CHAPTER VIII

General and Explanatory—Stirling's Philosophical Position

At this decisive point in the life of Stirling, when he had resolved to devote himself to the study of Hegel, it is perhaps advisable to attempt to indicate —so far as it is possible to do so in terms intelligible to the uninitiated, but thoughtful, reader for whom these pages are specially intended—the considerations which determined his decision—the grounds on which he rests the claim to supreme value of the Hegelian philosophy.

Perhaps the most obvious of those grounds is that Hegelianism is a *positive, constructive system*—not, as too many so-called philosophies are, the negation of the possibility of system, the destruction of the only foundations on which a system can be built. Together with that of Kant, of which it is the completion, the philosophy of Hegel forms the first great constructive movement which has taken place in metaphysics since the time of Aristotle, of whom Stirling regarded him (Hegel) as the modern counterpart. Stated barely so, this may not seem to constitute a very powerful claim on the part of Hegel to the gratitude of the mass of mankind; but we have still to see the full meaning of the statement.

To anyone who takes a wide view of history, it must be evident that, throughout the ages, two great movements alternately take place in the human world, analogous to those in the physical universe which the older scientists accounted for by what they named centripetal and centrifugal forces, or to the attraction and repulsion of chemistry, or the nega-

tive and positive currents of electricity. Throughout generations, perhaps centuries, the student of history may trace the gradual crystallization of the loose, floating, isolated individuals into settled communities, and of their crude, vague fancies, beliefs, opinions, into systems of faith, of law, of morals, of philosophy. Then the process is reversed; centuries of decomposition, of disintegration, of destruction follow; the crystals of creeds and systems melt into their constituent molecules; and those into their component atoms, and they again into their electrons, or whatever even smaller invisibilities they may comprise. There is no longer an orderly universe, but a chaos of isolated specks, floating, uneasy, with nothing to rest upon.

When we consider that those isolated specks—those invisibilities, or indivisibilities—are human *spirits*, it is easy to understand that those periods of decomposition and disintegration are times of pain, depression, and suffering—times of *Welt-schmerz*, as it has been called. Even the most unlettered and ignorant of human beings, at such times, is dimly conscious of a sense of want, of emptiness, of dissatisfaction. As Stirling puts it, "the Spirit that has been emptied feels, knows, that it has been only *robbed*, and, by very necessity of nature, is a craving, craving, ever-restless void."

During the centuries of what is called modern history, it is the process of decomposition and disintegration which we see going on. In almost every department of human life—in religion, in politics, in philosophy—there has been, as Stirling would name it, the assertion of the Particular against the Universal—the revolt of the Individual against Authority as expressed in institutions, creeds, and systems of thought—in every department, the judgment of the individual has exalted itself above the accumulated wisdom and experience of the race. In religion, the movement began with the Protestant Reformation,

which was a revolt against the authority of the Church of Rome; it went on in the divisions and subdivisions into smaller and ever smaller sects, which have taken place during the last century or two; and in our own day its results are manifest in the multiplicity of fantastic creeds, or the absence of any—in the fashionable fads and superstitions, the agnosticism, scepticism, or atheism—which we see around us.

In the domain of politics, the movement is seen most conspicuously in the French Revolution, during which every existing institution, every form of government or authority, was torn down and trampled under foot, amid scenes of violence and excess such as the world has seldom seen, and the Right of the Individual—the Principle of Subjectivity as Hegel would call it—was asserted in the watchword, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

In philosophy, the process of decomposition and disintegration is exemplified in the *Aufklärung*—the movement of sceptical enlightenment, or illumination, in the eighteenth century, which is associated in Britain with the name of David Hume—a movement of separation and disintegration so complete and exhaustive that it did not leave even the human atom, so to speak, an individual entity, but decomposed it into a bundle of sensations. Man found himself without the philosophical right to believe even in his own existence as a person. "The subtle suggestions of Hume," as Stirling says, "seemed to have loosened every joint of the Existent, and there seemed no conclusion but universal scepticism."

Before going further, it seems advisable to guard against the danger of seeming wholly to condemn the movement of Enlightenment, or utterly to deny the right of private judgment. That movement is often, not only justifiable and necessary, but, in its beginnings at least, salutary. The individual, the

Particular, has its inalienable rights; but, *human nature being what it is*, it is but seldom necessary, and often dangerous to the well-being of mankind, to insist upon them. At the time of the Protestant Reformation, the intellectual and spiritual tyranny of the Church of Rome, as well as its moral corruptness, made the revolt against its authority necessary; but the movement, which began as the reform of corruption, ended as a revolt against Faith, and was accompanied by similar movements in every department of human life—in the domains of politics, morality, thought. Liberty became, as it indeed, for the most part, still is, the ruling divinity; link by link, the individual snapped the chain of creeds, moral standards, systems of thought, which bound him to his fellow-men, and broke away into the isolation of the Animal that knows only its own sensations, and obeys only its own self-will.

At first the breach with authority, the assertion of his rights, brought to the individual a feeling of exultation. As Stevenson says of the child grown to manhood, terror had gone out of his life; he no longer saw "the devil in the bed-curtains." But this temporary exultation was soon followed by a depressing sense of loneliness, of emptiness, of want; the individual became dimly conscious that he was living, as Stirling puts it, "*divorced from substance* . . . isolated to himself—an absolutely abstract unit in a universal, unsympathizing, unparticipant *Atomism*." To take a homely illustration. In the course of the ages there had accumulated in the Human House, as well as necessary and useful equipments, much that was useless and cumbersome; then some fine day, an enterprising inmate threw open the windows, and pointing to the dust that covered the furniture, and the cobwebs that hung from the ceiling, declared that a Spring Cleaning was necessary. Instantly, there was a shout of assent, and all were eager to take part in the work; but they did not stop at

sweeping down walls and ceilings, and shovelling up the dust on the floors. Pictures were torn down, carpets were torn up; beds on which successive generations had slumbered peacefully were flung out of window; cupboards and wine-cellars were ransacked, and the food and drink which had satisfied the wants of ancestors condemned as unsanitary by their descendants. The human house was left bare, empty, desolate. But that was not all: there were those who said the house itself was badly built; and setting to work to prove that its foundations were insecure, reduced it to a heap of boards and bricks, and made the human family homeless outcasts.

