occasion of clamour or worry, he, with scarce pardonable oblivion of physical delicacy greater than his own, went off, generally to visit distinguished

friends, and left behind him the burden and the heat of the day. She performed her unpleasant work and all associated duties with a practical genius that he complimented as "triumphant." She performed them, ungrudgingly perhaps, but never without complaint; her invariable practice was to endure and tell. "Quelle vie," she writes in 1837 to John Sterling, whom she seems to have really liked, "let no woman who values peace of soul ever marry an author"; and again to the same in 1839, "Carlyle had to sit on a jury two days, to the ruin of his whole being, physical, moral, and intellectual," but "one gets to feel a sort of indifference to his growling." Conspicuous exceptions, as in the case of the Shelleys, the Dobells, and the Brownings, have been seen, within or almost within our memories, but as a rule it is a risk for two supersensitive and nervous people to live together: when they are sensitive in opposite ways the alliance is fatal; fortunately the Carlyles were, in this respect, in the main sympathetic. With most of the household troubles which occupy so exaggerated a space in the letters and journals of both—papering, plastering, painting, deceitful or disorderly domestics—general readers have so little concern that they have reason to resent the number of pages wasted in printing them; but there was one common grievance of wider and more urgent interest, to which we must here again finally refer, premising that it affected not one period but the whole of their lives, *i.e.* their constant, only half-effectual struggle with the modern Hydra-headed Monster, the reckless and needless Noises produced or permitted, sometimes increased rather than suppressed, by modern civilisation. Mrs. Carlyle suffered almost as much as her husband from these murderers of sleep and assassins of repose; on her mainly fell the task of contending with the cochin-chinas, whose senseless shrieks went "through her

like a sword," of abating a "Der Freischütz of cats," or a pandemonium of barrel organs, of suppressing macaws for which Carlyle "could neither think nor live"; now mitigating the scales on a piano, now conjuring away, by threat or bribe, from their neighbours a shoal of "demon fowls"; lastly of superintending the troops of bricklayers, joiners, iron-hammerers employed with partial success to convert the top story of 5 Cheyne Row into a sound-proof room. Her hard-won victories in this field must have agreeably added to the sense of personality to which she resolutely clung. Her assertion, "Instead of boiling up individuals into the species, I would draw a chalk circle round every individuality," is the essence of much of her mate's philosophy; but, in the following to Sterling, she somewhat bitterly protests against her own absorption: "In spite of the honestest efforts to annihilate my I—ity or merge it in what the world doubtless considers my better half, I still find myself a self-subsisting, and, alas, self-seeking me."

The ever-restive consciousness of being submerged is one of the dominant notes of her journal, the other is the sense of being even within the circle unrecognised. "C. is a domestic wandering Jew. . . . When he is at work I hardly ever see his face from breakfast to dinner." . . . "Poor little wretch that I am, . . . I feel as if I were already half-buried . . . in some intermediate state between the living and the dead. . . . Oh, so lonely." These are among the *suspiria de profundis* of a life which her husband compared to "a great joyless stoicism," writing to the brother, whom he had proposed as a third on their first home-coming:—"Solitude, indeed, is sad as Golgotha, but it is not mad like Bedlam; absence of delirium is possible only for me in solitude"; a sentiment almost literally acted on. In his offering of penitential cypress, referring to his wife's delight in the ultimate success of his work, he says, "She

flickered round me like a perpetual radiance." But during their joint lives their numerous visits and journeys were made at separate times or apart. They crossed continually on the roads up and down, but when absent wrote to one another often the most affectionate letters. Their attraction increased, contrary to Newton's law, in the *direct* ratio of the square of the distance, and when it was stretched beyond the stars the long-latent love of the survivor became a worship.

Carlyle's devotion to his own kin, blood of his blood and bone of his bone, did not wait for any death to make itself declared. His veneration for his mother was reciprocated by a confidence and pride in him unruffled from cradle to grave, despite their widening theoretic differences; for with less distinct acknowledgment she seems to have practically shared his belief, "it matters little what a man holds in comparison with how he holds it." But on his wife's side the family bond was less absolute, and the fact adds a tragic interest to her first great bereavement after the settlement in London. There were many callers—increasing in number and eminence as time went on—at Cheyne Row; but naturally few guests. Among these, Mrs. Carlyle's mother paid, in 1838, her first and last visit, unhappily attended by some unpleasant friction. Grace Welsh (through whom her daughter derived the gipsy vein) had been in early years a beauty and a woman of fashion, endowed with so much natural ability that Carlyle, not altogether predisposed in her favour, confessed she had just missed being a genius; but she was accustomed to have her way, and old Walter of Penfillan confessed to having seen her in fifteen different humours in one evening. Welcomed on her arrival, misunderstandings soon arose. Carlyle himself had to interpose with conciliatory advice to his wife to bear with her mother's humours. One

household incident, though often quoted, is too characteristic to be omitted. On occasion of an evening party, Mrs. Welsh, whose ideas of hospitality, if not display, were perhaps larger than those suited for her still struggling hosts, had lighted a show of candles for the entertainment, whereupon the mistress of the house, with an air of authority, carried away two of them, an act which her mother resented with tears. The penitent daughter, in a mood like that which prompted Johnson to stand in the Uttoxeter market-place, left in her will that the candles were to be preserved and lit about her coffin, round which, nearly thirty years later, they were found burning. Carlyle has recorded their last sight of his mother-in-law in a few of his many graphic touches. It was at Dumfries in 1841, where she had brought Jane down from Templand to meet and accompany him back to the south. They parted at the door of the little inn, with deep suppressed emotion, perhaps overcharged by some presentiment; Mrs. Welsh looking sad but bright, and their last glimpse of her was the feather in her bonnet waving down the way to Lochmaben gate. Towards the close of February 1842 news came that she had had an apoplectic stroke, and Mrs. Carlyle hurried north, stopping to break the journey at her uncle's house in Liverpool; when there she was so prostrated by the sudden announcement of her mother's death that she was prohibited from going further, and Carlyle came down from London in her stead. On reaching Templand he found that the funeral had already taken place. He remained six weeks, acting as executor in winding up the estate, which now, by the previous will, devolved on his wife. To her during the interval he wrote a series of pathetic letters. Reading these,—which, with others from Haddington in the following years make an anthology of tenderness and ruth, reading them alongside of his angry

invectives, with his wife's own accounts of the bilious earthquakes and peevish angers over petty cares; or worse, with ebullitions of jealousy assuming the mask of contempt, we again revert to the biographer who has said almost all that ought to be said of Carlyle, and more: "It seemed as if his soul was divided, like the Dioscuri, as if one part of it was in heaven, and the other in the place opposite heaven. But the misery had its origin in the same sensitiveness of nature which was so tremulously alive to soft and delicate emotion. Men of genius . . . are like the wind-harp which answers to the breath that touches it, now low and sweet, now rising into wild swell or angry scream, as the strings are swept by some passing gust." This applies completely to men like Burns, Byron, Heine, and Carlyle, less to the Miltons, Shakespeares, and Goethes of the world.

The crisis of bereavement, which promised to bind the husband and wife more closely together, brought to an end a dispute in which for once Mrs. Carlyle had her way. During the eight years over which we have been glancing, Carlyle had been perpetually grumbling at his Chelsea life: the restless spirit, which never found peace on this side of the grave, was constantly goading him with an impulse of flight and change, from land to sea, from shore to hills; anywhere or everywhere, at the time, seemed better than where he was. America and the Teufelsdröckh wanderings abandoned, he reverted to the idea of returning to his own haunts. A letter to Emerson in 1839 best expresses his prevalent feeling:—

> This foggy Babylon tumbles along as it was wont: and as for my particular case uses me not worse but better than of old. Nay, there are many in it that have a real friendliness for me. . . . The worst is the sore tear and wear of this huge roaring Niagara of things on such a poor excitable set of nerves as mine.

The velocity of all things, of the very word you hear on the streets, is at railway rate : joy itself is unenjoyable, to be avoided like pain ; there is no wish one has so pressingly as for quiet. Ah me ! I often swear I will be *buried* at least in free breezy Scotland, out of this insane hubbub . . . if ever the smallest competence of worldly means be mine, I will fly this whirlpool as I would the Lake of Malebolge.

The competence had come, the death of Mrs. Welsh leaving to his wife and himself practically from £200 to £300 a year: why not finally return to the home of their early restful secluded life, "in reductâ valle," with no noise around it but the trickle of rills and the nibbling of sheep? Craigenputtock was now their own, and within its "four walls" they would begin a calmer life. Fortunately Mrs. Carlyle, whose shrewd practical instinct was never at fault, saw through the fallacy, and set herself resolutely against the scheme. Scotland had lost much of its charm for her —a year later she refused an invitation from Mrs. Aitken, saying, "I could do nothing at Scotsbrig or Dumfries but cry from morning to night." She herself had enough of the Hill of the Hawks, and she knew that within a year Carlyle would again be calling it the Devil's Den and lamenting Cheyne Row. He gave way with the protest, "I cannot deliberately mean anything that is harmful to you," and certainly it was well for him.

There is no record of an original writer or artist coming from the north of our island to make his mark in the south, succeeding, and then retracing his steps. Had Carlyle done so, he would probably have passed from the growing recognition of a society he was beginning to find on the whole congenial, to the solitude of intellectual ostracism. Scotland may be breezy, but it is not conspicuously free. Erratic opinions when duly veiled are generally allowed ; but this concession is of little worth. On the tolerance of those

who have no strong belief in anything, Carlyle, thinking possibly of rose-water Hunt and the litterateurs of his tribe, expressed himself with incisive and memorable truth: "It is but doubt and indifference. *Touch the thing they do believe and value, their own self-conceit: they are rattlesnakes then.*"[1] Tolerance for the frank expression of views which clash with the sincere or professed faith of the majority is rare everywhere; in Scotland rarest. English Churchmen, high and broad, were content to condone the grim Calvinism still infiltrating Carlyle's thoughts, and to smile, at worst, at his idolatry of the iconoclast who said, "the idolater shall die the death." But the reproach of "Pantheism" was for long fatal to his reception across the Tweed.

Towards the close of this period he acknowledged that London was "among improper places" the best for "writing books, after all the one use of living" for him; its inhabitants "greatly the best" he "had ever walked with," and its aristocracy—the Marshalls, Stanleys, Hollands, Russells, Ashburtons, Lansdownes, who held by him through life—its "choicest specimens." Other friendships equally valued he made among the leading authors of the age. Tennyson sought his company, and Connop Thirlwall. Arnold of Rugby wrote in commendation of the *French Revolution* and hailed *Chartism*. Thackeray admired him and reviewed him well. In Macaulay, condemned to limbo under the suspicion of having reviewed him ill, he found, when the suspicion was proved unjust, a promise of better things. As early as 1839 Sterling had written an article in the *Westminster*, which gave him intense pleasure; for while contemning praise in almost the same words as Byron did, he loved it equally well. In 1840 he had crossed the Rubicon that lies between aspiration and attainment. The populace

[1] The italics are Mr. Froude's.

might be blind or dumb, the "rattlesnakes"—the "irresponsible indolent reviewers," who from behind a hedge pelt every wrestler till they found societies for the victor—might still obscurely hiss; but Carlyle was at length safe by the verdict of the "Conscript Fathers."

CHAPTER V

CHEYNE ROW

[1842–1853]

THE bold venture of coming to London with a lean purse, few friends, and little fame had succeeded: but it had been a terrible risk, and the struggle had left scars behind it. To this period of his life we may apply Carlyle's words,—made use of by himself at a later date,—"The battle was over and we were sore wounded." It is as a maimed knight of modern chivalry, who sounded the *réveil* for an onslaught on the citadels of sham, rather than as a prophet of the future that his name is likely to endure in the history of English thought. He has also a place with Scott amongst the recreators of bygone ages, but he regarded their annals less as pictures than as lesson-books. His aim was that expressed by Tennyson to "steal fire from fountains of the past," but his design was to admonish rather than "to glorify the present." This is the avowed object of the second of his distinctly political works, which following on the track of the first, *Chartism*, and written in a similar spirit, takes higher artistic rank. *Past and Present*, suggested by a visit to the poorhouse of St. Ives and by reading the chronicle of *Jocelin de Brakelond*, was undertaken as a duty, while he was mainly engaged on a

greater work,—the duty he felt laid upon him to say something that should bear directly on the welfare of the people, especially of the poor around him. It was an impulse similar to that which inspired *Oliver Twist*, but Carlyle's remedies were widely different from those of Dickens. Not merely more kindness and sympathy, but paternal government, supplying work to the idle inmates of the workhouse, and insisting, by force if need be, on it being done, was his panacea. It had been Abbot Samson's way in his strong government of the Monastery of St. Edmunds, and he resolved, half in parable, half in plain sermon, to recommend it to the Ministers Peel and Russell.

In this mood, the book was written off in the first seven weeks of 1843, a *tour de force* comparable to Johnson's writing of *Rasselas*. Published in April, it at once made a mark by the opposition as well as by the approval it excited. Criticism of the work—of its excellences, which are acknowledged, and its defects as manifold—belongs to a review of the author's political philosophy: it is enough here to note that it was remarkable in three ways. *First*, the object of its main attack, *laissez faire*, being a definite one, it was capable of having and had some practical effect. Mr. Froude exaggerates when he says that Carlyle killed the pseudo-science of orthodox political economy; for the fundamental truths in the works of Turgot, Smith, Ricardo, and Mill cannot be killed: but he pointed out that, like Aristotle's leaden rule, the laws of supply and demand must be made to bend; as Mathematics made mechanical must allow for friction, so must Economics leave us a little room for charity. There is ground to believe that the famous Factory Acts owed some of their suggestions to *Past and Present*. Carlyle always speaks respectfully of the future Lord Shaftesbury. "I heard Milnes saying," notes the Lady Sneerwell of real life, "at the Shuttleworths that

Lord Ashley was the greatest man alive: he was the only man that Carlyle praised in his book. I daresay he knew I was overhearing him." But, while supplying arguments and a stimulus to philanthropists, his protests against philanthropy as an adequate solution of the problem of human misery became more pronounced. About the date of the conception of this book we find in the Journal:—

> Again and again of late I ask myself in whispers, is it the duty of a citizen to paint mere heroisms? . . . Live to make others happy! Yes, surely, at all times, so far as you can. But at bottom that is not the aim of my life . . . it is mere hypocrisy to call it such, as is continually done nowadays. . . . Avoid cant. Do not think that your life means a mere searching in gutters for fallen figures to wipe and set up.

Past and Present, in the *second* place, is notable as the only considerable consecutive book—unless we also except the *Life of Sterling*,—which the author wrote without the accompaniment of wrestlings, agonies, and disgusts. *Thirdly*, though marking a stage in his mental progress, the fusion of the refrains of *Chartism* and *Hero-Worship*, and his first clear breach with Mazzini and with Mill, the book was written as an interlude, when he was in severe travail with his greatest contribution to English history. The last rebuff which Carlyle encountered came, by curious accident, from the *Westminster*, to which Mill had engaged him to contribute an article on "Oliver Cromwell." While this was in preparation, Mill had to leave the country on account of his health, and gave the review in charge to an Aberdonian called Robertson, who wrote to stop the progress of the essay with the message that *he* had decided to undertake the subject himself. Carlyle was angry; but, instead of sullenly throwing the MS. aside, he set about constructing on its basis a History of the Civil War.

Numerous visits and tours during the following three

years, though bringing him into contact with new and interesting personalities, were mainly determined by the resolve to make himself acquainted with the localities of the war; and his knowledge of them has contributed to give colour and reality to the finest battle-pieces in modern English prose. In 1842 with Dr. Arnold he drove from Rugby fifteen miles to Naseby, and the same year, after a brief yachting trip to Belgium—in the notes on which the old Flemish towns stand out as clearly as in Longfellow's verse—he made his pilgrimage to St. Ives and Ely Cathedral, where Oliver two centuries before had called out to the recalcitrant Anglican in the pulpit, "Cease your fooling and come down." In July 1843 Carlyle made a trip to South Wales; to visit first a worthy devotee called Redwood, and then Bishop Thirlwall near Carmarthen. "A right solid simple-hearted robust man, very strangely swathed," is the visitor's meagre estimate of one of our most classic historians.

