

I.

In the lately published Emerson and Carlyle correspondence, there is a passage from Emerson's note-book, upon Carlyle, that may well serve to start us upon our course in this essay. "He has," says Emerson, "manly superiority rather than intellectuality"; "there is more character than intellect in every sentence." This fact, with the consequent steep inclination of all Carlyle's faculties toward personality or personal prowess, affords the master-key to him, to his life, his works, his opinions, and is a brief summary of much that I have written upon him. He was a man of vehement and overweening conceit in man. A sort of anthropological greed and hunger possessed him, an insatiable craving for strong, picturesque characters, and for contact and conflict with them. This was his ruling passion (and it amounted to a passion) all his days. He fed his soul on heroes and heroic qualities, and all his literary exploits were a search for these things. Where he found them not, where he did not come upon some trace of them in books, in society, in politics, he saw only barrenness and futility. He was an idealist who was inhospitable to ideas; he must have a man, the flavor and stimulus of ample concrete personalities. "In the country," he said, writing to his brother in 1821, "I am like an alien, a stranger and pilgrim from a far distant land." His faculties were "up in mutiny, and slaying one another for lack of fair enemies." He must to the city, to Edinburgh, and finally to London, where, thirteen years later, we find his craving as acute as ever. "Oct. 1st. This morning, think of the old primitive Edinburgh scheme of *engineership*; almost meditate for a moment resuming it *yet!* It were a method of gaining bread, of getting into contact with men, my two grand wants and prayers."

This thirst for man, for personal force, sprang from his own intense and rampant individualism. Never was a soul housed, and, in some respects, imprisoned in a more striking and original idiosyncrasy. All there is of him is Carlylean, shot through and through, as if under enormous heat and pressure, with his own concrete quality. To do the work he felt called on to do, to offset and with-

stand the huge, roaring, on-rushing modern world as he did, required an enormous egoism. In more senses than one do the words applied to the old prophet apply to him: "For, behold, I have made thee this day a defended city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the Kings of Juda, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land." He was a defended city, an iron pillar, and brazen wall, in the extent to which he was riveted and clinched in his own purpose and aim as well as in his attitude of opposition or hostility to the times in which he lived.

A selfish or self-seeking man he in no sense was, though it has so often been charged upon him. He was the victim of his own genius; and he made others the victims, not of his selfishness. This genius no doubt came nearer the demon of Socrates than that of any other modern man. He is under its lash and tyranny from first to last. But the watchword of his life was "*Entsagen*," renunciation, self-denial, which he learned from unself-denying Goethe. His demon did not possess him lightly, but dominated and drove him.

One would as soon accuse St. Simeon Stylites, thirty years at the top of his penitential pillar, of selfishness. Seeking his own ends, following his own demon, St. Simeon certainly was; but seeking his ease or pleasure, or animated by any unworthy, ignoble purpose, he certainly was not. No more was Carlyle; each one of whose books was a sort of pillar of penitence or martyrdom atop of which he wrought and suffered, shut away from the world, renouncing its pleasures and prizes, wrapped in deepest gloom and misery, and wrestling with all manner of real and imaginary demons and hindrances. During his last great work,—the thirteen years spent in his study at the top of his house, writing the history of Frederick,—this isolation, this incessant toil and penitential gloom was such as only religious devotees have voluntarily imposed upon themselves.

Regarded simply as a man of ideas, the possessor of a multitude of clear and shapely thoughts, Carlyle ranks below Landor or Ruskin; as philosopher, he is not on a par with Mill or Spencer; certainly not with the latter, who is mainly a systematizer and organ-

izer of ideas—a sort of intellectual clearing-house on a scale befitting the nineteenth century.

We can only come at the worth and significance of Carlyle by regarding him as a source of moral power, as a medium and exemplar of the living quality of heroes, projected into current literature and politics with the emphasis of gunpowder and torpedoes. He probably brought more original invigorating force into the world than any other man of his time. His own test of originality was sincerity, not variety or novelty of ideas. "The believing man is the original man." This test is sufficient for himself at least. He believed in certain things, accepted them, combined with them, so to speak, with a kind of chemical fierceness and inevitableness. Much heat and power are disengaged by the eagerness of the combination; probably some gas also.