This may be admitted to afford a pretty fair illustration of the process which had been going on in the world of thought previous to Kant, and of the condition in which he found it. In the great Spring Cleaning which had been taking place during the previous generations, much that was valuable and precious had been discarded along with the dirt and rubbish, and, finally, Hume had reduced the human edifice to a confused pile of sticks and bricks. Kant, though, as Stirling says, he "participated deeply in the spirit" of the *Aufklärung*, "saw the necessity of a *positive* complement to the peculiar *negative* industry" which had occupied his immediate predecessor. To carry on our illustration, though he believed the spring cleaning to be necessary, he knew that only half—and that the least difficult half—of the process had been accomplished when the dust-covered furniture had been flung out of window, and the cobwebs swept down from the walls and ceiling, and he was convinced that that half of the process had been carried too far when he found the house itself reduced to ruins. Out of the ruins left to him by Hume, he set himself to construct some building fit to afford shelter to humanity. "So it was that,

though unconsciously to himself, he was led to seek his *Principles.*"

Just so, more than two thousand years before Kant, Socrates began the great constructive movement in philosophy which was carried on by Plato and completed by Aristotle, by endeavouring to find the *principles* underlying the chaos of individual opinions and sensations into which the human world had been dissolved as the result of the teachings of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, the Sophists. In the dictum of the founder of the sect, "Man is the Measure of all things," by "man" was meant, not what Hegel would call the Universal—not the Common Reason of humanity—but the individual man, with his subjective tastes and opinions. What is true or right for one individual, according to this dictum, is true or right *for him*, but not necessarily for anyone else. Each individual is thus shut into a world of his own opinions and sensations; and what can alone be called knowledge —*i.e.*, that which is *true for every intelligence*—as well as a standard of morality, becomes impossible. It was specially to the search for principles of *morals* that Socrates devoted himself. He believed that all particular moral judgments are based on principles, which are shared, though unconsciously, by all rational beings, and he endeavoured to make those principles explicit—to find a common meeting-ground, as it were, for all moral agents.

Those who are accustomed to condemn philosophy—and there are many such in these days—as mere vague, meaningless speculation, should ask themselves how it would be, in the sphere of human life, if there did not arise, now and then, a Socrates, a Kant, a Hegel, a Stirling to "search out the bounds between *opinion* and *knowledge*"—to find the rock of *principle* beneath the shifting sand of subjective (individual) opinion. If the individual is to be, as the Sophists maintained, the measure of

truth and right to himself, what becomes of law and morality; how is it possible for Society to exist at all? "Only fools and weaklings," says one of the Sophists in Plato's *Republic*—"only fools and weaklings are bound by law—right is nothing but the advantage of the ruler." Surely every reasonable human being must see the importance, the necessity, in the interests of human society, of combating such a position as this; every reasonable human being must admit that the philosopher, in endeavouring to find objective standards, universal principles, at least in the practical world, is doing important work for humanity. As Stirling says: "No partisan of the Illumination has ever said, Let the self-will of each be absolutely all: the control of a Police (Protection of Person and Property) has been a universal postulate, insisted on by even the extremest left of the movement."

The constructive movement begun by Socrates, as was said above, was carried on by Plato, and completed by Aristotle. What followed? Christ, meantime, by His life and death, had taught the same doctrine in terms of spirit, so to speak, as Socrates and Aristotle in terms of thought—the essential *oneness* of men with each other, and of mankind with God—yet, after two thousand years, we find the Sophists reincarnated in the disciples of the *Aufklärung*, the human world reduced to a bundle of sensations!

Perhaps, what has been said may be sufficient to prove that the constructive nature of Hegel's work forms a stronger claim to our gratitude than might at first sight appear. To revert for a moment to our illustration of the spring cleaning, Hegel found us houseless nomads; he has restored to us our *home*—not as it was before the great Spring Cleaning began—not choked with rubbish, and foul with dust and cobwebs—but clean, and fresh, and wholesome. "Hegel, in truth," to quote again from Stirling,

"would restore to us all that the Illumination has deprived us of, and that, too, in a higher and richer form, and not less in the light and element of the Illumination itself, and in perfect harmony with its principle and truth. . . . Philosophy is not to him Philosophy unless, or rather Philosophy is to him only Philosophy when, it stands up for the substance of Humanity, for all those great religious interests to which alone we virtually live." The great spring cleaning has not been in vain; even those of us who have suffered most from the period of unsettlement and convulsion, may inhale with satisfaction the fresh, clean odour of our restored home, even as we sink, with a sigh of relief, once more into our comfortable arm-chairs. If it has not been in vain, however, its day is over; yet, in certain quarters, it is still going on—eighty years after the death of Hegel, it is still going on! In the study and the library, it is true, books have been restored to their shelves, chairs and tables once more stand in their places; but down in the servants' quarters, cook and scullion and chambermaid are still hurling out of window, with shouts of derision, pots and pans and brooms and shovels, and all the other paraphernalia of the kitchen. The spirit of the *Aufklärung*, to which Hegel dealt the death-blow nearly a century ago, is still alive among the uneducated, or semi-educated, masses in the present day. It is this spirit that we meet with in almost every class of the uninitiated—in the materialism of the man of science; in the coarse atheism of the so-called "enlightened" or "broad"; in the flimsy eloquence of the Sunday lecturer; in the destructive mania of the red republican, the nihilist, the dynamiter; in the *nil admirari* of the man or woman of fashion; and even in the pages of some of our finest writers, our noblest poets, the noblest of whom can only "hope" that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill."

The light of some stars, we are told, takes hundreds of years to reach us, because of their great distance from us. Perhaps it is for the same reason—because of intellectual distance—that the thoughts expressed by thinkers of a hundred years ago have not yet penetrated the minds of the masses. And just as the stars whose light we now see may have ceased to exist, so too the philosophy which is now furnishing our intellectual food may be spiritually dead.

"Europe," says Stirling, "has continued to nourish itself from the vessel of Hume, notwithstanding that the *Historic Pabulum* has long since abandoned it for another and others." And the result is, to repeat the quotation given above, "we all live now *divorced from substance*." "Self-will, individual commodity, this has been made *the principle*, and accordingly we have turned to it that we might *enjoy ourselves alone*, that we might *live to ourselves alone*, that the I might be wholly the I, unmixed and unobstructed; and for result, the I of each of us is *dying of inanition*—even though we make (it is even *because* we make) the seclusion to self complete. . . . Hence the universal *rush* at present, as of maddened animals, to material possession. . . . Till even in the midst of material possession, and material ostentation, the heart within us has sunk into weary, weary, hopeless, hopeless ashes."