On his way back he carefully reconnoitred the field of Worcester. Passing his wife at Liverpool, where she was a guest of her uncle, and leaving her to return to London and brush up Cheyne Row, he walked over Snowdon from Llanberis to Beddgelert with his brother John. He next proceeded to Scotsbrig, then north to Edinburgh, and then to Dunbar, which he contrived to visit on the 3rd of September, an anniversary revived in his pictured page with a glow and force to match which we have to revert to Bacon's account of the sea-fight of the *Revenge*. From Dunbar he returned to Edinburgh, spent some time with his always admired and admiring friend Erskine of Linlathen, a Scotch broad churchman of the type of F. D. Maurice and Macleod Campbell, and then went home to set in earnest to the actual writing of his work. He had decided to abandon the design of a History, and to make his book a Biography of Cromwell, interlacing with it the main features and events

of the Commonwealth. The difficulties even of this reduced plan were still immense, and his groans at every stage in its progress were "louder and more loud," *e.g.* "My progress in *Cromwell* is frightful." "A thousand times I regretted that this task was ever taken up." "The most impossible book of all I ever before tried," and at the close, "*Cromwell* I must have written in 1844, but for four years previous it had been a continual toil and misery to me; four years of abstruse toil, obscure speculation, futile wrestling, and misery I used to count it had cost me." The book issued in 1845 soon went through three editions, and brought the author to the front as the most original historian of his time. Macaulay was his rival, but in different paths of the same field. About this time Mr. Froude became his pupil, and has left an interesting account (iii. 290-300) of his master's influence over the Oxford of those days, which would be only spoilt by selections. Oxford, like Athens, ever longing after something new, patronised the Chelsea prophet, and then calmed down to her wonted cynicism. But Froude and Ruskin were, as far as compatible with the strong personality of each, always loyal; and the capacity inborn in both, the power to breathe life into dry records and dead stones, had at least an added impulse from their master.

The year 1844 is marked by the publication in the *Foreign Quarterly* of the essay on *Dr. Francia*, and by the death of John Sterling,—loved with the love of David for Jonathan—outside his own family losses, the greatest wrench in Carlyle's life. Sterling's published writings are as inadequate to his reputation as the fragmentary remains of Arthur Hallam; but in friendships, especially unequal friendships, personal fascination counts for more than half, and all are agreed as to the charm in both instances of the inspiring companionships. Arch-

deacon Hare having given a somewhat coldly correct account of Sterling as a clergyman, Carlyle three years later, in 1851, published his own impressions of his friend as a thinker, sane philanthropist, and devotee of truth, in a work that, written in a three months' fervour, has some claim to rank, though faltering, as prose after verse, with *Adonais*, *In Memoriam*, and Matthew Arnold's *Thyrsis*.

These years are marked by a series of acts of unobtrusive benevolence, the memory of which has been in some cases accidentally rescued from the oblivion to which the benefactor was willing to have them consigned. Carlyle never boasted of doing a kindness. He was, like Wordsworth, frugal at home beyond necessity, but often as generous in giving as he was ungenerous in judging. His assistance to Thomas Cooper, author of the *Purgatory of Suicides*, his time spent in answering letters of "anxious enquirers," —letters that nine out of ten busy men would have flung into the waste-paper basket,—his interest in such works as Samuel Bamford's *Life of a Radical*, and admirable advice to the writer;[1] his instructions to a young student on the choice of books, and well-timed warning to another against the profession of literature, are sun-rifts in the storm, that show "a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity." The same epoch, however,—that of the start of the

[1] These letters to Bamford, showing a keen interest in the working men of whom his correspondent had written, point to the ideal of a sort of Tory Democracy. Carlyle writes: "We want more knowledge about the Lancashire operatives; their miseries and gains, virtues and vices. Winnow what you have to say, and give us wheat free from chaff. Then the rich captains of workers will be willing to listen to you. Brevity and sincerity will succeed. Be brief and select, omit much, give each subject its proper proportionate space; and be exact without caring to round off the edges of what you have to say." Later, he declines Bamford's offer of verses, saying "verse is a bugbear to booksellers at present. These are prosaic, earnest, practical, not singing times."

great writer's almost uninterrupted triumph—brings us in face of an episode singularly delicate and difficult to deal with, but impossible to evade.

Carlyle, now generally recognised in London as having one of the most powerful intellects and by far the greatest command of language among his contemporaries, was beginning to suffer some of the penalties of renown in being beset by bores and travestied by imitators; but he was also enjoying its rewards. Eminent men of all shades of opinion made his acquaintance; he was a frequent guest of the genial Mæcenas, an admirer of genius though no mere worshipper of success, R. Monckton Milnes; meeting Hallam, Bunsen, Pusey, etc., at his house in London, and afterwards visiting him at Fryston Hall in Yorkshire. The future Lord Houghton was, among distinguished men of letters and society, the one of whom he spoke with the most unvarying regard. Carlyle corresponded with Peel, whom he set almost on a par with Wellington as worthy of perfect trust, and talked familiarly with Bishop Wilberforce, whom he miraculously credits with holding at heart views much like his own. At a somewhat later date, in the circle of his friends, bound to him by various degrees of intimacy, History was represented by Thirlwall, Grote, and Froude; Poetry by Browning, Henry Taylor, Tennyson, and Clough; Social Romance by Kingsley; Biography by James Spedding and John Forster; and Criticism by John Ruskin. His link to the last named was, however, their common distrust of political economy, as shown in *Unto This Last*, rather than any deep artistic sympathy. In Macaulay, a conversationalist more rapid than himself, Carlyle found a rival rather than a companion; but his prejudiced view of physical science was forgotten in his personal affection for Tyndall and in their congenial politics. His society was from the publication of *Cromwell* till near his death increasingly

sought after by the aristocracy, several members of which invited him to their country seats, and bestowed on him all acceptable favours. In this class he came to find other qualities than those referred to in the *Sartor* inscription, and other aims than that of "preserving their game,"—the ambition to hold the helm of the State in stormy weather, and to play their part among the captains of industry. In the *Reminiscences* the aristocracy are deliberately voted to be "for continual grace of bearing and of acting, steadfast honour, light address, and cheery stoicism, actually yet the best of English classes." There can be no doubt that his intercourse with this class, as with men of affairs and letters, some of whom were his proximate equals, was a fortunate sequel to the duck-pond of Ecclefechan and the lonely rambles on the Border moors.

> Es bildet ein Talent sich in der Stille,
> Sich ein Character in dem Strom der Welt.

The life of a great capital may be the crown of education, but there is a danger in homage that comes late and then without reserve. Give me neither poverty nor riches, applies to praise as well as to wealth; and the sudden transition from comparative neglect to

> honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,

is a moral trial passing the strength of all but a few of the "irritable race" of writers. The deference paid to Carlyle made him yet more intolerant of contradiction, and fostered his selfishness, in one instance with the disastrous result of clouding a whole decade of his domestic life. In February 1839 he speaks of dining—"an eight-o'clock dinner which ruined me for a week"—with "a certain Baring," at whose table in Bath House he again met Bunsen, and was introduced to Lord Mahon. This

was the beginning of what, after the death of Sterling, grew into the most intimate friendship of his life. Baring, son of Lord Ashburton of the American treaty so named, and successor to the title on his father's death in 1848, was a man of sterling worth and sound sense, who entered into many of the views of his guest. His wife was by general consent the most brilliant woman of rank in London, whose grace, wit, refinement, and decision of character had made her the acknowledged leader of society. Lady Harriet, by the exercise of some overpowering though purely intellectual spell, made the proudest of men, the modern Diogenes, our later Swift, so much her slave that for twelve years, whenever he could steal a day from his work, he ran at her beck from town to country, from castle to cot; from Addiscombe, her husband's villa in Surrey, to the Grange, her father-in-law's seat in Hampshire; from Loch Luichart and Glen Finnan, where they had Highland shootings, to the Palais Royal. Mr. Froude's comment in his introduction to the Journal is substantially as follows: Lady Harriet Baring or Ashburton was the centre of a planetary system in which every distinguished public man of genuine worth then revolved. Carlyle was naturally the chief among them, and he was perhaps at one time ambitious of himself taking some part in public affairs, and saw the advantage of this stepping-stone to enable him to do something more for the world, as Byron said, than write books for it. But the idea of entering Parliament, which seems to have once suggested itself to him in 1849, was too vague and transient to have ever influenced his conduct. It is more correct to say that he was flattered by a sympathy not too thorough to be tame, pleased by adulation never gross, charmed by the same graces that charmed the rest, and finally fascinated by a sort of hypnotism. The irritation which this strange alliance produced in the mind of the mistress of

Cheyne Row is no matter of surprise. Pride and affection together had made her bear with all her husband's humours, and share with him all the toils of the struggle from obscurity. He had emerged, and she was still half content to be systematically set aside for his books, the inanimate rivals on which he was building a fame she had some claim to share. But her fiery spirit was not yet tamed into submitting to be sacrificed to an animate rival, or passively permitting the usurpation of companionship grudged to herself by another woman, whom she could not enjoy the luxury of despising. Lady Harriet's superiority in *finesse* and geniality, as well as advantages of station, only aggravated the injury; and this with a singular want of tact Carlyle further aggravated when he insisted on his wife accepting the invitations of his hostess. These visits, always against the grain, were rendered more irritating from a half-conscious antagonism between the chief female actors in the tragi-comedy; the one sometimes innocently unobservant of the wants of her guest, the other turning every accidental neglect into a slight, and receiving every jest as an affront. Carlyle's "Gloriana" was to the mind of his wife a "heathen goddess," while Mrs. Carlyle, with reference to her favourite dog "Nero," was in her turn nicknamed "Agrippina."

In midsummer of 1846, after an enforced sojourn at Addiscombe in worse than her usual health, she returned to Chelsea with "her mind all churned to froth," and opened it to her husband with such plainness that "there was a violent scene": she left the house in a mood like that of the first Mrs. Milton, and took refuge with her friends the Paulets at Seaforth near Liverpool, uncertain whether or not she would return. There were only two persons from whom it seemed natural for her at such a crisis to ask advice; one was Geraldine Jewsbury, a young Manchester lady, authoress of a well-known novel, *The Half-Sisters*, from

the beginning of their acquaintance in 1841 till the close in 1866 her most intimate associate and chosen confidant, who, we are told, "knew all" her secrets;[1] the other was the inspired Italian, pure patriot and Stoic moralist, Joseph Mazzini. To him she wrote twice—once apparently before leaving London, and again from Seaforth. His letters in reply, tenderly sympathetic and yet rigidly insistent on the duty of forbearance and endurance, availed to avert the threatened catastrophe; but there are sentences which show how bitter the complaints must have been.

> It is only you who can teach yourself that, whatever the *present* may be, you must front it with dignity. . . . I could only point out to you the fulfilment of duties which can make life—not happy—what can? but earnest, sacred, and resigned. . . . I am carrying a burden even heavier than you, and have undergone even bitterer deceptions. Your life proves an empty thing, you say. Empty! Do not blaspheme. Have you never done good? Have you never loved? . . . Pain and joy, deception and fulfilled hopes are just the rain and the sunshine that must meet the traveller on his way. Bless the Almighty if He has thought proper to send the latter to you. . . . Wrap your cloak round you against the first, but do not think a single moment that the one or the other have anything to do with the *end* of the journey.

Carlyle's first letter after the rupture is a mixture of reproach and affection. "We never parted before in such a manner; and all for literally nothing. . . . Adieu, dearest, for that is, and, if madness prevail not, may for ever be your authentic title." Another, enclosing the birthday present which he had never omitted since her mother's death, softened his wife's resentment, and the storm blew over for a time. But while the cause remained there was in the house at best a surface tranquillity, at worst an under-

[1] Carlyle often speaks, sometimes slightingly, of Miss Jewsbury, as a sensational novelist and admirer of George Sand, but he appreciated her genuine worth.

tone of misery which (October 1855 to May 1856) finds voice in the famous Diary, not merely covered with "black spider webs," but steeped in gall, the publication of which has made so much debate. It is like a page from *Othello* reversed. A few sentences condense the refrain of the lament. "Charles Buller said of the Duchess de Praslin, 'What could a poor fellow do with a wife that kept a journal but murder her?'" "That eternal Bath House. I wonder how many thousand miles Mr. C. has walked between here and there?" "Being an only child, I never wished to sew men's trousers—no, never!

I gin to think I've sold myself
For very little cas."

"To-day I called on my lady: she was perfectly civil, for a wonder." "Edward Irving! The past is past and gone is gone—

O waly, waly, love is bonnie,
A little while when it is new;"

quotations which, laid alongside the records of the writer's visit to the people at Haddington, "who seem all to grow so good and kind as they grow old," and to the graves in the churchyard there, are infinitely pathetic. The letters that follow are in the same strain, *e.g.* to Carlyle when visiting his sister at the Gill, "I never forget kindness, nor, alas, unkindness either": to Luichart, "I don't believe thee, wishing yourself at home. . . . You don't, as weakly amiable people do, sacrifice yourself for the pleasure of others"; to Mrs. Russell at Thornhill, "My London doctor's prescription is that I should be kept always happy and tranquil (!!!)."

In the summer of 1856 Lady Ashburton gave a real ground for offence in allowing both the Carlyles, on their way

north with her, to take a seat in an ordinary railway carriage, beside her maid, while she herself travelled in a special saloon. Partly, perhaps in consequence, Mrs. Carlyle soon went to visit her cousins in Fifeshire, and afterwards refused to accompany her ladyship on the way back. This resulted in another quarrel with her husband, who had issued the command from Luichart—but it was their last on the subject, for Gloriana died on the 4th of the following May, 1857, at Paris: "The most queen-like woman I had ever known or seen, by nature and by culture *facile princeps* she, I think, of all great ladies I have ever seen." This brought to a close an episode in which there were faults on both sides, gravely punished: the incidents of its course and the manner in which they were received show, among other things, that railing at the name of "Happiness" does little or nothing to reconcile people to the want of the reality. In 1858 Lord Ashburton married again—a Miss Stuart Mackenzie, who became the attached friend of the Carlyles, and remained on terms of unruffled intimacy with both till the end: she survived her husband, who died in 1864, leaving a legacy of £2000 to the household at Cheyne Row. *Sic transiit.*

From this date we must turn back over nearly twenty years to retrace the main steps of the great author's career. Much of the interval was devoted to innumerable visits, in acceptance of endless hospitalities, or in paying his annual devotions to Annandale,—calls on his time which kept him rushing from place to place like a comet. Two facts are notable about those expeditions: they rarely seemed to give him much pleasure, even at Scotsbrig he complained of sleepless nights and farm noises; and he was hardly ever accompanied by his wife. She too was constantly running north to her own kindred in Liverpool or Scotland, but their paths did not run parallel, they almost always intersected,

so that when the one was on the way north the other was homeward bound, to look out alone on "a horizon of zero." Only a few of these visits are worth recording as of general interest. Most of them were paid, a few received. In the autumn of 1846, Margaret Fuller, sent from Emerson, called at Cheyne Row, and recorded her impression of the master as "in a very sweet humour, full of wit and pathos, without being overbearing," adding that she was "carried away by the rich flow of his discourse"; and that "the hearty noble earnestness of his personal bearing brought back the charm of his writing before she wearied of it." A later visitor, Miss Martineau, his old helper in days of struggle, was now thus esteemed: "Broken into utter wearisomeness, a mind reduced to these three elements—imbecility, dogmatism, and unlimited hope. I never in my life was more heartily bored with any creature!" In 1847 there followed the last English glimpse of Jeffrey and the last of Dr. Chalmers, who was full of enthusiasm about *Cromwell*; then a visit to the Brights, John and Jacob, at Rochdale: with the former he had "a paltry speaking match" on topics described as "shallow, totally worthless to me," the latter he liked, recognising in him a culture and delicacy rare with so much strength of will and independence of thought. Later came a second visit from Emerson, then on a lecturing tour to England, gathering impressions revived in his *English Traits*. "His doctrines are too airy and thin," wrote Carlyle, "for the solid practical heads of the Lancashire region. We had immense talkings with him here, but found that he did not give us much to chew the cud upon. He is a pure-minded man, but I think his talent is not quite so high as I had anticipated." They had an interesting walk to Stonehenge together, and Carlyle attended one of his friend's lectures, but with modified approval, finding this serene "spiritual son" of his own rather "gone into

philanthropy and moonshine." Emerson's notes of this date, on the other hand, mark his emancipation from mere discipleship. "Carlyle had all the kleinstädtlicher traits of an islander and a Scotsman, and reprimanded with severity the rebellious instincts of the native of a vast continent. . . . In him, as in Byron, one is more struck with the rhetoric than with the matter. . . . There is more character than intellect in every sentence, therein strangely resembling Samuel Johnson." The same year Carlyle perpetrated one of his worst criticisms, that on Keats:—

> The kind of man he was gets ever more horrible to me. Force of hunger for pleasure of every kind, and want of all other force. . . . Such a structure of soul, it would once have been very evident, was a chosen "Vessel of Hell";

and in the next an ungenerously contemptuous reference to Macaulay's *History*:—

> The most popular ever written. Fourth edition already, within perhaps four months. Book to which four hundred editions could not add any value, there being no depth of sense in it at all, and a very great quantity of rhetorical wind.