He is the last man in the world to be reduced to a system, or tried by logical tests. You might as well try to bind the sea with chains. How he scoffs at your abstract idea, your philosophy of history, your rights of man, your rose-colored philanthropies, your potato gospels (vegetarianism), your "paralytic radicalism," and the like. The doctrine of Comte, or *Positivism*, he characterizes as the "miserable phantasmal *algebraic ghost* I have yet met with among the ranks of the living!" Evolution, as an arithmetical ghost, probably, was no more acceptable to him. The real and the ideal were no more separable with him than form and substance. His vivid Dantesque imagination must see every thought, every conception, issue in deed, in practicality, in personality. In fact, nothing but man, but heroes, touched him, moved him, satisfied him. He stands for heroes and hero-worship, and for that alone. Bring him the most plausible theory, the most magnanimous idea in the world, and he is cold, indifferent, or openly insulting; but bring him a brave, strong man, or the reminiscence of any noble personal trait—sacrifice, obedience, reverence,—and every faculty within him stirred and responded. He is a doctor who would cure the patient not by medicine, but by a heroic regimen—the cold plunge and the bastinado. Dreamers and enthusiasts, with their schemes for the millennium, rushed to him for aid and comfort, and usually had the door slammed in their faces. They forgot it was a man he had advertised for, and not an idea. Indeed, if you had the blow-fly of any popularism or reform buzzing in your bonnet, No. 5 Cheyne Row was the house above all others to be avoided. But welcome to any man with real work to do and the courage to do it; welcome

to any man who stood for any real, tangible thing in his own right. "In God's name, what *art* thou? Not Nothing, sayest thou! Then, How much and what? This is the thing I would know, and even *must* soon know, such a pass am I come to!" ("Past and Present.")

Caroline Fox, in her memoirs, tells how, in 1842, Carlyle's sympathies were enlisted in behalf of a Cornish miner who had kept his place in the bottom of a shaft, above a blast the fuse of which had been prematurely lighted, and allowed his comrade to be hauled up when only one could escape at a time. He sought out the hero, who, as by miracle, had survived the explosion, and set on foot an enterprise to raise funds for the bettering of his condition. In a letter to Sterling, he said, there was help and profit in knowing that there was such a true and brave workman living, and working with him on the earth at that time. "Tell all the people," he said, "that a man of this kind ought to be hatched—that it were shameful to eat him as a breakfast egg!"

All Carlyle's sins of omission and commission grew out of this terrible predilection for the individual hero; this bent or inclination determined the whole water-shed, so to speak, of his mind; every rill and torrent swept swiftly and noisily in this one direction. It is the tragedy in Burns's life that attracts him; the morose heroism in Johnson's, the copious manliness in Scott's, the lordly and regal quality in Goethe. Emerson praised Plato to him; but the endless dialectical hair-splitting of the Greek philosopher—"how does all this concern me at all?" he said. But when he discovered that Plato hated the Athenian democracy most cordially and poured out his scorn upon it, he thought much better of him. History swiftly resolves itself into biography to him; the tide in the affairs of men ebbed and flowed in obedience to the few potent wills. We do not find him exploiting or elucidating ideas and principles, but moral qualities,—always on the scent, on the search of the heroic.

He raises aloft the standard of the individual will, the supremacy of man over events. He sees the reign of law; none see it clearer. "Eternal Law is silently present everywhere and everywhen. By Law, the Planets gyrate in their orbits; by some approach to Law, the street-cabs ply in their thoroughfares." But law is still personal will with him, the will of God. He can see nothing but individuality, but conscious will and force in the universe. He believed in a personal God. He had an inward ground of assurance of it, in his own intense personality and vivid appre-

hension of personal force and genius. He seems to have believed in a personal devil. At least, he abuses "Auld Nickie-ben" as one would hardly think of abusing an abstraction. However impractical we may regard Carlyle, he was entirely occupied with practical questions; an idealist turned loose in the actual affairs of this world and intent only on bettering them. That which so drew reformers and all ardent ideal natures to him was not the character of his conviction, but the torrid impetuosity of his belief. He had the earnestness of fanaticism, the earnestness of rebellion; the earnestness of the Long Parliament and the National Convention—the only two parliaments he praises. He did not merely see the truth and placidly state it, standing aloof and apart from it; but, as soon as his intellect had conceived a thing as true, every current of his being set swiftly in that direction; it was an outlet at once for his whole pent-up energies, and there was a flood and sometimes an inundation of Carlylean wrath and power. Coming from Goethe, with his marvelous insight and cool, uncommitted moral nature to the great Scotchman, is like coming from a dress parade to a battle, from Melancthon to Luther. It would be far from the truth to say that Goethe was not in earnest: he was all eyes, all vision; he saw everything, but saw it for his own ends and behoof, for contemplation and enjoyment. In Carlyle, the vision is productive of pain and suffering, because his moral nature sympathizes so instantly and thoroughly with his intellectual: it is a call to battle and every faculty is enlisted. It was this that made Carlyle akin to the reformers and the fanatics and led them to expect more of him than they got. The artist element in him, and his vital hold upon the central truths of character and personal force, saved him from any such fate as overtook his friend Irving.