Forty-six years at least have passed since those words were written; but can anyone who reads the signs of the times—anyone who knows the present intellectual, moral, and spiritual condition of the mass of mankind—deny that they are as true now as when they were written—nay, truer? Do we not still "live divorced from Substance"? Is not self-will, individual commodity, still "the principle"? Is there not still a "universal rush, as of maddened animals, to material possession"? Do we not find "the principle"—the principle of self-will, of the Right of the Individual—every day assuming more extravagant, more degraded forms as it is adopted by intellectually lower and lower classes of men and

women? The movement which began with the assertion of the *Right to think*, has ended by the subjection of thought to the caprice, the whim, the passions of the individual. That which began as a revolt against tyranny has ended by banishing authority out of the pulpit, the lecture-room, the school, even out of the nursery! The police tell us that there are more juvenile offenders at the present day than there have ever been at any previous time, and that their number increases every day. Society has almost ceased to be an organism, with articulated limbs and members, and is fast dissolving into a chaos of individual atoms, each bristling in antagonistic isolation, like the quills of a porcupine. The epidemic of Egoism, with its *sequelae*, avarice, envy, vanity, discontent, prevails everywhere. Every woman, however little remarkable by nature, must make herself conspicuous, were it only by her dress; every school-boy, however ignorant or stupid, knows a great deal better than his father or his teacher.

> "... *unde manum juventus*
> *Metu deorum continuit? Quibus*
> *Pepercit aris?*"

Surely, there never was a time when the doctrine that whosoever would find his life must first lose it, required to be preached more than it does at present. And this doctrine—the very essence of Christianity—is perhaps, stated in simple terms, the most important *practical* outcome of Hegelianism. The Particular must subject itself to the Universal, and so find its true self. "The principle must not be Subjective Will, but Objective Will; not your will, *or* my will, *or* his will, and yet your will *and* my will *and* his will—Universal Will—Reason! Individual will is self-will or caprice; and that is precisely the one Evil, or the evil One—the Bad."

All that is said on this point—the relation of the Particular and the Universal—in the *Secret of Hegel* must have deep interest for every earnest and

thoughtful reader, for it is the expression—the vivid, striking expression—of a Truth which is of permanent value to humanity—a truth which, at intervals throughout the history of mankind, has to be stated, and re-stated, and stated again. It is part, in fact, of what Stirling calls "the choicest aliment of humanity—such aliment as nourishes us strongly into our true stature."

But the value of the Hegelian philosophy depends, for earnest, thoughtful human beings at the present day, not only on its constructive character, but also on the fact that, in an age of materialism, it stands for the *non-material, the idealistic*, for all that belongs to mind and spirit. This is the age of Science—physical science. The best brains of the day are, for the most part, occupied with microscope, or telescope, or chemical apparatus, analysing, weighing, measuring—matter, and endeavouring to discover the laws by which it is governed; and there is a marked tendency, among the educated or semi-educated masses, to exalt science above philosophy. The general belief of the uninitiated is that philosophy is concerned with airy speculations about empty abstractions, while science has its feet firmly planted, so to speak, on the solid ground of fact, its conclusions resting on the basis of experience, the evidence of the senses. Yet after all it is to philosophy that science must look for the assurance of the security of its foundations. The possibility of experience, the reliability of the so-called "evidence of the senses," has been called in question from various points of view. From the point of view of the Greek Sophists, for instance, of which mention has been made above, experience would be impossible. If each individual were to be the measure of truth to himself; if what is true for him were not necessarily so for anyone else, a common experience would be impossible for humanity. With regard to the evidence of the senses, as has been ably argued

in a comparatively recent philosophical work,[1] what it furnishes is not the indisputable *facts* on which science claims to be based, but merely *inferences*, since, according to physiology, it is only *mental states* which are the immediate objects of sense-experience, the existence of independent things which *cause* these mental states being only *inferred* from the mental states themselves.

It is not intended here to enter into any discussion of a Theory of Perception such as is familiar to every beginner in the study of philosophy. The object of the above remarks is to point out, to those who regard the "evidence of the senses" as the ultimate reality, that the question of the nature and reliability of this evidence is one that belongs to the department of philosophy—that it is philosophy which must decide the question of the solidity of the foundations on which the whole fabric of scientific discovery rests.

A common objection brought against philosophy by the adherents of science is that, after centuries of toil, she has no *results* to show, while science has discovered new elements, new laws, in matter—has traced out the course of the planets, and calculated the distance of the furthest star. One reply to this objection has already been partly indicated in what was said above in connection with Socrates and the search for *principles*. The search for principles, for laws, for *uniformities* in the *diversity* of individual objects, for the Universal element in the Particular —this is the proper business of all thinking men, whether scientific, or philosophical; but while the scientist is occupied with the laws of nature—with the uniformities exhibited by larger or smaller groups of physical objects—the philosopher is concerned with the laws of reason, with the principles which govern thought, and underlie society, with the attempt to reach the "law within the law," the

[1] *Foundations of Belief*, by the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour.

principle which is the final explanation of all other principles—the ultimate principle. Even if it be held that the ultimate principle cannot be reached by human reason, yet, according to the philosopher, the attempt to reach it must be made. In the words which Stirling puts into the mouth of Hegel :—

"Are we sent here simply to dig coals, and drink wine, and get, each of us, the most we can for our own individual vanity and pride, and then rot? What after all is the business of man here? To advance in civilization, you say. Well, is civilization digging coals, and drinking wine, etc.; or is civilization thought and the progress of thought? Is there anything of any real value in the end but thinking? . . . To tell us we cannot reach the Absolute, is to tell us not to think; and we *must* think, for we are sent to think. To live is to think; and *to think is to seek an ultimate principle.*"

If it may be allowed to make use of a simple illustration of the relative positions of the scientist and the philosopher, let us suppose that we—any man or woman of us—had fallen asleep, and on waking found ourselves in a railway carriage, along with several companions in the same plight as ourselves, who, without exhibiting the slightest curiosity as to the how or why of their situation, at once began to occupy themselves with the objects around them, one of them proceeding to draw the pattern of the paper on the ceiling, murmuring rapturously the while, with upturned eyes, "Beautiful, lovely!" while another set to ripping up the cushions, in order to see what they were stuffed with; a third, with spectacles on nose, took to deciphering the names scratched on the wood-work; and a fourth, buried in a corner of the carriage, made elaborate calculations of the speed of the train by the help of the telegraph-posts outside. Suppose, further, that, when we addressed the others, and endeavoured to arouse in them some interest in the question as to how they happened to be there at all, we were

silenced by a "My dear sir, what is the use of idle speculation? I have just found out that we are travelling at the rate of forty miles an hour;" or, "Pray, don't disturb me! I am at present occupied with a very difficult problem. I have just discovered that these cushions are stuffed with *real horse-hair;* and I am attempting to calculate how many horses' tails of average thickness would be required for the purpose"! The application of this illustration can be left to the reader's imagination; but surely, it may be said—surely, the *object* of the journey, the *starting-place*, and the *destination* —the Why, and the Whence, and the Whither—are questions of infinitely more importance to humanity than the speed of the train, the pattern on the ceiling of the carriage, or the stuffing of its cushions?