Landor, on the other hand, whom he visited later at Bath, he appreciated, being "much taken with the gigantesque, explosive but essentially chivalrous and almost heroic old man."[1] He was now at ease about the sale of his books, having, *inter alia*, received £600 for a new edition of the *French Revolution* and the *Miscellanies*. His journal

[1] This is one of the few instances in which further knowledge led to a change for the better in Carlyle's judgment. In a letter to Emerson, 1840, he speaks disparagingly of Landor as "a wild man, whom no extent of culture had been able to tame! His intellectual faculty seemed to me to be weak in proportion to his violence of temper: the judgment he gives about anything is more apt to be wrong than right,—as the inward whirlwind shows him this side or the other of the object: and *sides* of an object are all that he sees." *De te fabula*. Emerson answers defending Landor, and indicating points of likeness between him and Carlyle.

is full of plans for a new work on Democracy, Organisation of Labour, and Education, and his letters of the period to Thomas Erskine and others are largely devoted to politics.

In 1846 he spent the first week of September in Ireland, crossing from Ardrossan to Belfast, and then driving to Drogheda, and by rail to Dublin, where in Conciliation Hall he saw O'Connell for the first time since a casual glimpse at a radical meeting arranged by Charles Buller—a meeting to which he had gone out of curiosity in 1834. O'Connell was always an object of Carlyle's detestation, and on this occasion he does not mince his words.

> Chief quack of the then world . . . first time I had ever heard the lying scoundrel speak. . . . Demosthenes of blarney . . . the big beggar-man who had £15,000 a year, and, *proh pudor!* the favour of English ministers instead of the pillory.

At Dundrum he met by invitation Carleton the novelist, with Mitchell and Gavan Duffy,[1] the Young Ireland leaders whom he seems personally to have liked, but he told Mitchell that he would probably be hanged, and said during a drive about some flourishing and fertile fields of the Pale, "Ah! Duffy, there you see the hoof of the bloody Saxon." He returned from Kingston to Liverpool on the 10th, and so closed his short and unsatisfactory trip. Three years later, July to August 6th 1849, he paid a longer and final visit to the "ragged commonweal" or "common woe," as Raleigh called

[1] Sir C. Gavan Duffy, in the "Conversations and Correspondence," now being published in the *Contemporary Review*, naturally emphasises Carlyle's politer, more genial side, and prints several expressions of sympathy with the "Tenant Agitations"; but his demur to the *Reminiscences of My Irish Journey* being accepted as an accurate account of the writer's real sentiments is of little avail in face of the letters to Emerson, more strongly accentuating the same views, *e.g.* "Bothered almost to madness with Irish balderdash. . . . '*Blacklead* these two million idle beggars,' I sometimes advised, 'and sell them in Brazil as niggers!'—perhaps Parliament on sweet constraint will allow you to advance them to be niggers!"

it, landing at Dublin, and after some days there passing on to Kildare, Kilkenny, Lismore, Waterford, beautiful Killarney and its beggar hordes, and then to Limerick, Clare, Castlebar, where he met W. E. Forster, whose acquaintance he had made two years earlier at Matlock. At Gweedore in Donegal he stayed with Lord George Hill, whom he respected, though persuaded that he was on the wrong road to Reform by Philanthropy in a country where it had never worked; and then on to half Scotch Derry. There, August 6th, he made an emphatic after-breakfast speech to a half-sympathetic audience; the gist of it being that the remedy for Ireland was not "emancipation" or "liberty," but to "cease following the devil, as it had been doing for two centuries." The same afternoon he escaped on board a Glasgow steamer, and landed safe at 2 A.M. on the morning of the 7th. The notes of the tour, set down on his return to Chelsea and republished in 1882, have only the literary merit of the vigorous descriptive touches inseparable from the author's lightest writing; otherwise they are mere rough-and-tumble jottings, with no consecutive meaning, of a rapid hawk's-eye view of the four provinces.

But Carlyle never ceased to maintain the thesis they set forth, that Ireland is, for the most part, a country of semi-savages, whose staple trade is begging, whose practice is to lie, unfit not only for self-government but for what is commonly called constitutional government, whose ragged people must be coerced, by the methods of Raleigh, of Spenser, and of Cromwell, into reasonable industry and respect for law. At Westport, where "human swinery has reached its acme," he finds "30,000 paupers in a population of 60,000, and 34,000 kindred hulks on outdoor relief, lifting each an ounce of mould with a shovel, while 5000 lads are pretending to break stones," and exclaims, "Can it be a charity to keep men alive on these terms? In face

of all the twaddle of the earth, shoot a man rather than train him (with heavy expense to his neighbours) to be a deceptive human swine." Superficial travellers generally praise the Irish. Carlyle had not been long in their country when he formulated his idea of the Home Rule that seemed to him most for their good.

> Kildare Railway: big blockhead sitting with his dirty feet on seat opposite, not stirring them for one who wanted to sit there. "One thing we're all agreed on," said he; "we're very ill governed: Whig, Tory, Radical, Repealer, all all admit we're very ill-governed!" I thought to myself, "Yes, indeed; you govern yourself! He that would govern you well would probably surprise you much, my friend—laying a hearty horse-whip over that back of yours."

And a little later at Castlebar he declares, "Society here would have to eat itself and end by cannibalism in a week, if it were not held up by the rest of our Empire standing afoot." These passages are written in the spirit which inspired his paper on "The Nigger Question" and the aggressive series of assaults to which it belongs, on what he regarded as the most prominent quackeries, shams, and pretence philanthropies of the day. His own account of the reception of this work is characteristic:—

> In 1849, after an interval of deep gloom and bottomless dubitation, came *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, which unpleasantly astonished everybody, set the world upon the strangest suppositions—"Carlyle got deep into whisky," said some,—ruined my reputation according to the friendliest voices, and in effect divided me altogether from the mob of "Progress-of-the-species" and other vulgar; but were a great relief to my own conscience as a faithful citizen, and have been ever since.

These pamphlets alienated Mazzini and Mill, and provoked the assault of the newspapers; which, by the author's confession, did something to arrest and restrict the sale

Nor was this indignation wholly unnatural. Once in his life, on occasion of his being called to serve at a jury trial, Carlyle, with remarkable adroitness, coaxed a recalcitrant juryman into acquiescence with the majority; but coaxing as a rule was not his way. When he found himself in front of what he deemed to be a falsehood his wont was to fly in its face and tear it to pieces. His satire was not like that of Horace, who taught his readers *ridendo dicere verum*, it was rather that of the elder Lucilius or the later Juvenal; not that of Chaucer, who wrote—

> That patience is a virtue high is plain,
> Because it conquers, as the clerks explain,
> Things that rude valour never could attain,

but that of *The Lye*, attributed to Raleigh, or Swift's *Gulliver* or the letters of Junius. The method of direct denunciation has advantages: it cannot be mistaken, nor, if strong enough, ignored; but it must lay its account with consequences, and Carlyle in this instance found them so serious that he was threatened at the height of his fame with dethronement. Men said he had lost his head, gone back to the everlasting "No," and mistaken swearing all round for political philosophy. The ultimate value attached to the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* must depend to a large extent on the view of the critic. It is now, however, generally admitted on the one hand that they served in some degree to counteract the rashness of Philanthropy; on the other, that their effect was marred by more than the writer's usual faults of exaggeration. It is needless to refer the temper they display to the troubles then gathering about his domestic life. A better explanation is to be found in the public events of the time.

The two years previous to their appearance were the Revolution years, during which the European world seemed

to be turned upside down. The French had thrown out their *bourgeois* king, Louis Philippe—"the old scoundrel," as Carlyle called him,—and established their second Republic. Italy, Hungary, and half Germany were in revolt against the old authorities; the Irish joined in the chorus, and the Chartist monster petition was being carted to Parliament. Upheaval was the order of the day, kings became exiles and exiles kings, dynasties and creeds were being subverted, and empires seemed rocking as on the surface of an earthquake. They were years of great aspirations, with beliefs in all manner of swift regeneration—

Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo,

all varieties of doctrinaire idealisms. Mazzini failed at Rome, Kossuth at Pesth; the riots of Berlin resulted in the restoration of the old dull bureaucratic regime; Smith O'Brien's bluster exploded in a cabbage garden; the Railway Bubble burst in the fall of the bloated king Hudson, and the Chartism of the time evaporated in smoke. The old sham gods, with Buonaparte of the stuffed eagle in front, came back; because, concluded Carlyle, there was no man in the front of the new movement strong enough to guide it; because its figure-heads were futile sentimentalists, insurgents who could not win. The reaction produced by their failure had somewhat the same effect on his mind that the older French Revolution had on that of Burke: he was driven back to a greater degree than Mr. Froude allows on practical conservatism and on the negations of which the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* are the expression. To this series of *pronunciamentos* of political scepticism he meant to add another, of which he often talks under the name of "Exodus from Houndsditch," boldly stating and setting forth the grounds of his now complete divergence from all forms of what either in

England or Europe generally could be called the Orthodox faith in Religion. He was, we are told, withheld from this by the feeling that the teaching even of the priests he saw and derided in Belgium or in Galway was better than the atheistic materialism which he associated with the dominion of mere physical science. He may have felt he had nothing definite enough to be understood by the people to substitute for what he proposed to destroy; and he may have had a thought of the reception of such a work at Scotsbrig. Much of the *Life of Sterling*, however, is somewhat less directly occupied with the same question, and though gentler in tone it excited almost as much clamour as the *Pamphlets*, especially in the north. The book, says Carlyle himself, was "utterly revolting to the religious people in particular (to my surprise rather than otherwise). 'Doesn't believe in us either!' Not he for certain; can't, if you will know." During the same year his almost morbid dislike of materialism found vent in denunciations of the "Crystal Palace" Exhibition of Industry; though for its main promoter, Prince Albert, he subsequently entertained and expressed a sincere respect.

In the summer of 1851 the Carlyles went together to Malvern, where they met Tennyson (whose good nature had been proof against some slighting remarks on his verses), Sydney Dobell, then in the fame of his "Roman," and other celebrities. They tried the "Water Cure," under the superintendence of Dr. Gully, who received and treated them as guests; but they derived little good from the process. "I found," says Carlyle, "water taken as medicine to be the most destructive drug I had ever tried." Proceeding northward, he spent three weeks with his mother, then in her eighty-fourth year and at last growing feeble; a quiet time only disturbed by indignation at

"one ass whom I heard the bray of in some Glasgow newspaper," comparing "our grand hater of shams" to Father Gavazzi. His stay was shortened by a summons to spend a few days with the Ashburtons at Paris on their return from Switzerland. Though bound by a promise to respond to the call, Carlyle did not much relish it. Travelling abroad was always a burden to him, and it was aggravated in this case by his very limited command of the language for conversational purposes. Fortunately, on reaching London he found that the poet Browning, whose acquaintance he had made ten years before, was, with his wife, about to start for the same destination, and he prevailed upon them, though somewhat reluctant, to take charge of him.[1] The companionship was therefore not accidental, and it was of great service. "Carlyle," according to Mrs. Browning's biographer, "would have been miserable without Browning," who made all the arrangements for the party, passed luggage through the customs, saw to passports, fought the battles of all the stations, and afterwards acted as guide through the streets of the great city. By a curious irony, two verse-makers and admirers of George Sand made it possible for the would-be man of action to find his way. The poetess, recalling the trip afterwards, wrote that she liked the prophet more than she expected, finding his "bitterness only melancholy, and his scorn sensibility." Browning himself continued through life to regard Carlyle with "affectionate reverence." "He never ceased," says Mrs. Orr, "to defend him against the charge of unkindness to his wife, or to believe that, in the matter of their domestic unhappiness, she was the more responsible of the two. . . . He always thought her a hard unlovable woman, and I believe little liking was lost between them

[1] Mrs. Sutherland Orr's *Life of Robert Browning*.

. . Yet Carlyle never rendered him that service—easy as it appears—which one man of letters most justly values from another, that of proclaiming the admiration which he privately professed for his work." The party started, September 24th, and reached Dieppe by Newhaven, after a rough passage, the effects of which on some fellow-travellers more unfortunate than himself Carlyle describes in a series of recently-discovered jottings[1] made on his return, October 2nd, to Chelsea. On September 25th they reached Paris. Carlyle joined the Ashburtons at Meurice's Hotel; there dined, went in the evening to the Théâtre Français, cursed the play, and commented unpleasantly on General Changarnier sitting in the stalls.

During the next few days he met many of the celebrities of the time, and caricatured, after his fashion, their personal appearance, talk, and manner. These criticisms are for the most part of little value. The writer had in some of his essays shown almost as much capacity of understanding the great Frenchmen of the last century as was compatible with his Puritan vein; but as regards French literature since the Revolution he was either ignorant or alien. What light could be thrown on that interesting era by a man who could only say of the authors of *La Comédie Humaine* and *Consuelo* that they were ministers in a Phallus worship? Carlyle seems to have seen most of Thiers, whom he treats with good-natured condescension, but little insight: "round fat body, tapering like a ninepin into small fat feet, placidly sharp fat face, puckered eyeward . . . a frank, sociable kind of creature, who has absolutely no malignity towards any one, and is not the least troubled with self-seekings." Thiers talked with contempt of Michelet; and Carlyle, uncon-

[1] Partially reproduced, *Pall Mall Gazette*, April 9th 1890, with illustrative connecting comments.

scious of the numerous affinities between that historian of genius and himself, half assented. Prosper Mérimée,[1] on the other hand, incensed him by some freaks of criticism, whether in badinage or in earnest—probably the former. "Jean Paul," he said, getting on the theme of German literature, "was a hollow fool of the first magnitude," and Goethe was "insignificant, unintelligible, a paltry kind of Scribe manqué." "I could stand no more of it, but lighted a cigar, and adjourned to the street. 'You impertinent blasphemous blockhead!' this was sticking in my throat: better to retire without bringing it out." Of Guizot he writes, "Tartuffe, gaunt, hollow, resting on the everlasting 'No' with a haggard consciousness that it ought to be the everlasting 'Yea.'" "To me an extremely detestable kind of man." Carlyle missed General Cavaignac, "of all Frenchmen the one" he "cared to see." In the streets of Paris he found no one who could properly be called a gentleman. "The truly ingenious and strong men of France are here (*i.e.* among the industrial classes) making money, while the politician, literary, etc. etc. class is mere play-actorism." His summary before leaving at the close of a week, rather misspent, is: "Articulate-speaking France was altogether without beauty or meaning to me in my then diseased mood; but I saw traces of the inarticulate . . . much worthier."

