

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 *reveille* 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 almshouse of St. Ives and 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*, and 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 of 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; first to visit a worthy devotee called Redmond, and then to 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, were aggravations of 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," 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 would seem 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"; and 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 slightly, of Miss Jewsbury, as a sensational novelist and admirer of George Sand, but he appreciated her genuine worth.

tone of misery which finds voice in Mrs. Carlyle's diary from October 1855 to May 1856, 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 caa."

"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 which 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 transit.*

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 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 being 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 departed from the views they set forth, that Ireland is in the main a country of idle 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 and 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 jurymen 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 and his wife, whose acquaintance he had made ten years before, were 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 jottings¹ 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 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 under-
stand and do."