The following passage from the first of Stirling's *Lectures on the Philosophy of Law* suggests itself as peculiarly applicable here:—

"Man may go on much as he likes in his merely animal capacity . . . he finds always in the end . . . that he must *think* as well as live and enjoy; above all, that he *must think existence;* that he must inquire, once for all, *why all this is here*, *why* is it, *whence* is it, *whither* does it go? All that may be summed up in the single phrase, he demands *explanation*. . . . Explanation is sought for as regards the stars, and there is astronomy. Explanation is sought for as regards the constituents of the earth, etc. . . . and there are the sciences of physics, chemistry, and what not . . . and after every explanation of science in regard to the special laws of it, the questions in general, why, whence, whither? remain unanswered. These questions in general constitute philosophy. . . . Philosophy, then, receives all the explanations of the sciences, of science in general, and so instructed, proceeds to put the final question. . . . In a word, philosophy demands an explanation of existence as existence. It is all very well to say here, *that* is impossible, that is a demand which, by the very nature of the case, never can be granted. . . . Man is reason, and reason is irrepressible. . . . In a word, reason demands explanation as explanation. Now, what is that? . . . It is here that Hegel steps in."

Hegel does indeed claim to have reached the ultimate principle. Whether or not the claim be admitted, "at least we can say this," to quote again from the *Secret of Hegel*, "should the path be but a vista of imagination, and conduct us nowhere, it yields at every step the choicest aliment of humanity . . . every step of his system is towards the Immortality of the Soul, every step is towards the Freedom of the Will, every step is towards God."

The third (and last) ground on which it is maintained that the substance of Hegelianism, as expressed in the works of Hegel's British interpreter, is of supreme value to humanity, even to-day, concerns what it may be permitted to call *the Philosophic Succession.* Systems of philosophy—at least those which are of lasting value—do not spring up, like mushrooms, individual and isolated. They resemble rather the work of the coral insect, which, by building always on the foundations laid by its predecessors, at length over-tops the sea, and reaches the light of heaven. A Comte, a Schopenhauer, or perhaps a Herbert Spencer, may command contemporary admiration by the brilliant hues of the soap-bubble system, which he has blown, so to speak, with his own pipe; but a Plato, an Aristotle, a Kant, a Hegel, after years of probing and testing and measuring, raises the temple of thought one stage higher on the foundations laid by his predecessors.

In the history of philosophy in Europe, it is perhaps not too much to say that there have been but two great constructive movements—the one, in ancient times, associated with the names of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle; the other, in modern times, associated specially with the names of Kant and Hegel, though Spinoza, Fichte, and Schelling have more or less directly influenced it. Each of those movements represented what has been called

above a *philosophic succession;* in each, the torch was passed from hand to hand, from predecessor to successor. Of the second, according to Stirling, Hegel is "the historical culmination and end"—a position which he owes, "not so much to common consent . . . as to the inexorable sentence of history; for there has been no step since his death which is not to be characterized as dissolution and demise."

This last remark, written by the author of the *Secret of Hegel*, and before the publication of that work, cannot be held any longer to be literally true. The appearance of the *Secret* represents one step at least which can *not* be characterized as "dissolution and demise." Its author has admittedly taken the torch from the hand of Hegel, and carried it onwards.

It is Hegel who says that the man who perfectly reproduces any system, is, *ipso facto*, already beyond it. If this is so, no one can deny that Stirling has gone beyond Hegel—that he is not merely the *interpreter*, but the *successor*, of Hegel. To use his own words with respect to the *Historic Pabulum*, if Hegel "alone of all mankind has succeeded in eating it all up out of the vessel of Kant," he (Stirling) has alone succeeded in eating it all up out of the vessel of Hegel; and, consequently, it is in his vessel—in the vessel of Stirling—that it is now contained.

For this statement—if not in its literality, at least in its substance—it would be easy to find support on the authority of a group of scholarly, gifted, and able writers on philosophy, now living, all more or less familiar with the works of Kant and Hegel. For corroboration, however, it is thought best to refer to the *Secret* itself. If anyone doubt what has been said above—if anyone think that a book published five-and-forty years ago is necessarily dead and done with, and can have

nothing to say to us to-day—let him read a page or two at random in, say, the Preface to the original edition, or in the "Struggle to Hegel," or the conclusion, and, if he is an open-minded, unprejudiced person, he will see reason to change his opinion. He will find that the book is *alive* still—alive on every page—that it is, as its author himself said of it, "*dipped in the blood of an original experience*, and possibly of an original thought," and full of thought which is as valuable to us to-day as when it was written. He will find himself echoing what the author said with respect to Hegel's work: "All the great interests of mankind have been kindled into new light by the touch of this master-hand; and surely the general idea is one of the hugest that ever curdled in the thought of man."

CHAPTER IX

1857-1860

London—Interview with Carlyle—The *Gough-Lees Controversy*—Essays on Jerrold, Tennyson, Macaulay—The Return to Scotland

THE sojourn abroad ended in 1857, curtailed probably (but this is only a matter of surmise) by the death of Stirling's last surviving brother, which took place in the beginning of July of that year. The unexpected news of his brother's death must have hastened Stirling's return to his own country. David Stirling was unmarried, and the work of settling his affairs would naturally devolve, to a large extent at least, on his only surviving brother, who, with their sister (now married), was his nearest heir.

Of the journey home, however, we have no records, nor of the period of unsettlement before November 1857, when we find Stirling and his family settled at 3 Wilton Terrace, Kensington, which was to be their home for the next three years. (Wilton Terrace, Kensington, it may be mentioned in passing, though it still stands in its old place, no longer bears its old name, and experience has proved that one may wander long about the streets of Kensington without finding it.)

Naturally, one of the first things Stirling did, when he found himself settled in London, was to endeavour to see the man who, for so many years of his young manhood, had been to him Teacher, Master, Prophet. As we saw, in Carlyle's letter of 1854, given above, there is an allusion to a meeting with Stirling, evidently some years earlier. The

only evidence that such meeting did take place, however, to be found in any writing of Stirling's, whether printed or not, is contained in the following sentence in his third *Letter on Carlyle*, which appeared in *The Truth-Seeker* for September 1850:—

"I fancy, indeed, that to gain a glimpse into the origin of his [Carlyle's] style, one has but to see the man, and hear him speak. Imagine a tall, lank figure with a somewhat blunt, honest, resolutely matter-of-fact look of face—an entity which you can easily suppose to be rather dry, shy, and stiff in all its manners and manifestations. Imagine this, and you have Carlyle's personality *as correctly as there is any occasion for*."