Back in London, he sent Mrs. Carlyle to the Grange (distinguishing himself, in an interval of study at home, by washing the back area flags with his own hands), and there joined her till the close of the year. During the early part of the next he was absorbed in reading and planning work. Then came an unusually tranquil visit to Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, during which he had only to

[1] The two men were mutually antagonistic; Mérimée tried to read the *French Revolution*, but flung the book aside in weariness or disdain.

complain that the servants were often obliged to run out of the room to hide their laughter at his humorous bursts. At the close of August 1852 he embarked on board a Leith steamer bound for Rotterdam, on his first trip to Germany. Home once more, in October, he found chaos come, and seas of paint overwhelming everything; "went to the Grange, and back in time to witness from Bath House the funeral, November 18th, of the great Duke," remarking, "The one true man of official men in England, or that I know of in Europe, concludes his long course. . . . Tennyson's verses are naught. Silence alone is respectable on such an occasion." In March, again at the Grange, he met the Italian minister Azeglio, and when this statesman disparaged Mazzini—a thing only permitted by Carlyle to himself—he retorted with the remark, "Monsieur, vous ne le connaissez pas du tout, du tout." At Chelsea, on his return, the fowl tragic-comedy reached a crisis, "the unprotected male" declaring that he would shoot them or poison them. "A man is not a Chatham nor a Wallenstein; but a man has work too, which the Powers would not quite wish to have suppressed by two and sixpence worth of bantams. . . . They must either withdraw or die." Ultimately his mother-wife came to the rescue of her "babe of genius"; the cocks were bought off, and in the long-talked-of sound-proof room the last considerable work of his life, though painfully, proceeded. Meanwhile "brother John" had married, and Mrs. Carlyle went to visit the couple at Moffat. While there bad tidings came from Scotsbrig, and she dutifully hurried off to nurse her mother-in-law through an attack from which the strong old woman temporarily rallied. But the final stroke could not be long delayed. When Carlyle was paying his winter visit to the Grange in December news came that his mother was worse, and her recovery despaired of; and, by consent

of his hostess, he hurried off to Scotsbrig,—"mournful leave given me by the Lady A., mournful encouragement to be speedy, not dilatory,"—and arrived in time to hear her last words. "Here is Tom come to bid you good-night, mother," said John. "As I turned to go, she said, 'I'm muckle obleeged to you.'" She spoke no more, but passed from sleep after sleep of coma to that of death, on Sunday, Christmas Day, 1853. "We can only have one mother," exclaimed Byron on a like event—the solemn close of many storms. But between Margaret Carlyle and the son of whom she was so proud there had never been a shadow. "If," writes Mr. Froude, "she gloried in his fame and greatness, he gloried more in being her son, and while she lived she, and she only, stood between him and the loneliness of which he so often and so passionately complained."

Of all Carlyle's letters none are more tenderly beautiful than those which he sent to Scotsbrig. The last, written on his fifty-eighth birthday, December 4th, which she probably never read, is one of the finest. The close of their way-faring together left him solitary; his "soul all hung with black," and, for months to come, everything around was overshadowed by the thought of his bereavement. In his journal of February 28th 1854, he tells us that he had on the Sunday before seen a vision of Mainhill in old days, with mother, father, and the rest getting dressed for the meeting-house. "They are gone now, vanished all; their poor bits of thrifty clothes, . . . their pious struggling efforts; their little life, it is all away. It has all melted into the still sea, it was rounded with a sleep." The entry ends, as fitting, with a prayer: "O pious mother! kind, good, brave, and truthful soul as I have ever found, and more than I have elsewhere found in this world. Your poor Tom, long out of his schooldays now, has fallen very

lonely, very lame and broken in this pilgrimage of his; and you cannot help him or cheer him . . . any more. From your grave in Ecclefechan kirkyard yonder you bid him trust in God; and that also he will try if he can understand and do."

CHAPTER VI

THE MINOTAUR

[1853–1866]

CARLYLE was now engaged on a work which required, received, and wellnigh exhausted all his strength, resulting in the greatest though the least generally read of all his books. *Cromwell* achieved, he had thrown himself for a season into contemporary politics, condescending even, contrary to his rule, to make casual contributions to the Press; but his temper was too hot for success in that arena, and his letters of the time are full of the feeling that the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* had set the world against him. Among his generous replies to young men asking advice, none is more suggestive than that in which he writes from Chelsea (March 9th 1850):—

> If my books teach you anything, don't mind in the least whether other people believe it or not; but lay it to heart . . . as a real message left with you, which you must set about fulfilling, whatever others do. . . . And be not surprised that "people have no sympathy with you." That is an accompaniment that will attend you all your days if you mean to live an earnest life.

But he himself, though "ever a fighter," felt that, even for him, it was not good to be alone. He decided there "was no use railing in vain like Timon"; he would go back again

from the present to the past, from the latter days of discord to seek countenance in some great figure of history, under whose ægis he might shelter the advocacy of his views. Looking about for a theme, several crossed his mind. He thought of Ireland, but that was too burning a subject; of William the Conqueror, of Simon de Montfort, the Norsemen, the Cid; but these may have seemed to him too remote. Why, ask patriotic Scotsmen, did he not take up his and their favourite Knox? But Knox's life had been fairly handled by M'Crie, and Carlyle would have found it hard to adjust his treatment of that essentially national "hero" to the "Exodus from Houndsditch." "Luther" might have been an apter theme; but there too it would have been a strain to steer clear of theological controversy, of which he had had enough. Napoleon was at heart too much of a gamin for his taste. Looking over Europe in more recent times, he concluded that the Prussian monarchy had been the main centre of modern stability, and that it had been made so by its virtual creator, Friedrich II., called the Great. Once entertained, the subject seized him as with the eye of Coleridge's mariner, and, in spite of manifold efforts to get free, compelled him, so that he could "not choose but" write on it. Again and again, as the magnitude of the task became manifest, we find him doubting, hesitating, recalcitrating, and yet captive. He began reading Jomini, Preuss, the king's own Memoirs and Despatches, and groaned at the mountains through which he had to dig. "Prussian Friedrich and the Pelion laid on Ossa of Prussian dry-as-dust lay crushing me with the continual question, Dare I try it? Dare I not?" At length, gathering himself together for the effort, he resolved, as before in the case of Cromwell, to visit the scenes of which he was to write. Hence the excursion to Germany of 1852, during which, with the kindly-offered guidance of Mr.

Neuberg, an accomplished German admirer of some fortune resident in London, he made his first direct acquaintance with the country of whose literature he had long been himself the English interpreter. The outlines of the trip may be shortly condensed from the letters written during its progress to his wife and mother. He reached Rotterdam on September 1st; then after a night made sleepless by "noisy nocturnal travellers and the most industrious cocks and clamorous bells" he had ever heard, he sailed up the river to Bonn, where he consulted books, saw "Father Arndt," and encountered some types of the German professoriate, "miserable creatures lost in statistics." There he met Neuberg, and they went together to Rolandseck, to the village of Hunef among the Sieben-Gebirge, and then on to Coblenz. After a detour to Ems, which Carlyle, comminating the gaming-tables, compared to Matlock, and making a pilgrimage to Nassau as the birthplace of William the Silent, they rejoined the Rhine and sailed admiringly up the finest reach of the river. From Mainz the philosopher and his guide went on to Frankfort, paid their respects to Goethe's statue and the garret where *Werther* was written, the Judengasse, "grimmest section of the Middle Ages," and the Römer—election hall of the old Kaisers; then to Homburg, where they saw an old Russian countess playing "gowpanfuls of gold pieces every stake," and left after no long stay, Carlyle, in a letter to Scotsbrig, pronouncing the fashionable Badeort to be the "rallying-place of such a set of empty blackguards as are not to be found elsewhere in the world." We find him next at Marburg, where he visited the castle of Philip of Hesse. Passing through Cassel, he went to Eisenach, and visited the neighbouring Wartburg, where he kissed the old oaken table, on which the Bible was made an open book for the German race, and noted the hole in the plaster where

the inkstand had been thrown at the devil and his noises · an incident to which eloquent reference is made in the lectures on "Heroes." Hence they drove to Gotha, and lodged in Napoleon's room after Leipzig. Then by Erfurt, with more Luther memories, they took rail to Weimar, explored the houses of Goethe and of Schiller, and dined by invitation with the Augustenburgs; the Grand Duchess, with sons and daughters, conversing in a Babylonish dialect, a melange of French, English, and German. The next stage seems to have been Leipzig, then in a bustle with the Fair. "However," says Carlyle, "we got a book or two, drank a glass of wine in Auerbach's keller, and at last got off safe to the comparative quiet of Dresden." He ignores the picture galleries; and makes a bare reference to the palaces from which they steamed up the Elbe to the heart of Saxon Switzerland. There he surveyed Lobositz, first battle-field of the Seven Years' War, and rested at the romantic mountain watering-place of Töplitz. "He seems," wrote Mrs. Carlyle, "to be getting very successfully through his travels, thanks to the patience and helpfulness of Neuberg. He makes in every letter frightful *misereres* over his sleeping accommodations; but he cannot conceal that he is really pretty well." The writer's own *misereres* are as doleful and nearly as frequent; but she was really in much worse health. From Töplitz the companions proceeded in weary stellwagens to Zittau in Lusatia, and so on to

Herrnhut, the primitive city of the Moravian brethren: a place not bigger than Annan, but beautiful, pure, and quiet beyond any town on the earth, I daresay; and, indeed, more like a saintly dream of ideal Calvinism made real than a town of stone and lime.

Onward by "dreary moory Frankfurt" on the Oder, whence they reconnoitred "the field of Kunersdorf, a scraggy village where Fritz received his worst defeat," they

reached the Prussian capital on the last evening of the month. From the British Hotel, Unter den Linden, we have, October 1st:—

> I am dead stupid; my heart nearly choked out of me, and my head churned to pieces. . . . Berlin is loud almost as London, but in no other way great . . . about the size of Liverpool, and more like Glasgow.

They spent a week there (sight-seeing being made easier by an introduction from Lady Ashburton to the Ambassador), discovering at length an excellent portrait of Fritz, meeting Tieck, Cornelius, Rauch, Preuss, etc., and then got quickly back to London by way of Hanover, Cologne, and Ostend. Carlyle's travels are always interesting, and would be more so without the tiresome, because ever the same, complaints. Six years later (1858) he made his second expedition to Germany, in the company of two friends, a Mr. Foxton—who is made a butt—and the faithful Neuberg. Of this journey, undertaken with a more exclusively business purpose, and accomplished with greater dispatch, there are fewer notes, the substance of which may be here anticipated. He sailed (August 21st) from Leith to Hamburg, admiring the lower Elbe, and then went out of his way to accept a pressing invitation from the Baron Usedom and his wife to the Isle of Rügen, sometimes called the German Isle of Wight. He went there by Stralsund, liked his hosts and their pleasant place, where for cocks crowing he had doves cooing; but in Putbus, the Richmond of the island, he had to encounter brood sows as well as cochin-chinas. From Rügen he went quickly south by Stettin to Berlin, then to Cüstrin to survey the field of Zorndorf, with what memorable result readers of *Friedrich* know. His next halt was at Liegnitz, headquarters for exploring the grounds of "Leuthen, the grandest of all the battles," and Molwitz—first of Fritz's fights—of which we hear so

much in the *Reminiscences.* His course lay on to Breslau, "a queer old city as ever you heard of, high as Edinburgh or more so," and, by Landshut, through the picturesque villages of the Riesen-Gebirge into Bohemia. There he first put up at Pardubitz in a vile, big inn, for bed a "trough eighteen inches too short, a mattress forced into it which cocked up at both ends"—such as most travellers in remoter Germany at that period have experienced. Carlyle was unfavourably impressed by the Bohemians; and "not one in a hundred of them could understand a word of German. They are liars, thieves, slatterns, a kind of miserable, subter-Irish people,—Irish with the addition of ill-nature." He and his friends visited the fields of Chotusitz and Kolin, where they found the "Golden Sun," from which "the last of the Kings" had surveyed the ground, "sunk to be the dirtiest house probably in Europe." Thence he made for Prague, whose picturesque grandeur he could not help extolling. "Here," he writes, enclosing the flower to his wife, "is an authentic wild pink plucked from the battle-field. Give it to some young lady who practises 'the Battle of Prague' on her piano to your satisfaction." On September 15th he dates from Dresden, whence he spent a laborious day over Torgau. Thereafter they sped on, with the usual tribulations, by Hochkirk, Leipzig, Weissenfels, and Rossbach. Hurrying homeward, they were obliged to decline another invitation from the Duchess at Weimar; and, making for Guntershausen, performed the fatiguing journey from there to Aix-la-Chapelle in one day, *i.e.* travelling often in slow trains from 4 A.M. to 7 P.M., a foolish feat even for the eupeptic. Carlyle visited the cathedral, but has left a very poor account of the impression produced on him by the simple slab sufficiently inscribed, "Carolo Magno." "Next morning stand upon the lid of Charlemagne,

abominable monks roaring out their idolatrous grand music within sight." By Ostend and Dover he reached home on the 22nd. A Yankee scamper trip, one might say, but for the result testifying to the enormous energy of the traveller. "He speaks lightly," says Mr. Froude, "of having seen Kolin, Torgau, etc. etc. No one would guess from reading these short notices that he had mastered the details of every field he visited; not a turn of the ground, not a brook, not a wood . . . had escaped him. . . . There are no mistakes. Military students in Germany are set to learn Frederick's battles in Carlyle's account of them."

During the interval between those tours there are few events of interest in Carlyle's outer, or phases of his inner life which have not been already noted. The year 1854 found the country ablaze with the excitement of the Crimean War, with which he had as little sympathy as had Cobden or Bright or the members of Sturge's deputation. He had no share in the popular enthusiasm for what he regarded as a mere newspaper folly. All his political leaning was on the side of Russia, which, from a safe distance, having no direct acquaintance with the country, he always admired as a seat of strong government, the representative of wise control over barbarous races. Among the worst of these he reckoned the Turk, "a lazy, ugly, sensual, dark fanatic, whom we have now had for 400 years. I would not buy the continuance of him in Europe at the rate of sixpence a century." Carlyle had no more faith in the "Balance of power" than had Byron, who scoffed at it from another, the Republican, side as "balancing straws on kings' noses instead of wringing them off," *e.g.*—

> As to Russian increase of strength, he writes, I would wait till Russia meddled with me before I drew sword to stop his increase of strength. It is the idle population of editors, etc., that has done all this in England. One perceives clearly that ministers go forward in it against their will.

Even our heroisms at Alma — "a terrible, almost horrible, operation" — Balaclava, and Inkermann, failed to raise a glow in his mind, though he admitted the force of Tennyson's ringing lines. The alliance with the "scandalous copper captain," elected by the French, as the Jews chose Barabbas, — an alliance at which many patriots winced — was to him only an added disgrace. Carlyle's comment on the subsequent visit to Osborne of Victor Hugo's "brigand," and his reception within the pale of legitimate sovereignty was, "Louis Bonaparte has not been shot hitherto. That is the best that can be said." Sedan brought most men round to his mind about Napoleon III.: but his approval of the policy of the Czars remains open to the criticism of M. Lanin. In reference to the next great struggle of the age, Carlyle was in full sympathy with the mass of his countrymen. He was as much enraged by the Sepoy rebellion as were those who blew the ringleaders from the muzzles of guns. "Tongue cannot speak," he exclaims, in the spirit of Noel Paton's picture, before it was amended or spoilt, "the horrors that were done on the English by these mutinous hyænas. Allow hyænas to mutiny and strange things will follow." He never seems to have revolved the question as to the share of his admired Muscovy in instigating the revolt. For the barbarism of the north he had ready apologies, for the savagery of the south mere execration; and he writes of the Hindoos as he did, both before and afterwards, of the negroes in Jamaica.

Three sympathetic obituary notices of the period expressed his softer side. In April 1854, John Wilson and Lord Cockburn died at Edinburgh. His estimate of the former is notable as that generally entertained, now that the race of those who came under the personal spell of Christopher North has passed :—

We lived apart as in different centuries ; though to say the truth I always loved Wilson, he had much nobleness of heart, and many traits of noble genius, but the central tie-beam seemed always wanting ; very long ago I perceived in him the most irreconcilable contradictions — Toryism with Sansculottism, Methodism of a sort with total incredulity, etc. . . . Wilson seemed to me always by far the most gifted of our literary men, either then or still : and yet intrinsically he has written nothing that can endure.

Cockburn is referred to in contrast as "perhaps the last genuinely national type of rustic Scotch sense, sincerity, and humour—a wholesome product of Scotch dialect, with plenty of good logic in it." Later, Douglas Jerrold is described as "last of the London wits, I hope the last." Carlyle's letters during this period are of minor interest : many refer to visits paid to distinguished friends and humble relatives, with the usual complaints about health, servants, and noises. At Farlingay, where he spent some time with Edward FitzGerald, translator of *Omar Khayyam*, the lowing of cows took the place of cocks crowing. Here and there occurs a criticism or a speculation. That on his dreams is, in the days of "insomnia," perhaps worth noting (F. iv. 154, 155) ; *inter alia* he says :—"I have an impression that one always dreams, but that only in cases where the nerves are disturbed by bad health, which produces light imperfect sleep, do they start into such relief as to force themselves on our waking consciousness." Among posthumously printed documents of Cheyne Row, to this date belongs the humorous appeal of Mrs. Carlyle for a larger allowance of house money, entitled "Budget of a Femme Incomprise." The arguments and statement of accounts, worthy of a bank auditor, were so irresistible that Carlyle had no resource but to grant the request, *i.e.* practically to raise the amount to £230, instead of £200 per annum. It has been calculated that his reliable

income even at this time did not exceed £400, but the rent of the house was kept very low, £30: he and his wife lived frugally, so that despite the expenses of the noise-proof room and his German tour he could afford in 1857 to put a stop to her travelling in second-class railway carriages; in 1860, when the success of the first instalment of his great work made an end of financial fears, to keep two servants; and in 1863 to give Mrs. Carlyle a brougham. Few men have left on the whole so unimpeachable a record in money matters.

In November 1854 there occurred an incident hitherto unrecorded in any biography. The Lord Rectorship of the University of Glasgow having fallen vacant, the "Conservative Club" of the year had put forward Mr. Disraeli as successor to the honorary office. A small body of Mr. Carlyle's admirers among the senior students on the other side nominated him, partly as a tribute of respect and gratitude, partly in opposition to a statesman whom they then distrusted. The nomination was, after much debate, adopted by the so-called "Liberal Association" of that day; and, with a curious irony, the author of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* and *Friedrich II.* was pitted, as a Radical, against the future promoter of the Franchise of 1867 as a Tory. It soon appeared that his supporters had underestimated the extent to which Mr. Carlyle had offended Scotch theological prejudice and outraged the current Philanthropy. His name received some sixty adherents, and had ultimately to be withdrawn. The nomination was received by the Press, and other exponents of popular opinion, with denunciations that came loudest and longest from the leaders of orthodox Dissent, then arrogating to themselves the profession of Liberalism and the initiation of Reform. Among the current expressions in reference to his social and religious creeds were the following:—

Carlyle's philanthropy is not that of Howard, his cure for national distress is to bury our paupers in peat bogs, driving wooden boards on the top of them. His entire works may be described as reiterating the doctrine that "whatever is is wrong." He has thrown off every form of religious belief and settled down into the conviction that the Christian profession of Englishmen is a sham. . . . Elect him and you bid God-speed to Pantheism and spiritualism.[1] Mr. Carlyle neither possesses the talent nor the distinction, nor does he occupy the position which entitle a man to such an honour as the Rectorial Chair. The *Scotch Guardian* writes: But for the folly exhibited in bringing forward Mr. Disraeli, scarcely any party within the College or out of it would have ventured to nominate a still more obnoxious personage. This is the first instance we have been able to discover in which the suffrages of the youth of the University have been sought for a candidate who denied in his writings that the revealed Word of God is "the way, the truth, the life." It is impossible to separate Mr. Carlyle from that obtrusive feature of his works in which the solemn verities of our holy religion are sneered at as worn-out "biblicalities," "unbelievabilities," and religious profession is denounced as "dead putrescent cant." The reader of the *Life of Sterling* is not left to doubt for a moment the author's malignant hostility to the religion of the Bible. In that work, saving faith is described as "stealing into heaven by the modern method of sticking ostrich-like your head into fallacies on earth," that is to say, by believing in the doctrines of the Gospels. How, after this, could the Principal and Professors of the University, the guardians of the faiths and morals of its inexperienced youth, accompany to the Common Hall, and allow to address the students a man who has degraded his powers to the life-labour of sapping and mining the foundations of the truth, and opened the fire of his fiendish raillery against the citadel of our best aspirations and dearest hopes?

In the result, two men of genius[2]—however diverse—

[1] Mr. Wylie states that "twice before his election by his own University he (Carlyle) had been invited to allow himself to be nominated for the office of Lord Rector, once by students in the University of Glasgow and once by those of Aberdeen: but both of these invitations he had declined." This as regards Glasgow is incorrect.

[2] For the elucidation of some points of contact between Carlyle and Lord Beaconsfield, *vide* Mr. Froude's *Life* of the latter.

were discarded, and a Scotch nobleman of conspicuous talent, always an active, if not intrusive, champion of orthodoxy, was returned by an "overwhelming majority." In answer to intelligence transmitted to Mr. Carlyle of these events, the president of the Association of his supporters—who had nothing on which to congratulate themselves save that only the benches of the rooms in which they held their meetings had been riotously broken,—received the following previously unpublished letter :—

CHELSEA, 16*th December* 1854.

DEAR SIR—I have received your Pamphlet; and return many thanks for all your kindness to me. I am sorry to learn, as I do for the first time from this narrative, what angry nonsense some of my countrymen see good to write of me. Not being much a reader of Newspapers, I had hardly heard of the Election till after it was finished; and I did not know that anything of this melancholy element of Heterodoxy, "Pantheism," etc. etc., had been introduced into the matter. It is an evil, after its sort, this of being hated and denounced by fools and ignorant persons; but it cannot be mended for the present, and so must be left standing there.

That another wiser class think differently, nay, that they alone have any real knowledge of the question, or any real right to vote upon it, is surely an abundant compensation. If that be so, then all is still right; and probably there is no harm done at all!—To you, and the other young gentlemen who have gone with you on this occasion, I can only say that I feel you have loyally meant to do me a great honour and kindness; that I am deeply sensible of your genial recognition, of your noble enthusiasm (which reminds me of my own young years); and that in fine there is no loss or gain of an Election which can in the least alter these valuable facts, or which is not wholly insignificant to me in comparison with them. "Elections" are not a thing transacted by the gods, in general; and I have known very unbeautiful creatures "elected" to be kings, chief-priests, railway kings, etc., by the "most sweet voices," and the spiritual virtue that inspires these, in our time!

Leaving all that, I will beg you all to retain your honourable

good feelings towards me; and to think that if anything I have done or written can help any one of you in the noble problem of living like a wise man in these evil and foolish times, it will be more valuable to me than never so many Elections or Non-elections.

With many good wishes and regards I heartily thank you all, and remain—Yours very sincerely, T. CARLYLE.

Carlyle's letters to strangers are always valuable, for they are terse and reticent. In writing to weavers, like Bamford; to men in trouble, as Cooper; to students, statesmen, or earnest inquirers of whatever degree, a genuine sympathy for them takes the place of the sympathy for himself, often too prominent in the copious effusions to his intimates. The letter above quoted is of special interest, as belonging to a time from which comparatively few survive; when he was fairly under weigh with a task which seemed to grow in magnitude under his gaze. The *Life of Friedrich* could not be a succession of dramatic scenes like the *French Revolution*, nor a biography like *Cromwell*, illustrated by the surrounding events of thirty years. Carlyle found, to his dismay, that he had involved himself in writing the History of Germany, and in a measure of Europe, during the eighteenth century, a period perhaps the most tangled and difficult to deal with of any in the world's annals. He was like a man who, with intent to dig up a pine, found himself tugging at the roots of an Igdrasil that twined themselves under a whole Hercynian forest. His constant cries of positive pain in the progress of the work are distressing, as his indomitable determination to wrestle with and prevail over it is inspiring. There is no imaginable image that he does not press into his service in rattling the chains of his voluntary servitude. Above all, he groans over the unwieldy mass of his authorities—"anti-solar systems of chaff."

I read old German books dull as stupidity itself—nay superannuated stupidity—gain with labour the dreariest glimpses of unimportant extinct human beings . . . but when I begin operating: *how* to reduce that widespread black desert of Brandenburg sand to a small human garden! . . . I have no capacity of grasping the big chaos that lies around me, and reducing it to order. Order! Reducing! It is like compelling the grave to give up its dead!"

Elsewhere he compares his travail with the monster of his own creation to "Balder's ride to the death kingdoms, through frozen rain, sound of subterranean torrents, leaden-coloured air"; and in the retrospect of the *Reminiscences* touchingly refers to his thirteen years of rarely relieved isolation. "A desperate dead-lift pull all that time; my whole strength devoted to it . . . withdrawn from all the world." He received few visitors and had few correspondents, but kept his life vigorous by riding on his horse Fritz (the gift of the Marshalls), "during that book, some 30,000 miles, much of it, all the winter part of it, under cloud of night, sun just setting when I mounted. All the rest of the day I sat, silent, aloft, insisting upon work, and such work, *invitissimâ Minervâ*, for that matter." Mrs. Carlyle[1] had her usual share of the sufferings involved in "the awful *Friedrich*." "That tremendous book," she writes, "made prolonged and entire devastation of any satisfactory semblance of home life or home happiness." But when at last, by help of

[1] Carlyle himself writes: "I felt well enough how it was crushing down her existence, as it was crushing down my own; and the thought that she had not been at the choosing of it, and yet must suffer so for it, was occasionally bitter to me. But the practical conclusion always was, Get done with it, get done with it! For the saving of us both that is the one outlook. And sure enough, I did stand by that dismal task with all my time and all my means; day and night wrestling with it, as with the ugliest dragon, which blotted out the daylight and the rest of the world to me till I should get it slain."

Neuberg and of Mr. Larkin, who made the maps of the whole book, the first two volumes were in type (they appeared in autumn 1858), his wife hailed them in a letter sent from Edinburgh to Chelsea: "Oh, my dear, what a magnificent book this is going to be, the best of all your books, forcible, clear, and sparkling as the *French Revolution*; compact and finished as *Cromwell*. Yes, you shall see that it will be the best of all your books, and small thanks to it, it has taken a doing." On which the author naïvely purrs: "It would be worth while to write books, if mankind would read them as you." Later he speaks of his wife's recognition and that of Emerson—who wrote enthusiastically of the art of the work, though much of it was across his grain—as "the only bit of human criticism in which he could discern lineaments of the thing." But the book was a swift success, two editions of 2000 and another of 1000 copies being sold in a comparatively brief space. Carlyle's references to this—after his return from another visit to the north and the second trip to Germany—seem somewhat ungracious:—

> Book . . . much babbled over in newspapers . . . no better to me than the barking of dogs . . . officious people put reviews into my hands, and in an idle hour I glanced partly into these; but it would have been better not, so sordidly ignorant and impertinent were they, though generally laudatory.

But these notices recall the fact familiar to every writer, that while the assailants of a book sometimes read it, favourable reviewers hardly ever do; these latter save their time by payment of generally superficial praise, and a few random quotations.

Carlyle scarcely enjoyed his brief respite on being discharged of the first instalment of his book: the remainder lay upon him like a menacing nightmare; he never ceased to feel that the work must be completed ere he could be

free, and that to accomplish this he must be alone. Never absent from his wife without regrets, lamentations, contrite messages, and childlike entreaties for her to "come and protect him," when she came it was to find that they were better apart; for his temper was never softened by success. "Living beside him," she writes in 1858, is "the life of a weathercock in high wind." During a brief residence together in a hired house near Aberdour in Fife-shire, she compares herself to a keeper in a madhouse; and writes later from Sunnybank to her husband, "If you could fancy me in some part of the house out of sight, my absence would make little difference to you, considering how little I do see of you, and how preoccupied you are when I do see you." Carlyle answers in his touching strain, "We have had a sore life pilgrimage together, much bad road. Oh, forgive me!" and sends her beautiful descriptions; but her disposition, not wholly forgiving, received them somewhat sceptically. "Byron," said Lady Byron, "can write anything, but he does not feel it"; and Mrs. Carlyle on one occasion told her "harsh spouse" that his fine passages were very well written for the sake of future biographers: a charge he almost indignantly repudiates. He was then, August 1860, staying at Thurso Castle, the guest of Sir George Sinclair; a visit that terminated in an unfortunate careless mistake about a sudden change of plans, resulting in his wife, then with the Stanleys at Alderley, being driven back to Chelsea and deprived of her promised pleasure and requisite rest with her friends in the north.

The frequency of such incidents,—each apart capable of being palliated by the same fallacy of division that has attempted in vain to justify the domestic career of Henry VIII.,—points to the conclusion of Miss Gully that Carlyle, though often nervous on the subject, acted to his wife as if he were "totally inconsiderate of her health," so much so

that she received medical advice not to be much at home when he was in the stress of writing. In January 1858 he writes to his brother John an anxious letter in reference to a pain about a hand-breadth below the heart, of which she had begun to complain, the premonitory symptom of the disease which ultimately proved fatal; but he was not sufficiently impressed to give due heed to the warning; nor was it possible, with his long-engrained habits, to remove the Marah spring that lay under all the wearisome bickerings, repentances, and renewals of offence. The "very little herring" who declined to be made a part of Lady Ashburton's luggage now suffered more than ever from her inanimate rival. The highly-endowed wife of one of the most eminent philanthropists of America, whose life was devoted to the awakening of defective intellects, thirty-five years ago murmured, "If I were only an idiot!" Similarly Mrs. Carlyle might have remonstrated, "Why was I not born a book!" Her letters and journal teem to tiresomeness with the refrain, "I feel myself extremely neglected for unborn generations." Her once considerable ambitions had been submerged, and her own vivid personality overshadowed by a man she was afraid to meet at breakfast, and glad to avoid at dinner. A woman of immense talent and a spark of genius linked to a man of vast genius and imperious will, she had no choice but to adopt his judgments, intensify his dislikes, and give a sharper edge to his sneers.

Mr. Froude, who for many years lived too near the sun to see the sun, and inconsistently defends many of the inconsistencies he has himself inherited from his master, yet admits that Carlyle treated the Broad Church party in the English Church with some injustice. His recorded estimates of the leading theologians of the age, and personal relation to them, are hopelessly bewildering. His lifelong friendship for Erskine of Linlathen is intelligible, though he did

not extend the same charity to what he regarded as the muddle-headedness of Maurice (Erskine's spiritual son), and keenly ridiculed the reconciliation pamphlet entitled "Subscription no Bondage." The Essayists and Reviewers, "Septem contra Christum," "should," he said, "be shot for deserting their posts"; even Dean Stanley, their *amicus curiæ*, whom he liked, came in for a share of his sarcasm; "there he goes," he said to Froude, "boring holes in the bottom of the Church of England." Of Colenso, who was doing as much as any one for the "Exodus from Houndsditch," he spoke with open contempt, saying, "he mistakes for fame an extended pillory that he is standing on"; and was echoed by his wife, "Colenso isn't worth talking about for five minutes, except for the absurdity of a man making arithmetical onslaughts on the Pentateuch with a bishop's little black silk apron on." This is not the place to discuss the controversy involved; but we are bound to note the fact that Carlyle was, by an inverted Scotch intolerance, led to revile men rowing in the same boat as himself, but with a different stroke. To another broad Churchman, Charles Kingsley, partly from sympathy with this writer's imaginative power, he was more considerate; and one of the still deeply religious freethinkers of the time was among his closest friends. The death of Arthur Clough in 1861 left another blank in Carlyle's life: we have had in this century to lament the comparatively early loss of few men of finer genius. Clough had not, perhaps, the practical force of Sterling, but his work is of a higher order than any of the fragments of the earlier favourite. Among High Churchmen Carlyle commended Dr. Pusey as "solid and judicious," and fraternised with the Bishop of Oxford; but he called Keble "an ape," and said of Cardinal Newman that he had "no more brains than an ordinary-sized rabbit."