The words italicized here are characteristic of the philosopher (of the philosopher in all ages, perhaps—of the philosopher who is the subject of this memoir, certainly). Unlike Carlyle, who always made a point, in his descriptions of historical characters, of any peculiarities of form, or feature, or manner, Stirling always regarded the external manifestation, the *form*, as of little, or no, importance. Even with regard to literature, he was apt to be impatient with those critics who dilated on the *style* of a writer, holding that the style, the form, was of little moment, what alone was essential being the substance, the *Inhalt*, the thought.

"Beautifully written, is it?" how often has one heard him contemptuously exclaim. "Psha! what does that matter? Is there anything *in* it? Has it any *Inhalt?*"

In a letter written, in 1870, to Dr Ingleby he writes thus on the subject of style: "Do you know, I sometimes catch myself blaming myself for not looking after those things? [epigram, antithesis, etc.]. It seems to me as if I thought only of the whole and its purpose (its meaning), were anxious only to drive that home. I seem never to think of ornament—to be content to let it come or stay away

as it chooses, though as young littérateur and student, I absolutely *steamed* (smoked?)—both ugly!—with images."

As early as 1849, when he wrote the first of the *Letters on Carlyle*, he seems already to have learned not to set much value on style. Speaking of the style of Carlyle, he says:—

"Of his mere words, it appears to me, he has ceased to think; but of his thoughts he is very solicitous. He puts now no weight on mere phrases, nor distresses himself about the flow of them. And is it the words, then, or the flow of them, that, in any really great writer, constitutes his excellence?"

What the style is to literature, the external appearance—features, form, etc.—is to the man himself, *i.e.* (according to Stirling), quite insignificant. In the third of the Carlyle *Letters*, he writes:—

"You will excuse my want of eloquence about noble foreheads, spiritual eyes, lordly noses, intellectual wrists, and what not; for you are aware of the smallness of my faith in such things, and recollect our cozy little laugh over the information that the eye under that plain turnip-head, on the top of that long, skulking yankee-figure of Emerson, was 'the finest ever seen in living man'! Oh, my dear A., what trash all those corporalities are! For very certain am I that I have seen all sorts of hearts in all sorts of trunks, and all sorts of brains under all sorts of skulls."

Though no record of Stirling's *first* meeting with Carlyle is to be found, of the meeting which took place in 1857 there have been preserved some brief notes, as well as the following short letter from Carlyle, appointing the time of meeting:—

"CHELSEA, 29 *Novr.* 1857.

"DEAR SIR,—I never in my life was so busy as at present—and for a good while back and ahead.

"If you will come on Monday evng. (tea is

Chelsea, 29 Novr, 1857 —

Dear Sir,

I never in my life was so busy as at present; — and for a good while back and ahead.

If you will come on Tuesday Evg (Tea is at 7½ p.m.), I shall be glad to see you again (nobody but my wife & I here) for an hour.

Yours always truly

T. Carlyle

FAC SIMILE LETTER FROM THOMAS CARLYLE.

To face p. 138.

at 7½ p.m.), I shall be glad to see you again (nobody but my wife and I here) for an hour.—Yours always truly, T. CARLYLE."

In response to the invitation contained in this note, Stirling presented himself at Cheyne Row on the evening of the 1st December, and found Mr and Mrs Carlyle in a "little front room," with "a good fire, red curtains, and a little oval table." Presumably, the room contained more than the fire, the curtains, and the "little oval table." (Indeed, there is mention, later, of a chair!); but Stirling was always practically blind to the furniture of a room, and in fact regarded it as unbecoming and undignified, if not actually contemptible, to see either "a man's clothes, or the clothes of his house." The occasion of this meeting with Carlyle is evidently the exception that proves the rule, for he describes the Chelsea sage as wearing a "high collar, plain, high-stock, and long, brown, great-coat-looking dressing-gown." Of Mrs Carlyle's dress, he trusts himself to give only a brief, *negative* description—"no head-dress, I think." That is all! With regard to the rest of her clothing, our imagination is allowed to run riot. We can picture her as circular with the crinoline, or straight and slender with clinging draperies, or even as bifurcated with the costume of the harem. Even on the question of the head-dress we are left in doubt! That "I think" is characteristic—the philosopher will not commit himself definitely to the statement that there was no head-dress. After all, there *may* have been one, although he did not notice it—he is well aware of his lack of observation in such matters.

With respect to the personal characteristics of both Carlyle and his wife, there is a little more in the way of description. Mrs Carlyle is described as of "middle-size, pale, with pleasant quiet voice, pleasant smiling eyes, a good face, hair apparently

still black—spoke but seldom." Carlyle is put before us as a "tall, lank figure, hand an extraordinary bunch of fingers, moustache half-grown, black still, whisker round chin grizzled at upper edge, cheek ruddy, but this time hectic-like—flush of vigil, and eye of the lustre and glare of vigil—a general *raised* look, as of a man with his nervous system in unnatural tension—kind of intellectual animal magnetism, every pore an eye—his hair grey now, still down on brow, brow struck me as both low and narrow. The face small, oval, and pointing towards chin."

Of the conversation on the occasion, only the mere *headings* are jotted down—only the subjects spoken of, not what was said by Carlyle on any of them. They spoke of the weather, of Stirling's new home at Kensington, of his sojourn abroad. Did he speak German anything fluently? he was asked. Carlyle, it is remarked, is "accustomed now to receive people who only come to see and hear—prone to prose on dreamily about the places he has seen, his impressions, etc." He "spoke of Merthyr and Crawshay—and money—and titles—gave anecdotes of merchants—the island of Calydon [?]—Dixon's blast—the Glasgow banks—the British nation going to H—[!]—*Times*—Literature—useless epigrammatists — Thackeray, Dickens, Bunsen (Kant, Spinoza, Hegel — knows little of those), Jerrold, Sir J. Clark, Carpenter—Annan, Dumfries, Ecclefechan."

This seems a sufficiently wide range of subjects —especially when one adds to them Dyspepsia, and Carlyle's daily three-hour rides in cure of it, homœopathy, the English, Classical marine stores, and Mill's *Logic!*

The jottings conclude with this remark:— "General idea of a pair of good simple human beings, of whom rather remarkable that so many people in so many different places should be speaking and writing."