These years are otherwise marked by his most glaring political blunder. The Civil War, then raging in America, brought, with its close, the abolition of Slavery throughout the States, a consummation for which he cared little, for he had never professed to regard the negroes as fit for freedom; but this result, though inevitable, was incidental. As is known to every one who has the remotest knowledge of Transatlantic history, the war was in great measure a struggle for the preservation of National Unity: but it was essentially more; it was the vindication of Law and Order against the lawless and disorderly violence of those who, when defeated at the polling-booth, flew to the bowie knife; an assertion of Right as Might for which Carlyle cared everything: yet all he had to say of it was his "Ilias Americana in nuce," published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, August 1863.

Peter of the North (to Paul of the South): "Paul, you unaccountable scoundrel, I find you hire your servants for life, not by the month or year as I do. You are going straight to Hell, you——"

Paul: "Good words, Peter. The risk is my own. I am willing to take the risk. Hire you your servants by the month or the day, and get straight to Heaven; leave me to my own method."

Peter: "No, I won't. I will beat your brains out first!" [And is trying dreadfully ever since, but cannot yet manage it.]

This, except the *Prinzenraub*, a dramatic presentation of a dramatic incident in old German history, was his only side publication during the writing of *Friedrich*.

After the war ended and Emerson's letters of remonstrance had proved prophetic, Carlyle is said to have confessed to Mr. Moncure Conway as well as to Mr. Froude that he "had not seen to the bottom of the matter." But his republication of this nadir of his nonsense was an offence,

emphasising the fact that, however inspiring, he is not always a safe guide, even to those content to abide by his own criterion of success.

There remains of this period the record of a triumph and of a tragedy. After seven years more of rarely intermitted toil, broken only by a few visits, trips to the seashore, etc., and the distress of the terrible accident to his wife,—her fall on a curbstone and dislocation of a limb,—which has been often sufficiently detailed, he had finished his last great work. The third volume of *Friedrich* was published in May 1862, the fourth appeared in February 1864, the fifth and sixth in March 1865. Carlyle had at last slain his Minotaur, and stood before the world as a victorious Theseus, everywhere courted and acclaimed, his hard-earned rest only disturbed by a shower of honours. His position as the foremost prose writer of his day was as firmly established in Germany, where his book was at once translated and read by all readers of history, as in England. Scotland, now fully awake to her reflected fame, made haste to make amends. Even the leaders of the sects, bond and "free," who had denounced him, were now eager to proclaim that he had been intrinsically all along, though sometimes in disguise, a champion of their faith. No men knew better how to patronise, or even seem to lead, what they had failed to quell. The Universities made haste with their burnt-offerings. In 1856 a body of Edinburgh students had prematurely repeated the attempt of their forerunners in Glasgow to confer on him their Lord Rectorship, and failed. In 1865 he was elected, in opposition again to Mr. Disraeli, to succeed Mr. Gladstone, the genius of elections being in a jesting mood. He was prevailed on to accept the honour, and, later, consented to deliver in the spring of 1866 the customary Inaugural Address. Mrs. Carlyle's anxiety on this occasion as to his success and his health is a tribute

to her constant and intense fidelity. He went north to his Installation, under the kind care of encouraging friends, imprimis of Professor Tyndall,[1] one of his truest; they stopped on the road at Fryston, with Lord Houghton, and there met Professor Huxley, who accompanied them to Edinburgh. Carlyle, having resolved to speak and not merely to read what he had to say, was oppressed with nervousness; and of the event itself he writes: "My speech was delivered in a mood of defiant despair, and under the pressure of nightmare. Some feeling that I was not speaking lies alone sustained me. The applause, etc., I took for empty noise, which it really was not altogether." The address, nominally on the "Reading of Books," really a rapid autobiography of his own intellectual career, with references to history, literature, religion, and the conduct of life, was, as Tyndall telegraphed to Mrs. Carlyle,—save for some difficulty the speaker had in making himself audible —"a perfect triumph." His reception by one of the most enthusiastic audiences ever similarly assembled marked the climax of a steadily-increasing fame. It may be compared to the late welcome given to Wordsworth in the Oxford Theatre. After four days spent with Erskine and his own brother James in Edinburgh, he went for a week's quiet to Scotsbrig, and was kept there, lingering longer than he had intended, by a sprained ankle, "blessed in the country stillness, the purity of sky and earth, and the absence of all babble." On April 20th he wrote his last letter to his wife, a letter which she never read. On the evening of Saturday the 21st, when staying on the way south at his sister's house at Dumfries, he received a telegram inform-

[1] For the most interesting, loyally sympathetic, and characteristic account of Carlyle's journey north on this occasion, and of the incidents which followed, we may refer to *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, just published.

ing him that the close companionship of forty years —companionship of struggle and victory, of sad and sweet so strangely blent—was for ever at an end. Mrs. Carlyle had been found dead in her carriage when driving round Hyde Park on the afternoon of that day, her death (from heart-disease) being accelerated by an accident to a favourite little dog. Carlyle felt as "one who hath been stunned," hardly able to realise his loss. "They took me out next day . . . to wander in the green sunny Sabbath fields, and ever and anon there rose from my sick heart the ejaculation, 'My poor little woman,' but no full gust of tears came to my relief, nor has yet come." On the following Monday he set off with his brother for London. "Never for a thousand years shall I forget that arrival here of ours, my first unwelcomed by her. She lay in her coffin, lovely in death. Pale death and things not mine or ours had possession of our poor darling." On Wednesday they returned, and on Thursday the 26th she was buried in the nave of the old Abbey Kirk at Haddington, in the grave of her father The now desolate old man, who had walked with her over many a stony road, paid the first of his many regretful tributes in the epitaph inscribed over her tomb: in which follows, after the name and date of birth :—

IN HER BRIGHT EXISTENCE SHE HAD MORE SORROWS THAN ARE COMMON, BUT ALSO A SOFT INVINCIBILITY, A CAPACITY OF DISCERNMENT, AND A NOBLE LOYALTY OF HEART WHICH ARE RARE. FOR 40 YEARS SHE WAS THE TRUE AND LOVING HELP-MATE OF HER HUSBAND, AND BY ACT AND WORD UNWEARIEDLY FORWARDED HIM AS NONE ELSE COULD IN ALL OF WORTHY THAT HE DID OR ATTEMPTED. SHE DIED AT LONDON, 21ST APRIL 1866, SUDDENLY SNATCHED FROM HIM, AND THE LIGHT OF HIS LIFE AS IF GONE OUT.

CHAPTER VII

DECADENCE

[1866–1881]

After this shock of bereavement Carlyle's days went by "on broken wing," never brightening, slowly saddening to the close; but lit up at intervals by flashes of the indomitable energy that, starting from no vantage, had conquered a world of thought, and established in it, if not a new dynasty, at least an intellectual throne. Expressions of sympathy came to him from all directions, from the Queen herself downwards, and he received them with the grateful acknowledgment that he had, after all, been loved by his contemporaries. When the question arose as to his future life, it seemed a natural arrangement that he and his brother John, then a childless widower who had retired from his profession with a competence, should take up house together. The experiment was made, but, to the discredit of neither, it proved a failure. They were in some respects too much alike. John would not surrender himself wholly to the will or whims even of one whom he revered, and the attempt was by mutual consent abandoned; but their affectionate correspondence lasted through the period of their joint lives. Carlyle, being left to himself in his "gaunt and lonesome home," after a short visit to Miss

Bromley, an intimate friend of his wife, at her residence in Kent, accepted the invitation of the second Lady Ashburton to spend the winter in her house at Mentone. There he arrived on Christmas Eve 1866, under the kind convoy of Professor Tyndall, and remained breathing the balmy air and gazing on the violet sea till March of the following year. During the interval he occupied himself in writing his *Reminiscences*, drawing pen-and-ink pictures of the country, steeped in beauty fit to soothe any sorrow save such as his, and taking notes of some of the passers-by. Of the greatest celebrity then encountered, Mr. Gladstone, he writes in his journal, in a tone intensified as time went on: "Talk copious, ingenious, . . . a man of ardent faculty, but all gone irrecoverably into House of Commons shape. . . . Man once of some wisdom or possibility of it, but now possessed by the Prince, or many Princes, of the Air." Back in Chelsea, he was harassed by heaps of letters, most of which, we are told, he answered, and spent a large portion of his time and means in charities.

Amid Carlyle's irreconcilable inconsistencies of theory, and sometimes of conduct, he was through life consistent in practical benevolence. The interest in the welfare of the working classes that in part inspired his *Sartor*, *Chartism*, and *Past and Present* never failed him. He was among the foremost in all national movements to relieve and solace their estate. He was, further, with an amiable disregard of his own maxims, overlenient towards the waifs and strays of humanity, in some instances careless to inquire too closely into the causes of their misfortune or the degree of their demerits. In his latter days this disposition grew upon him: the gray of his own evening skies made him fuller of compassion to all who lived in the shade. Sad himself, he mourned with those who mourned; afflicted, he held out hands to all in affliction. Consequently "the poor

were always with him," writing, entreating, and personally soliciting all sorts of alms, from advice and help to ready money. His biographer informs us that he rarely gave an absolute refusal to any of these various classes of beggars. He answered a letter which is a manifest parody of his own surface misanthropy; he gave a guinea to a ticket-of-leave-convict, pretending to be a decayed tradesman; and a shilling to a blind man, whose dog took him over the crossing to a gin shop. Froude remonstrated; "Poor fellow," was the answer, "I daresay he is cold and thirsty." The memory of Wordsworth is less warmly cherished among the dales of Westmoreland than that of Carlyle in the lanes of Chelsea, where "his one expensive luxury was charity."

His attitude on political questions, in which for ten years he still took a more or less prominent part, represents him on his sterner side. The first of these was the controversy about Governor Eyre, who, having suppressed the Jamaica rebellion by the violent and, as alleged, cruel use of martial law, and hung a quadroon preacher called Gordon—the man whether honest or not being an undoubted incendiary—without any law at all, was by the force of popular indignation dismissed in disgrace, and then arraigned for misgovernment and illegality. In the movement, which resulted in the governor's recall and impeachment, there was doubtless the usual amount of exaggeration—represented by the violent language of one of Carlyle's minor biographers: "There were more innocent people slain than at Jeffreys' Bloody Assize"; "The massacre of Glencoe was nothing to it"; "Members of Christian Churches were flogged," etc. etc.—but among its leaders there were so many men of mark and celebrity, men like John S. Mill, T. Hughes, John Bright, Fawcett, Cairnes, Goldwin Smith, Herbert Spencer, and Frederick Harrison, that it could not be set aside as a mere unreasoning clamour. It was a hard

test of Carlyle's theory of strong government; and he stood to his colours. Years before, on John Sterling suggesting that the negroes themselves should be consulted as to making a permanent engagement with their masters, he had said, "I never thought the rights of the negroes worth much discussing in any form. Quashee will get himself made a slave again, and with beneficent whip will be compelled to work." On this occasion he regarded the black rebellion in the same light as the Sepoy revolt. He organised and took the chair of a "Defence Committee," joined or backed by Ruskin, Henry Kingsley, Tyndall, Sir R. Murchison, Sir T. Gladstone, and others. "I never," says Mr. Froude, "knew Carlyle more anxious about anything." He drew up a petition to Government and exerted himself heart and soul for the "brave, gentle, chivalrous, and clear man," who when the ship was on fire "had been called to account for having flung a bucket or two of water into the hold beyond what was necessary." He had damaged some of the cargo perhaps, but he had saved the ship, and deserved to be made "dictator of Jamaica for the next twenty-five years," to govern after the model of Dr. Francia in Paraguay. The committee failed to get Eyre reinstalled or his pension restored; but the impeachment was unsuccessful.

The next great event was the passing of the Reform Bill of 1867, by the Tories, educated by Mr. Disraeli to this method of "dishing the Whigs," by outbidding them in the scramble for votes. This instigated the famous tract called *Shooting Niagara*, written in the spirit of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*—Carlyle's final and unqualified denunciation of this concession to Democracy and all its works. But the upper classes in England seemed indifferent to the warning. "Niagara, or what you like," the author quotes as the saying of a certain shining countess, "we

will at least have a villa on the Mediterranean when Church and State have gone." A *mot* emphatically of the decadence.

Later he fulminated against the Clerkenwell explosions being a means of bringing the Irish question within the range of practical politics.

> I sit in speechless admiration of our English treatment of those Fenians first and last. It is as if the rats of a house had decided to expel and extirpate the human inhabitants, which latter seemed to have neither rat-catchers, traps, nor arsenic, and are trying to prevail by the method of love.

Governor Eyre, with Spenser's Essay on Ireland for text and Cromwell's storm of Drogheda for example, or Otto von Bismarck, would have been, in his view, in place at Dublin Castle.

In the next great event of the century, the close of the greatest European struggle since Waterloo, the cause which pleased Cato pleased also the gods. Carlyle, especially in his later days, had a deepening confidence in the Teutonic, a growing distrust of the Gallic race. He regarded the contest between them as one between Ormuzd and Ahriman, and wrote of Sedan, as he had written of Rossbach, with exultation. When a feeling spread in this country, naming itself sympathy for the fallen,—really half that, the other half, as in the American war, being jealousy of the victor,—and threatened to be dangerous, Carlyle wrote a decisive letter to the *Times*, November 11th 1870, tracing the sources of the war back to the robberies of Louis XIV., and ridiculing the prevailing sentiment about the recaptured provinces of Lothringen and Elsass. With a possible reference to Victor Hugo and his clients, he remarks—

> They believe that they are the "Christ of Nations." . . . I wish they would inquire whether there might not be a Cartouche of nations. Cartouche had many gallant qualities—had many

fine ladies begging locks of his hair while the indispensable gibbet was preparing. Better he should obey the heavy-handed Teutsch police officer, who has him by the windpipe in such frightful manner, give up part of his stolen goods, altogether cease to be a Cartouche, and try to become again a Chevalier Bayard. All Europe does *not* come to the rescue in gratitude for the heavenly illumination it is getting from France: nor could all Europe if it did prevent that awful Chancellor from having his own way. Metz and the boundary fence, I reckon, will be dreadfully hard to get out of that Chancellor's hands again. . . . Considerable misconception as to Herr von Bismarck is still prevalent in England. He, as I read him, is not a person of Napoleonic ideas, but of ideas quite superior to Napoleonic. . . . That noble, patient, deep, pious, and solid Germany should be at length welded into a nation, and become Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless, and over-sensitive France, seems to me the hopefulest fact that has occurred in my time.

Carlyle seldom wrote with more force, or with more justice. Only, to be complete, his paper should have ended with a warning. He has done more than any other writer to perpetuate in England the memories of the great thinkers and actors—Fichte, Richter, Arndt, Körner, Stein, Goethe, —who taught their countrymen how to endure defeat and retrieve adversity. Who will celebrate their yet undefined successors, who will train Germany gracefully to bear the burden of prosperity? Two years later Carlyle wrote or rather dictated, for his hand was beginning to shake, his historical sketch of the *Early Kings of Norway*, showing no diminution of power either of thought or expression, his estimates of the three Hakons and of the three Olafs being especially notable; and a paper on *The Portraits of John Knox*, the prevailing dull gray of which is relieved by a radiant vision of Mary Stuart.

He was incited to another public protest, when, in May 1877, towards the close of the Russo-Turkish war, he had got, or imagined himself to have got, reliable information

that Lord Beaconsfield, then Prime Minister, having sent our fleet to the Dardanelles, was planning to seize Gallipoli and throw England into the struggle. Carlyle never seems to have contemplated the possibility of a Sclavo-Gallic alliance against the forces of civilised order in Europe, and he chose to think of the Czars as the representatives of an enlightened autocracy. We are here mainly interested in the letter he wrote to the *Times*, as "his last public act in this world,"—the phrase of Mr. Froude, who does not give the letter, and unaccountably says it "was brief, not more than three or four lines." It is as follows:—

SIR—A rumour everywhere prevails that our miraculous Premier, in spite of the Queen's Proclamation of Neutrality, intends, under cover of care for "British interests," to send the English fleet to the Baltic, or do some other feat which shall compel Russia to declare war against England. Latterly the rumour has shifted from the Baltic and become still more sinister, on the eastern side of the scene, where a feat is contemplated that will force, not Russia only, but all Europe, to declare war against us. This latter I have come to know as an indisputable fact; in our present affairs and outlooks surely a grave one.

As to "British interests" there is none visible or conceivable to me, except taking strict charge of our route to India by Suez and Egypt, and for the rest, resolutely steering altogether clear of any copartnery with the Turk in regard to this or any other "British interest" whatever. It should be felt by England as a real ignominy to be connected with such a Turk at all. Nay, if we still had, as we ought to have, a wish to save him from perdition and annihilation in God's world, the one future for him that has any hope in it is even now that of being conquered by the Russians, and gradually schooled and drilled into peaceable attempt at learning to be himself governed. The newspaper outcry against Russia is no more respectable to me than the howling of Bedlam, proceeding as it does from the deepest ignorance, egoism, and paltry national jealousy.

These things I write, not on hearsay, but on accurate knowledge, and to all friends of their country will recommend immediate attention to them while there is yet time, lest in a

few weeks the maddest and most criminal thing that a British government could do, should be done and all Europe kindle into flames of war.—I am, etc.

T. CARLYLE.

5 CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA,
May 4th.

Meanwhile honours without stint were being rendered to the great author and venerable sage. In 1868 he had by request a personal interview with the Queen, and has left, in a letter, a graphic account of the interview at the Deanery of Westminster. Great artists as Millais, Watts, and Boehm vied with one another, in painting or sculpture, to preserve his lineaments; prominent reviews to record their impression of his work, and disciples to show their gratitude. One of these, Professor Masson of Edinburgh, in memory of Carlyle's own tribute to Goethe, started a subscription for a medal, presented on his eightieth birthday; but he valued more a communication of the same date from Prince Bismarck. Count Bernstoff from Berlin wrote him (1871) a semi-official letter of thanks for the services he had conferred on Germany, and in 1874 he was prevailed on to accept the Prussian "Ordre pour le mérite." In the same year Mr. Disraeli proposed, in courteous oblivion of bygone hostilities, to confer on him a pension and the "Order of the Grand Cross of Bath," an emolument and distinction which Carlyle, with equal courtesy, declined. To the Countess of Derby, whom he believed to be the originator of the scheme, he (December 30th) expressed his sense of the generosity of the Premier's letter: "It reveals to me, after all the hard things I have said of him, a new and unexpected stratum of genial dignity and manliness of character." To his brother John he wrote: "I do, however, truly admire the magnanimity of Dizzy in regard to me. He is the only man I almost never spoke of without contempt . . . and yet see here he comes with a pan of

hot coals for my guilty head." That he was by no means gagged by personal feeling or seduced in matters of policy is evident from the above-quoted letter to the *Times*; but he liked Disraeli better than he did his great rival; the one may have bewildered his followers, the other, according to his critic's view, deceived himself—the lie, in Platonic phrase, had got into the soul, till, to borrow an epigram, "he made his conscience not his guide but his accomplice." "Carlyle," says Mr. Froude, "did not regard Mr. Gladstone merely as an orator who, knowing nothing as it ought to be known, had flung his force into specious sentiments, but as the representative of the numerous cants of the age . . . differing from others in that the cant seemed true to him. He in fact believed him to be one of those fatal figures created by England's evil genius to work irreparable mischief." It must be admitted that Carlyle's censures are so broadcast as to lose half their sting. In uncontroversial writing, it is enough to note that his methods of reforming the world and Mr. Gladstone's were as far as the poles asunder; and the admirers of the latter may console themselves with the reflection that the censor was, at the same time, talking with equal disdain of the scientific discoverers of the age—conspicuously of Mr. Darwin, whom he describes as "evolving man's soul from frog spawn," adding, "I have no patience with these gorilla damnifications of humanity." Other criticisms, as those of George Eliot, whose *Adam Bede* he pronounced "simply dull," display a curious limitation or obtuseness of mind.

One of the pleasantest features of his declining years is the ardour of his attachment to the few staunch friends who helped to cheer and console them. He had a sincere regard for Fitzjames Stephen, "an honest man with heavy strokes"; for Sir Garnet Wolseley, to whom he said in effect, "Your duty one day will be to take away that bauble and close

the doors of the House of Discord"; for Tyndall always; for Lecky, despite their differences; for Moncure Conway, athwart the question of "nigger" philanthropies; for Kingsley and Tennyson and Browning, the last of whom was a frequent visitor till near the end. Froude he had bound to his soul by hoops of steel; and a more faithful disciple and apostle, in intention always, in practice in the main (despite the most perplexing errors of judgment), no professed prophet ever had. But Carlyle's highest praise is reserved for Ruskin, whom he regarded as no mere art critic, but as a moral power worthy to receive and carry onward his own "cross of fire." The relationship between the two great writers is unchequered by any shade of patronage on the one hand, of jealousy or adulation on the other. The elder recognised in the younger an intellect as keen, a spirit as fearless as his own, who in the Eyre controversy had "plunged his rapier to the hilt in the entrails of the Blatant Beast," *i.e.* Popular Opinion. He admired all Ruskin's books; the *Stones of Venice*, the most solid structure of the group, he named "Sermons in Stones"; he resented an attack on *Sesame and Lilies* as if the book had been his own; and passages of the *Queen of the Air* went into his heart "like arrows." The *Order of the Rose* has attempted a practical embodiment of the review contemplated by Carlyle, as a counteractive to the money making practice and expediency-worships of the day

Meanwhile he had been putting his financial affairs in order. In 1867, on return from Mentone, he had recorded his bequest of the revenues of Craigenputtock for the endowment of three John Welsh bursaries in the University of Edinburgh. In 1873 he made his will, leaving John Forster and Froude his literary executors: a legacy of trust which, on the death of the former, fell to the latter, to whose discretion, by various later bequests, less and less

limited, there was confided the choice—at last almost made a duty—of editing and publishing the manuscripts and journals of himself and his wife.

Early in his seventy-third year (December 1867) Carlyle quotes, "Youth is a garland of roses," adding, "I did not find it such. 'Age is a crown of thorns.' Neither is this altogether true for me. If sadness and sorrow tend to loosen us from life, they make the place of rest more desirable." The talk of Socrates in the *Republic*, and the fine phrases in Cicero's *De Senectute*, hardly touch on the great grief, apart from physical infirmities, of old age—its increasing solitariness. After sixty, a man may make disciples and converts, but few new friends, while the old ones die daily; the "familiar faces" vanish in the night to which there is no morning, and leave nothing in their stead.

During these years Carlyle's former intimates were falling round him like the leaves from an autumn tree, and the kind care of the few survivors, the solicitous attention of his niece, nurse, and amanuensis, Mary Aitken, yet left him desolate. Clough had died, and Thomas Erskine, and John Forster, and Wilberforce, with whom he thought he agreed, and Mill, his old champion and ally, with whom he so disagreed that he almost maligned his memory—calling one of the most interesting of autobiographies "the life of a logic-chopping machine." In March 1876 he attended the funeral of Lady Augusta Stanley; in the following month his brother Aleck died in Canada; and in 1878 his brother John at Dumfries. He seemed destined to be left alone; his physical powers were waning. As early as 1868 he and his last horse had their last ride together; later, his right hand failed, and he had to write by dictation. In the gathering gloom he began to look on death as a release from the shreds of life, and to envy the old Roman mode of shuffling off the coil. His thoughts

turned more and more to Hamlet's question of the possible dreams hereafter, and his longing for his lost Jeannie made him beat at the iron gates of the "Undiscovered Country" with a yearning cry; but he could get no answer from reason, and would not seek it in any form of superstition, least of all the latest, that of stealing into heaven "by way of mesmeric and spiritualistic trances." His question and answer are always—

> Strength quite a stranger to me. . . . Life is verily a weariness on those terms. Oftenest I feel willing to go, were my time come. Sweet to rejoin, were it only in eternal sleep, those that are away. That . . . is now and then the whisper of my worn-out heart, and a kind of solace to me. "But why annihilation or eternal sleep?" I ask too. They and I are alike in the will of the Highest.

"When," says Mr. Froude, "he spoke of the future and its uncertainties, he fell back invariably on the last words of his favourite hymn—

> Wir heissen euch hoffen.

His favourite quotations in those days were Macbeth's "To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow"; Burns's line, "Had we never lo'ed sae kindly,"—thinking of the tomb which he was wont to kiss in the gloamin' in Haddington Church,—the lines from "The Tempest" ending, "our little life is rounded with a sleep," and the dirge in "Cymbeline." He lived on during the last years, save for his quiet walks with his biographer about the banks of the Thames, like a ghost among ghosts, his physical life slowly ebbing till, on February 4th 1881, it ebbed away. His remains were, by his own desire, conveyed to Ecclefechan and laid under the snow-clad soil of the rural churchyard, beside the dust of his kin. He had objected to be buried, should the request be made (as it was by Dean Stanley), in Westminster Abbey: ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος.

Of no man whose life has been so laid bare to us is it more difficult to estimate the character than that of Thomas Carlyle; regarding no one of equal eminence, with the possible exception of Byron, has opinion been so divided. After his death there was a carnival of applause from his countrymen in all parts of the globe, from Canton to San Francisco. Their hot zeal, only equalled by that of their revelries over the memory of Burns, was unrestrained by limit, order, or degree. No nation is warmer than the Scotch in worship of its heroes when dead and buried: one perfervid enthusiast says of the former "Atheist, Deist, and Pantheist": "Carlyle is gone; his voice, pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free, will be heard no more": the *Scotsman* newspaper writes of him as "probably the greatest of modern literary men; . . . before the volcanic glare of his *French Revolution* all Epics, ancient and modern, grow pale and shadowy, . . . his like is not now left in the world." More recently a stalwart Aberdonian, on helping to put a bust into a monument, exclaims in a strain of genuine ardour, "I knew Carlyle, and I aver to you that his heart was as large and generous as his brain was powerful; that he was essentially a most lovable man, and that there were depths of tenderness, kindliness, benevolence, and most delicate courtesy in him, with all his seeming ruggedness and sternness, such as I have found throughout my life rarely in any human being."

On the other side, a little later, after the publication of the *Reminiscences*, *Blackwood* denounced the "old man eloquent" as "a blatant impostor, who speaks as if he were the only person who knew good from bad. . . . Every one and every thing dealt with in his *History* is treated in the tone of a virtuous Mephistopheles." The *World* remarks that Carlyle has been made to pay the penalty of a posthumous depreciation for a factitious fame; "but the game

of venomous recrimination was begun by himself. . . . There is little that is extraordinary, still less that is heroic in his character. He had no magnanimity about him . . . he was full of littleness and weakness, of shallow dogmatism and of blustering conceit." The *Quarterly*, after alluding to Carlyle's style "as the eccentric expression of eccentricity," denounces his choice of "heroes" as reckless of morality. According to the same authority, he "was not a deep thinker, but he was a great word-painter . . . he has the inspiration as well as the contortions of the Sibyl, the strength as well as the nodosities of the oak. . . . In the *French Revolution* he rarely condescends to plain narrative . . . it resembles a drama at the Porte St. Martin, in so many acts and tableaux. . . . The raisers of busts and statues in his honour are winging and pointing new arrows aimed at the reputation of their most distinguished contemporaries, and doing their best to perpetuate a baneful influence." *Fraser*, no longer edited by Mr. Froude, swells the chorus of dissent: "Money, for which he cared little, only came in quantity after the death of his wife, when everything became indifferent to an old and life-weary man. Who would be great at such a price? Who would buy so much misery with so much labour? Most men like their work. In his Carlyle seems to have found the curse imposed upon Adam. . . . He cultivated contempt of the kindly race of men."

Ample texts for these and similar censures are to be found in the pages of Mr. Froude, and he has been accused by Carlyle's devotees of having supplied this material of malice prepense. No accusation was ever more ridiculously unjust. To the mind of every impartial reader, Froude appears as one of the loyallest if one of the most infatuated of friends. Living towards the close in almost daily communion with his master, and in inevitable contact

with his numerous frailties, he seems to have revered him with a love that passeth understanding, and attributed to him in good faith, as Dryden did in jest to the objects of his mock heroics, every mental as well as every moral power, *e.g.*, "Had Carlyle turned his mind to it he would have been a great philologer." "A great diplomatist was lost in Carlyle." "He would have done better as a man of action than a man of words." By kicking the other diplomatists into the sea, as he threatened to do with the urchins of Kirkcaldy? Froude's panegyrics are in style and tone worthy of that put into the mouth of Pericles by Thucydides, with which the modern biographer closes his only too faithful record. But his claims for his hero—amounting to the assertions that he was never seriously wrong; that he was as good as he was great; that "in the weightier matters of the law his life had been without speck or flaw"; that "such faults as he had were but as the vapours which hang about a mountain, inseparable from the nature of the man"; that he never, in their intercourse, uttered a "trivial word, nor one which he had better have left unuttered"—these claims will never be honoured, for they are refuted in every third page after that on which they appear:—*e.g.* in the Biography, vol. iv. p. 258, we are told that Carlyle's "knowledge was not in points or lines but complete and solid": facing the remark we read, "He liked *ill* men like Humboldt, Laplace, or the author of the *Vestiges*. He refused Darwin's transmutation of species as unproved; he fought against it, though I could see he dreaded that it might turn out true." The statement that "he always spoke respectfully of Macaulay" is soon followed by criticisms that make us exclaim, "Save us from such respect." The extraordinary assertion that Carlyle was "always just in speaking of living men" is safeguarded by the quotation of large utterances of in-

justice and contempt for Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Comte, Balzac, Hugo, Lamb, George Eliot, and disparaging patronage[1] of Scott, of Jeffrey, of Mazzini, and of Mill. The dog-like fidelity of Boswell and Eckermann was fitting to their attitude and capacity; but the spectacle of one great writer surrendering himself to another is a new testimony to the glamour of conversational genius.

Carlyle was a great man, but a great man spoiled, that is, largely soured. He was never a Timon; but, while at best a Stoic, he was at worst a Cynic, emulous though disdainful, trying all men by his own standard, and intolerant of a rival on the throne. To this result there contributed the bleak though bracing environment of his early years, amid kindred more noted for strength than for amenity, whom he loved, trusted, and revered, but from whose grim creed, formally at least, he had to tear himself with violent wrenches apart; his purgatory among the border-ruffians of Annan school; his teaching drudgeries; his hermit college days; ten years' struggle for a meagre competence; a life-long groaning under the Nessus shirt of the irritable yet stubborn constitution to which genius is often heir; and above all his unusually late recognition. There is a good deal of natural bitterness in reference to the long refusal by the publishers of his first original work—an idyll like Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, and our finest prose poem in philosophy. "Popularity," says Emerson, "is for dolls"; but it remains to find the preacher, prophet, or poet wholly impervious to unjust criticism. Neglect which crushes

[1] This patronage of men, some quite, others nearly on his own level, whom he delights in calling "small," "thin," and "poor," as if he were the only big, fat, and rich, is more offensive than spurts of merely dyspeptic abuse. As regards the libels on Lamb, Dr. Ireland has endeavoured to establish that they were written in ignorance of the noble tragedy of "Elia's" life; but this contention cannot be made good as regards the later attacks.

dwarfs only exasperates giants, but to the latter also there is great harm done. Opposition affected Carlyle as it affected Milton, it made him defiant, at times even fierce, to those beyond his own inner circle. When he triumphed, he accepted his success without a boast, but not without reproaches for the past. He was crowned; but his coronation came too late, and the death of his wife paralysed his later years.