Reading between the lines here, one cannot help seeing that Stirling has now outgrown, not his admiration of Carlyle, but his exclusive worship of him. Although to the end of his life he retained the warmest admiration for the original genius of the author of *Sartor* and *Hero-worship*—for his "intense zeal and fervid eloquence," his "rare truth and trenchancy of stroke," his "fiercest, keenest indignation against wrong and injustice"—it is evident that, by 1857, Carlyle had ceased to be to him the only guide and prophet, "our beginning, our middle, and our end." Already he had begun to see that it was not in the vessel of Carlyle that the *Historic Pabulum* was to be found, the "inhaustion" of which he had come to regard as the proper business of Humanity. Already the influence of the "home-spun, rustic-real, blunt" Suabian, Hegel, had begun to manifest itself in a growing distaste for mere "*Genieschwünge*"—flights of genius. Already he had come to regard the Universal as alone important and significant, while Carlyle, for his part, stood in general by the Particular. As Stirling himself writes:—

"To generalize is for him [Carlyle] to do nothing but waste paper; he must particularize. The universal is to him a pallid ghost, and impalpable: he must see instead, show us instead, the red blood of the individual. What Aristotle calls the δέυτερα οὐσία Carlyle will not look at; he must have the πρώτη οὐσία, just the τόδε τι, this one actual singular and single thing at once. And yet our business is to *think*, while it is only by universals, and never by singulars, that we *can* think."[1]

It was during his three years' stay at Kensington that Stirling made the acquaintance of Kinglake, the author of *Eothen*, and the historian of the Crimean War, to whom reference was made in the previous chapter. About the same time probably it was that he began his correspondence with George

[1] *Thomas Carlyle's Counsels*, pp. 19, 20.

Cupples, author of the celebrated sea novel, *The Green Hand*, with whom he was long and intimately acquainted. Unfortunately, however, the earlier letters of the correspondence do not seem to have been preserved. There is still extant, however, a brief critical notice by Stirling of Cupples's later novel, *Hinchbridge Haunted*, which appeared in the *Inverness Courier* of 15th December 1859.

Those years in London were part of the strenuous nine, alluded to in last chapter, when Stirling was occupied "with positive agony, and often for twelve hours a day" in preparing for his *magnum opus;* yet even his severe labours did not make him deaf to the call of friendship. It was in March 1859 that he came generously forward as champion of the loser in a *cause célèbre* long since forgotten—the *Gough-Lees Controversy*. In this case, Dr Lees, the well-known lecturer on Temperance, and leader in the Teetotal movement, was accused of libelling another lecturer on Teetotalism—a certain Mr Gough—and it seemed as if popular sympathy in general, as well as the opinions of those who acted as judges in the case, were almost entirely with the latter. Stirling himself, who had some personal acquaintance with Dr Lees, was inclined at first—before possessing a full knowledge of the facts of the case—to take the popular side; but after reading the whole history of the case, as presented *by the friends of Mr Gough*, in the *Weekly Record*, he at once wrote a letter of sympathy to Dr Lees, and some time afterwards, a careful and incisive examination of the case, which was printed with the title, "Why I wrote a Letter of Sympathy to Dr Lees."

To take the trouble to wade through the dreary mass of correspondence which gathers round a case of this sort, carefully to compare, and weigh, and sift the evidence, would constitute a convincing proof of friendship, even on the part of a more or less unoccupied person; but when the man who

does all this is at the grips, "often for twelve hours a day," with an uncomprehended, if not incomprehensible, writer on an abstruse subject, it argues the possession on his part of most unusual loyalty. chivalry, and love of truth and justice. The little pamphlet in question, in spite of the inherent dryness of the subject, is illumined by flashes of the writer's vivid style, his humour, and power of seizing on the salient features of character; and the reader, moreover, is left in no doubt as to what is the real truth of the matter—that Dr Lees has been condemned on no better evidence than a private letter of his own (not intended to go further than the *friend* to whom it was written), in which he had simply repeated a statement in common circulation. The conclusion reached by Stirling was, it is believed, the view of the matter afterwards generally accepted.

It was at the request of a friend that, in the same year, he intermitted his philosophical labours to pen a light sketch on *Full Dress*, which appeared in the *Englishwoman's Review* for July 1859, and was afterwards included among the *Saved Leaves* published in 1878. The little paper, if not very important, is interesting as showing Stirling in an unfamiliar vein. It is written in a bright, smart, vivacious style, quite unlike what readers of his philosophical works are accustomed to associate with him. The following very brief extract will serve by way of example :—

"Fair reader, do not fear! I am not going to touch your crinolines. . . . The *base* of the pyramid I abandon to avenging fire, or the assaults of *Punch*; my business is with the *apex*. In other words, what you name as full dress, or low dress, is offensive to my sympathies and my judgment, and I must remonstrate with you. . . . I know why people dress : it is for warmth—it is for decency —it is for ornament. But *you*—you *undress!*"

The friend at whose request this article was written was Miss Kate Barland—a woman of many accomplishments, of some learning, and great intellectual activity, and the writer of verses, which, if they do not entitle her to a place among the immortals, at least prove the possession on her part of undoubted poetic feeling and great earnestness. After her death, which took place in 1875, Stirling had it in mind to publish a selection of her verses, with a brief biographical sketch by himself; but, for various reasons, this intention was never carried out. He had, however, gathered together the materials for the contemplated volume, and even written a very brief biographical sketch.

One story told about Miss Barland is interesting as illustrating the extraordinary narrow-mindedness of sixty years ago. In 1847, she had the honour of being introduced to the great American essayist, Emerson, then on a visit to Glasgow, where she had a private school. Much as she personally appreciated the honour of the introduction, however, it was otherwise looked upon by the parents of her pupils. In their opinion, a person acquainted with Emerson was not orthodox enough to teach their children, and, as she used to say afterwards, "they took away my bread from me." Unfortunately, it was not merely her own bread that they took from her—for years, with some small help from a sister, she was bread-winner for a paralyzed father and a helpless mother.

It was Miss Barland who pointed out, some years later, the resemblance which Stirling undoubtedly bore to the pictures of the great Prince Bismarck. Both faces seem to show the same large, open brow, the same keen, penetrating gaze, the same firm, resolute mouth and chin—the same energy, independence, and decision—but the face of the statesman was more massive, and rough-hewn, that of the philosopher finer and more clear-cut.

The year 1859 was a very productive one with Stirling; for it was during that year that, besides the *Full Dress* article, and the Gough-Lees pamphlet mentioned above, two of his well-known essays (those on Jerrold and Tennyson) appeared in *Meliora;* and they were followed, in the spring of 1860, by the essay on Macaulay. Those three essays, which, together with others on De Quincey and Coleridge, and Ebenezer Elliott, were published in book form in 1868, are admittedly amongst the best of Stirling's literary writings, and each is very distinct and different in character from the other—as distinct and different as the subjects were from each other. The essay on Tennyson, besides being warm and enthusiastic in its admiration and appreciation of the poet, is itself poetical in its language, poetical in its imagery; that on Macaulay is calm, critical, incisive as befits the subject, while the *Jerrold* is kindly, and tender, and human in its tone, dealing rather with the man, for whom Stirling had a genuine and grateful affection, than with the writer, of whose faults he was keenly sensible.

While the essayist is quite just in his criticisms of all three writers, it is easy to see, when one reads between the lines, which of them has his sympathy. His warmest sympathy is all for the poet, Tennyson, and the man, Jerrold. As for Macaulay, although his many excellent qualities as a writer are admitted, his standpoint—the *Aufklärung*—puts him outside the pale of his critic's sympathy. "All systems," he is quoted as saying, "religious, political, or scientific, are but *opinions* resting on evidence more or less satisfactory." It was impossible for the philosopher, whose business it was, as we saw in Chapter VIII., to "search out the bounds between opinion and knowledge"—to endeavour to find the bed-rock of principle beneath the shifting sand of opinion—it was impossible for the philosopher to sympathize

with the point of view indicated in the quotation. Nevertheless, he does ample justice to Macaulay's merits as a historian and scholar. Speaking of his *History*, he says:—

"There was [in the *History*] a judgment tamed into the measure of success by its very circumspection, its very ascription to the general philosophy of the eighteenth century — a judgment which, within this range, was luminously clear and sharply precise. There was a memory eminently retentive, ready, and suggestive, stored, too, with material, teeming with illustration, prompt with allusion. There was a fancy exceedingly vivid, quick, and fertile. . . . Accordingly a result so splendid has been produced that its incompletion will remain the lament of our latest literature."

In spite of all those excellent qualities, however, and of a power of "striking epithets and sharp, well-defined predication" elsewhere spoken of in the essay, it is easy to see that Macaulay does not arouse the enthusiastic admiration of his reviewer. Throughout the essay, Stirling is the calm, keen-eyed, fair-minded critic, for its subject does not, in spite of all his brilliant gifts, possess the qualities which rouse him to enthusiasm and fervour.

"He cannot originate, he cannot create," is the conclusion of the essay, "but he disposes admirably, and has a marvellous power of what the French call *mise en scène*. In subtlety, depth, fertility, in spontaneity of thought, he is infinitely behind his own great prototype Hume. To the solidity, the comprehensiveness, the completeness, the immensity of range of Gibbon, he can have no pretension. To the earnestness, the intensity, the *vision* of Carlyle, he is equally a stranger. With men like these he is simply incommensurable. His place is not among the kings; he holds no throne; he sits not by the sides of Thucydides and Tacitus."

As a critic[1] said of this essay at the time of its appearance in book form in 1868, "It is a fine specimen of philosophical criticism, that seizes the

[1] In the *Edinburgh Courant*, March 23, 1868.

inner spirit of the subject discussed, criticizing from the heart outwards, as from a centre to the circumference, and not from the waistcoat inward."

If it is the critic that we see all through the essay on Macaulay, in that on Tennyson it is the enthusiastic, fervid admirer. Every page of the *Tennyson* fairly glows with the poetic ardour awakened in the writer by his warm sympathy with his subject. Tennyson surely never had the good fortune to meet with a more deeply sympathetic and comprehending critic, and one at the same time not lacking in discrimination. No less remarkable than the fervour and enthusiasm of the essay is the courage which its writer displays. In 1859 Tennyson had not secured the high place in poetry which he now holds; but the unknown writer of the critique in *Meliora*, with the clear insight, and the unswerving self-reliance of judgment, which are the marks of original intellect, does not hesitate to give the living poet a place among the accepted immortals.

"But of all poetic triads," he writes, "the last surely is the richest, the happiest, and the completest. Shelley, Keats and Tennyson! No, not even in their own verses can we find a more harmonious and triumphant triplet. They are the three Graces of English literature—our trinal Catullus—and should never be found apart. . . . 'What!' we hear the commoner critics cry, 'do you dare to rank among dead and accepted classics a mere living aspirant?' Not only that, but we dare to say that this living aspirant, as the ripest of the triad, must take precedence of these, his otherwise equal fellows. As completed bard, indeed, and in consideration (with special reference to Wordsworth) of the richer humanity and wider universality of his range, Tennyson, perhaps, transcends the whole series of poets that separates him from Milton."

But this essay, though it passes in review almost every poem of Tennyson's which had been published at the time, from *Claribel* and *The Owl*

up to *In Memoriam*, *Maud*, and *The Idylls of the King*, is more than a review of Tennyson's poetry. To find Tennyson's true place, the writer must compare him with his predecessors, and so Milton, Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats are appraised in a few telling strokes, and with such intensely sympathetic insight as compels assent on the part of the reader. In Milton, we are told, there is "a density and intensity of metal, audible in the very breadth and depth of the mere ring of it, that place him above all later aspirants," while at the same time he is "fierce, intolerant, Hebraic." Of Wordsworth, while his best sonnets, his *Laodamia*, and his *Vernal Ode* are declared to "approximate him to Milton," it is admitted that all through his poems we "fancy we detect . . . an occasional insonority as of original wood." There is more warmth in the touches with which Shelley and Keats (the critic's favourite poets) are set before us.

"Then Shelley, with his imagination as of the unclouded blue when nothing but the sun is there—his selfless heart—his boundless sympathies—his pity and his gentleness—his images which are as living sublimities that awe — the supernatural melody of his verse — the unparalleled splendour and magnificence of his innumerable products — how shall we abate him under any man? Keats again, so fecund, facile, full, with his delicious sound, his instantaneous instinct of the very self of elemental beauty, his sumptuous fancy, his gracious imagination—Keats blowing a pipe so mellow that it charms, whispering single words that are as 'open sesames' to the most enchanting secrets."

With regard to Tennyson, the reviewer concludes that his "main characteristics" are "ethical conception and classical execution"; and he winds up with the following beautiful comparison of the five poets whom he associates together:—

"It is this ethical or human side of Tennyson that involved his necessity for maturity and experience. To

Keats, who had no quest but sensuous beauty, boyhood sufficed. To Shelley again, who, too eager to wait, too impatient for the laws of time, must, instantly and at once, give voice and shape to all his crude sympathies and torrid anticipations, youth gave verge enough. But Tennyson, who bore the burthen of a purer, richer, larger humanity, required the breadths of space for his roots, and the heights of Time for his branches. . . . We may say that Milton keeps the summit of the hill, and sits amid the thunders; that Wordsworth has chosen for himself a separate crag, where he lives in a somewhat thin complacency, but waited on by simple dignity and solemn earnestness; that Shelley takes the very breast of the mountain, fronting the firmament and the sun; that Keats has found a haunted wood upon the flank, where flash the white feet of the gods and goddesses; and that Tennyson, holding himself free to wander where he will, prefers the fields of labour and the flowers of culture hard by the smoke of roofs."