Let those who from the Clyde to the Isis, from the Dee to the Straits, make it their pastime to sneer at living worth, compare Ben Jonson's lines,

> Your praise and dispraise are to me alike,
> One does not stroke me, nor the other strike,

with Samuel Johnson's, "It has been delayed till most of those whom I wished to please are sunk into the grave, and success and failure are empty sounds," and then take to heart the following :—

The "recent return of popularity greater than ever," which I hear of, seems due alone to that late Edinburgh affair; especially to the Edinburgh "Address," and affords new proof of the singularly dark and feeble condition of "public judgment" at this time. No idea, or shadow of an idea, is in that Address but what had been set forth by me tens of times before, and the poor gaping sea of prurient blockheadism receives it as a kind of inspired revelation, and runs to buy my books (it is said), now when I have got quite done with their buying or refusing to buy. If they would give me £10,000 a year and bray unanimously their hosannahs heaven-high for the rest of my life, who now would there be to get the smallest joy or profit from it? To me I feel as if it would be a silent sorrow rather, and would bring me painful retrospections, nothing else.

We require no open-sesame, no clumsy confidence from attachés flaunting their intimacy, to assure us that there were "depths of tenderness" in Carlyle. His susceptibility to the softer influences of nature, of family

life, of his few chosen friends, is apparent in almost every page of his biography, above all in the *Reminiscences*, those supreme records of regret, remorse, and the inspiration of bereavement. There is no surge of sorrow in our literature like that which is perpetually tossed up in the second chapter of the second volume, with the never-to-be-forgotten refrain—

> Cherish what is dearest while you have it near you, and wait not till it is far away. Blind and deaf that we are; oh, think, if thou yet love anybody living, wait not till death sweep down the paltry little dust clouds and dissonances of the moment, and all be at last so mournfully clear and beautiful, when it is too late!

Were we asked to bring together the three most pathetic sentences in our tongue since Lear asked the question, "And have his daughters brought him to this pass?" we should select Swift's comment on the lock of Stella, "Only a woman's hair"; the cry of Tennyson's Rizpah, "The bones had moved in my side"; and Carlyle's wail, "Oh that I had you yet but for five minutes beside me, to tell you all!" But in answer we hear only the flapping of the folds of Isis, "strepitumque Acherontis avari."

> All of sunshine that remained in my life went out in that sudden moment. All of strength too often seems to have gone. . . . Were it permitted, I would pray, but to whom? I can well understand the invocation of saints. One's prayer now has to be voiceless, done with the heart still, but also with the hands still more. . . . Her birthday. She not here—I cannot keep it for her now, and send a gift to poor old Betty, who next to myself remembers her in life-long love and sacred sorrow. This is all I can do. . . . Time was to bring relief, said everybody; but Time has not to any extent, nor, in truth, did I much wish him
>
> Eurydicen vox ipsa et frigida lingua,
> Eurydicen toto referebant flumine ripæ.

Carlyle's pathos, far from being confined to his own calamity, was ready to awake at every touch. "I was walking with him," writes Froude, "one Sunday afternoon in Battersea Park. In the open circle among the trees was a blind man and his daughter, she singing hymns, he accompanying her on some instrument. We stood listening. She sang Faber's 'Pilgrims of the Night.' The words were trivial, but the air, though simple, had something weird and unearthly about it. 'Take me away,' he said, after a few minutes, 'I shall cry if I stay longer.'"

The melancholy, "often as of deep misery frozen torpid," that runs through his writing, that makes him forecast death in life and paint the springs of nature in winter hue, the "hoarse sea," the "bleared skies," the sunsets "beautiful and brief and wae," compels our compassion in a manner quite different from the pictures of Sterne, and De Quincey; and other colour dramatists, because we feel it is as genuine as the melancholy of Burns. Both had the relief of humour, but Burns only of the two was capable of gaiety. "Look up there," said Leigh Hunt, pointing to the starry skies, "look at that glorious harmony that sings with infinite voices an eternal song of hope in the soul of man." "Eh, it's a sair sicht," was the reply.

We have referred to a few out of a hundred instances of Carlyle's practical benevolence. To all deserving persons in misfortune he was a good Samaritan, and like all benefactors the dupe of some undeserving. Charity may be, like maternal affection, a form of self-indulgence, but it is so only to kind-hearted men. In all that relates to money Carlyle's career is exemplary. He had too much common sense to affect to despise it, and was restive when he was underpaid; he knew that the labourer was worthy of his hire. But, after hacking for Brewster he cannot be said to have ever worked for wages, his concern was rather

with the quality of his work, and, regardless of results, he always did his best. A more unworldly man never lived; from his first savings he paid ample tributes to filial piety and fraternal kindness, and to the end of his life retained the simple habits in which he had been trained. He hated waste of all kinds, save in words, and carried his home frugalities even to excess. In writing to James Aitken, engaged to his sister, "the Craw," he says, "remember in marriage you have undertaken to do to others as you would wish they should do to you." But this rede he did not reck.

"Carlyle," writes Longfellow, "was one of those men who sacrificed their happiness to their work"; the misfortune is that the sacrifice did not stop with himself. He seemed made to live with no one but himself. Alternately courteous and cross-grained, all his dramatic power went into his creations; he could not put himself into the place of those near him. Essentially perhaps the bravest man of his age, he would not move an inch for threat or flattery; centered in rectitude, conscience never made him a coward. He bore great calamities with the serenity of a Marcus Aurelius: his reception of the loss of his first volume of the *French Revolution* was worthy of Sidney or of Newton: his letters, when the successive deaths of almost all that were dearest left him desolate, are among the noblest, the most resigned, the most pathetic in biography. Yet, says Mr. Froude, in a judgment which every careful reader must endorse: "Of all men I have ever seen Carlyle was the least patient of the common woes of humanity." "A positive Christian," says Mrs. Carlyle, "in bearing others' pain, he was a roaring Thor when himself pricked by a pin," and his biographer corroborates this: "If matters went well with himself, it never occurred to him that they could be going ill with any one else; and, on the

other hand, if he were uncomfortable he required all the world to be uncomfortable along with him." He did his work with more than the tenacity of a Prescott or a Fawcett, but no man ever made more noise over it than this apostle of silence. "Sins of passion he could forgive, but those of insincerity never." Carlyle has no tinge of insincerity; his writing, his conversation, his life, are absolutely, dangerously, transparent. His utter genuineness was in the long run one of the sources of his success. He always, if we allow for a habit of rhetorical exaggeration, felt what he made others feel.

Sullen moods, and "words at random sent," those judging him from a distance can easily condone; the errors of a hot head are pardonable to one who, in his calmer hours, was ready to confess them. "Your temptation and mine," he writes to his brother Alexander, "is a tendency to imperiousness and indignant self-help; and, if no wise theoretical, yet, practical forgetfulness and tyrannical contempt of other men." His nicknaming mania was the inheritance of a family failing, always fostered by the mocking-bird at his side. Humour, doubtless, ought to discount many of his criticisms. Dean Stanley, in his funeral sermon, charitably says, that in pronouncing the population of England to be "thirty millions, mostly fools," Carlyle merely meant that "few are chosen and strait is the gate," generously adding—"There was that in him, in spite of his contemptuous descriptions of the people, which endeared him to those who knew him best. The idols of their market-place he trampled under foot, but their joys and sorrows, their cares and hopes, were to him revered things." Another critic pleads for his discontent that it had in it a noble side, like that of Faust, and that his harsh judgments of eminent men were based on the belief that they had allowed meaner to triumph over

higher impulses, or influences of society to injure their moral fibre. This plea, however, fails to cover the whole case. Carlyle's ignorance in treating men who moved in spheres apart from his own, as the leaders of science, definite theological enlightenment, or even poetry and arts, was an intellectual rather than a moral flaw; but in the implied assertion, "what I can't do is not worth doing," we have to regret the influence of an enormous egotism stunting enormous powers, which, beginning with his student days, possessed him to the last. The fame of Newton, Leibnitz, Gibbon, whose works he came to regard as the spoon-meat of his "rude untutored youth," is beyond the range of his or of any shafts. When he trod on Mazzini's pure patriot career, as a "rose-water imbecility," or maligned Mill's intrepid thought as that of a mere machine, he was astray on more delicate ground, and alienated some of his truest friends. Among the many curses of our nineteenth-century literature denounced by its leading Censor, the worst, the want of loyalty among literary men, he fails to denounce because he largely shares in it. "No sadder proof," he declares, "can be given by a man of his own littleness than disbelief in great men," and no one has done more to retrieve from misconception the memories of heroes of the past; but rarely does either he or Mrs. Carlyle say a good word for any considerable English writer then living. It is true that he criticises, more or less disparagingly, all his own works, from *Sartor*, of which he remarks that "only some ten pages are fused and harmonious," to his self-entitled "rigmarole on the Norse Kings": but he would not let his enemy say so; nor his friend. Mill's just strictures on the "Nigger Pamphlet" he treats as the impertinence of a boy, and only to Emerson would he grant the privilege to hold his own. *Per contra*, he overestimated those who were content to be his echoes.

Material help he refused with a red Indian pride; intellectual he used and slighted. He renders scant justice to those who had preceded him in his lines of historical investigation, as if they had been poachers on his premises, *e.g.* Heath, the royalist writer of the Commonwealth time, is "carrion Heath": Noble, a former biographer of Cromwell, is "my reverend imbecile friend": his predecessors in *Friedrich*, as Schlosser, Preuss, Ranke, Förster, Vehse, are "dark chaotic dullards whose books are mere blotches of printed stupor, tumbled mountains of marine stores"—criticism valueless even when it raises the laughter due to a pantomime. Carlyle assailed three sets of people:—

1. Real humbugs, or those who had behaved, or whom he believed to have behaved, badly to him.
2. Persons from whom he differed, or whom he could not understand—as Shelley, Keats, Lamb, Coleridge, and the leaders of Physics and Metaphysics.
3. Persons who had befriended, but would not give him an unrestricted homage or an implicit following, as Mill, Mazzini, Miss Martineau, etc.

The last series of assaults are hard to pardon. Had his strictures been always just,—so winged with humorous epigram,—they would have blasted a score of reputations: as it is they have only served to mar his own. He was a typical Scotch student of the better class, stung by the οἶστρος of their ambitious competition and restless push, wanting in repose, never like

> a gentleman at ease
> With moral breadth of temperament,

too apt to note his superiority with the sneer, "they call this man as good as me." Bacon, in one of his finest

antitheses, draws a contrast between the love of Excellence and the love of Excelling. Carlyle is possessed by both; he had none of the exaggerated caution which in others of his race is apt to degenerate into moral cowardice: but when he thought himself trod on he became, to use his own figure, "a rattlesnake," and put out fangs like those of the griffins curiously, if not sardonically, carved on the tombs of his family in the churchyard at Ecclefechan.

Truth, in the sense of saying what he thought, was one of his ruling passions. To one of his brothers on the birth of a daughter, he writes, "Train her to this, as the corner-stone of all morality, to stand by the truth, to abhor a lie as she does hell-fire." The "gates of hell" is the phrase of Achilles; but Carlyle has no real point of contact with the Greek love of abstract truth. He objects that "Socrates is terribly at ease in Zion": he liked no one to be at ease anywhere. He is angry with Walter Scott because he hunted with his friends over the breezy heath instead of mooning alone over twilight moors. Read Scott's *Memoirs* in the morning, the *Reminiscences* at night, and dispute if you like about the greater genius, but never about the healthier, better, and larger man.

Hebraism, says Matthew Arnold, is the spirit which obeys the mandate, "walk by your light"; Hellenism the spirit which remembers the other, "have a care your light be not darkness." The former prefers doing to thinking, the latter is bent on finding the truth it loves. Carlyle is a Hebraist unrelieved and unretrieved by the Hellene. A man of inconsistencies, egotisms, Alpine grandeurs and crevasses, let us take from him what the gods or protoplasms have allowed. His way of life,[1] duly admired for its

[1] In the *Times* of February 7th 1881, there appeared an interesting account of Carlyle's daily routine. "No book hack could have surpassed the regularity and industry with which he worked early and

stern temperance, its rigidity of noble aim—eighty years spent in contempt of favour, plaudit, or reward,—left him austere to frailty other than his own, and wrapt him in the repellent isolation which is the wrong side of uncompromising dignity. He was too great to be, in the common sense, conceited. All his consciousness of power left him with the feeling of Newton, "I am a child gathering shells on the shore": but what sense he had of fallibility arose from his glimpse of the infinite sea, never from any suspicion that, in any circumstances, he might be wrong and another mortal right: Shelley's lines on Byron—

> The sense that he was greater than his kind
> Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind
> By gazing on its own exceeding light.

fit him, like Ruskin's verdict, "What can you say of Carlyle but that he was born in the clouds and struck by the lightning?" which withers while it immortalises.

late in his small attic. A walk before breakfast was part of the day's duties. At ten o'clock in the morning, whether the spirit moved him or not, he took up his pen and laboured hard until three o'clock. Nothing, not even the opening of the morning letters, was allowed to distract him. Then came walking, answering letters, and seeing friends. . . . In the evening he read and prepared for the work of the morrow."

CHAPTER VIII

CARLYLE AS MAN OF LETTERS, CRITIC, AND HISTORIAN

CARLYLE was so essentially a Preacher that the choice of a profession made for him by his parents was in some measure justified; but he was also a keen Critic, unamenable to ecclesiastic or other rule, a leader of the revolutionary spirit of the age, even while protesting against its extremes: above all, he was a literary Artist. Various opinions will continue to be held as to the value of his sermons; the excellence of his best workmanship is universally acknowledged. He was endowed with few of the qualities which secure a quick success—fluency, finish of style, the art of giving graceful utterance to current thought; he had in full measure the stronger if slower powers—sound knowledge, infinite industry, and the sympathetic insight of penetrative imagination—that ultimately hold the fastnesses of fame. His habit of startling his hearers, which for a time restricted, at a later date widened their circle. There is much, sometimes even tiresome, repetition in Carlyle's work; the range of his ideas is limited, he plays on a few strings, with wonderfully versatile variations; in reading his later we are continually confronted with the "old familiar faces" of his earlier essays. But, after the perfunctory work for Brewster he wrote nothing wholly commonplace;

occasionally paradoxical to the verge of absurdity, he is never dull.

Setting aside his TRANSLATIONS, always in prose,—often in verse,—masterpieces of their kind, he made his first mark in CRITICISM, which may be regarded as a higher kind of translation: the great value of his work in this direction is due to his so regarding it. Most criticism has for its aim to show off the critic; good criticism interprets the author. Fifty years ago, in allusion to methods of reviewing, not even now wholly obsolete, Carlyle wrote:—

> The first and most convenient is for the reviewer to perch himself resolutely, as it were, on the shoulder of his author, and therefrom to show as if he commanded him and looked down upon him by natural superiority of stature. Whatsoever the great man says or does the little man shall treat with an air of knowingness and light condescending mockery, professing with much covert sarcasm that this or that is beyond *his* comprehension, and cunningly asking his readers if *they* comprehend it.

There is here perhaps some "covert sarcasm" directed against contemporaries who forgot that their mission was to pronounce on the merits of the books reviewed, and not to patronise their authors; it may be set beside the objection to Jeffrey's fashion of saying, "I like this; I do not like that," without giving the reason why. But in this instance the writer did reck his own rede. The temptation of a smart critic is to seek or select legitimate or illegitimate objects of attack; and that Carlyle was well armed with the shafts of ridicule is apparent in his essays as in his histories; superabundantly so in his letters and conversation. His examination of the *German Playwrights*, of *Taylor's German Literature*, and his inimitable sketch of Herr Döring, the hapless biographer of Richter, are as amusing as is Macaulay's *coup de grâce* to