All these passages quoted bear testimony, not only to a faculty of poetic insight and sympathy extremely rare in these days, but also to a power of vivid expression and imagery which are truly poetic. There are other passages, however, in which it is the philosophic, rather than the poetic, faculty of the writer which is manifested, as in the following. The writer has been speaking of Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and of "the questionings" in it; and he goes on to point out how it is the note of interrogation—an interrogation to which there is no reply—that is the prevailing one in the works of all writers of the time.

"Why is this?" he asks. "Is there nothing for the race but scepticism and the senses, or—scepticism and suicide? Surely we have advanced, at last, beyond the mere putting of the problem; surely the answering of it 'must even now be of ripe progress!' Surely there is this answer, at all events, that Christianity, after French criticism and German criticism, and accepting each for what it is worth, and for all it is worth, is a purer thing than ever, and that it will live for ever, and grow for ever . . . the true result of the latest philosophy—the true result of Kant and

Hegel—is that knowledge and belief coalesce in lucid union, that to reason as to faith there is but one religion, one God, one Redeemer."

It is with a shock of wonder that one reads this passage and the context, written over fifty years ago. More than half a century has passed since the writer of it looked for the "answering of the problem" "even now"; and even yet we have not advanced beyond "the mere putting of it," or if any answer is attempted, it is the answer of despair! Yet here, in this essay, written by a then unknown hand, and published in an obscure periodical, there is already an answer suggested—an answer not of despair—which, six years later, received a fuller, deeper, more exhaustive statement in the essayist's *magnum opus*.

Of the essay on Jerrold it is needless to say more here, as a pretty full reference to it has already been made in a former chapter.

It was just at the time when the *Jerrold* article appeared in *Meliora*, and when its author was probably revolving the *Tennyson* in his mind, that there occurrred an outbreak of scarlet fever in his family. In those days, the sanitary inspector had not yet become the tyrant he now is; and the fever hospital was not the universal refuge of the stricken. As they sickened one after the other, Stirling's little children were laid up in their home at Wilton Terrace, Kensington. It was before the days when nursing had become a skilled profession; nurses were comparatively few, and very far from skilful in the management of their patients; and unfortunately the mother of the children was unable to give any help in the tending of her little ones, as she was herself confined to bed at the time, with a doctor and monthly nurse in attendance. The chief burden, not only of anxiety, but of the actual nursing, fell upon the father. Fortunately he was a doctor, as well as a literary man and a budding

philosopher. The two eldest children were very dangerously ill; and there were two or three days of grave anxiety and fears for their recovery. Then came an evening when the visiting doctor in attendance shook his head, as he turned away from the bedside of the little girl,[1] who he feared would have passed out of his care before morning. But all night long her father sat by her little bed, administering at intervals a spoonful of brandy or beef-tea, and now and then, when the fever-restless child whispered weakly, "Lift me, papa!" taking her in his arms, and holding her for a while; and in the morning the crisis was passed, the child's life was saved. It is an interesting fact that the father, though daily, hourly, in such close contact with the malady, from which he had never before suffered, entirely escaped infection.

In the following year (1860) Stirling and his wife decided to leave London, and make their home in Scotland. Many reasons contributed to this decision; but perhaps the strongest was that the climate of London did not agree with Mrs Stirling, who was never very well during her three years' stay there. In June 1860, Stirling went ahead of his family to Edinburgh, where he was to look out for a house, which was to be their future home. He did not find the search a very easy one, to judge from the following characteristic letter to his wife:—

"I can hardly either crawl or scrawl—my legs feel as if broken, and I am all dazed and in a fever —I can see nothing but one little house, six small rooms, and a smaller closet—a kitchen, etc., very small, and a dungeon—dirty—dirty—no grates—all like a ruin. No empty houses at Portobello. £16 a month asked in furnished lodgings for our wants. There is nothing else for it—Pope warehouses the furniture—you come on. . . . I forget

[1] Stirling's eldest daughter, who afterwards became the wife of the Rev. Robert Armstrong, Glasgow.

whether I gave you my address—write me—the weather is charming now—I wish to heaven I could get a week in bed!"

The absence of a date on the above letter makes it impossible to determine the exact length of the interval between the writing of it and of one, dated June 21, in which the writer gives his wife his final advice about her journey north. "If the weather is good, and the sea smooth," he writes, "perhaps you had better contract for the whole lot.[1] You may arrive at Granton very early in the morning, and the stewardess may wish to get quit of you, but just stay on board till I come—I will be there at ½ past 8."

This letter is interesting as containing a list of what Stirling seems to have regarded as the necessaries of life. "As the things [furniture] are stored," it goes on, "you must bring all we require for living and clothing. Books, too, I must have. Bring Willie's and all the children's books and things. Bring for me Anton's Homer (I saw it in drawing-room by case of instruments), Voss's Homer, the little Greek and Latin books lately bought, Ahn's two Greek courses, the Greek grammar, Sandford's Greek extracts, the old Greek dictionary, Horace, Latin and German dictionary, the Atlas, the German and English dictionary (2 vols.), the French dictionary, the Italian and French ditto, Otto's German book, Ollendorff and Key both for French and German—all the Ollendorffs and Keys—Hutton's mathematics, Euler's Algebra, Euclid, Hume's Essays, my prize books, Aristotle's Metaphysics, all my medical books and *note* books that are beside the printed medical books. Every book with Hegel on it in German—the German Kant (not the English), 2 works of

[1] Mrs Stirling acted on this advice; but as "the whole lot" (which included a French nurse-maid) suffered from sea-sickness which lasted during the entire passage, she was not without doubts of the practical wisdom of her lord and master!

Schelling, one of Fichte, one of Reinhold, one of Rosenkranz (green and tan), one on philosophy by Schwegler, the Bibles, the boxes of instruments and of weights and scales."

To most people the above list would seem to contain enough books to keep even a philosopher going for a while till he could get all his possessions together; but the writer of the letter was not of that opinion! He adds: "Look about for everything or book I might like . . . . look for Milton, Burns, Shelley, and Keats, etc., if room for them—bring the *Melioras* and the papers and newspapers beside them that relate to the articles—bring the *Jerrold* with my articles, *Truth-Seekers* ditto, and *Leigh Hunt* ditto."

So, in the summer of 1860, Stirling found himself, with his family about him, once more settled on his native soil, which he was never again to quit save for two or three brief visits, at long intervals, to other places. His *Wanderjahre* were now over; thenceforth the life of the philosopher was to be marked by few external events save the successive appearances of his various works; thenceforth it was to be devoted almost entirely to thought, and study, and intellectual toil.