Carlyle owed everything to his power of will and to his unflinching adherence to principle. He was in no sense a lucky man, had no good fortune, was borne by no current, was favored and helped by no circumstance whatever. His life from the first was a steady pull against both wind and tide. He confronted all the cherished thoughts, beliefs, tendencies of his time; he spurned and insulted his age and country. No man ever before poured out such withering scorn upon his contemporaries. The opinions and practices of his times in politics, religion, and literature were as a stubbly, brambly field, to which he would fain apply the match and clean the ground for a nobler crop. He would purge and fertilize the soil by fire. His attitude was at once like that of the old prophets, one of

warning and rebuking. He was refused every public place he ever aspired to—every college and editorial chair. Every man's hand was against him. He was hated by the Whigs and feared by the Tories. He was poor, proud, uncompromising, sarcastic; he was morose, dyspeptic, despondent, compassed about by dragons and all manner of evil menacing forms; in fact, the odds were fearfully against him, and yet he succeeded, and succeeded on his own terms. He fairly conquered the world—yes, and the flesh and the devil. But it was one incessant, heroic struggle and wrestle from the first. All through his youth and his early manhood, he was nerving himself for the conflict. Whenever he took counsel with himself it was to give his courage a new fillip. In his letters to his people, in his private journal, in all his meditations, he never loses the opportunity to take a new hitch upon his resolution, to screw his purpose up tighter. Not a moment's relaxation, but ceaseless vigilance and "desperate hope." In 1830, he says in his journal: "Oh, I care not for poverty, little even for disgrace, nothing at all for want of renown. But the horrible feeling is when I cease my own struggle, lose the consciousness of my own strength, and become positively quite worldly and wicked." A year later he wrote: "To it, thou *Taugenichts!* Gird thyself! stir! struggle! forward! forward! Thou art bundled up here and tied as in a sack. On, then, as in a sack race; running, not raging!" Carlyle made no terms with himself nor with others. He would not agree to keep the peace; he would be the voice of absolute conscience, of absolute justice, come what come might. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion," he once said to John Sterling. The stern, uncompromising front which he first turned to the world he never relaxed for a moment. He had his way with mankind at all times, or rather conscience had its way with him at all times in his relations with mankind. He made no selfish demands, but ideal demands. Jeffrey, seeing his attitude and his earnestness in it, despaired of him; he looked upon him as a man butting his head against a stone wall; he never dreamed that the wall would give way before the head did. It was not mere obstinacy, it was not the pride of opinion: it was the thunder of conscience, the awful voice of Sinai within him; he *dared* not do otherwise.

Like knows like; deep answers deep. It was this intense and regnant personality of Carlyle, this emphasis and specialization in the direction of man, that gave him such insight into character and such power of human portraiture. It is, perhaps, not too much to say

that in all literature there is not another such master portrait-painter, such a limner and interpreter of historical figures and physiognomies. That power of the old artists to paint or to carve a man, to body him forth, almost to recreate him, so rare in the moderns, Carlyle had in a preëminent degree. As an artist, it is his distinguishing gift, and puts him on a par with Rembrandt and Angelo, and with the antique masters of sculpture. He could put his finger upon the weak point and upon the strong point of a man as unerringly as fate. His pictures of Johnson, of Boswell, of Voltaire, of Mirabeau, what masterpieces! His portrait of Coleridge will doubtless survive all others; one fears also that poor Lamb has been stamped to last. None of Carlyle's characterizations have excited more ill-feeling than this same one of Lamb. But it was plain from the outset, that Carlyle could not like such a verbal acrobat as Lamb. He doubtless had him or his kind in view when he wrote this passage in "Past and Present": "His poor fraction of sense has to be perked into some epigrammatic shape, that it may prick into me,—perhaps (this is the commonest) to be topsy-turvièd, left standing on its head, that I may remember it the better! Such grinning inanity is very sad to the soul of man. Human faces should not grin on one like masks; they should look on one like faces! I love honest laughter as I do sunlight, but not dishonest; most kinds of dancing, too, but the St. Vitus kind, not at all!"

Carlyle fairly evolves Cromwell from his inner consciousness, he does not merely depict him; he bodies him forth dramatically. "At last," says Taine, "we are face to face with Cromwell"; "I see a fact, and not an account of a fact." "I can touch the truth itself." The fame and power of "The French Revolution" rests upon the same vivid presentation of personality, the same artist grasp and portraiture of man's moral, generic nature. We are eye-witnesses of the terrible drama. Carlyle's method of writing history is foreshadowed in a paragraph in his notebook when he was but thirty-one. "An historian must write, so to speak, in *lines*; but every event is a *superficies*. Nay, if we search out its causes, a *solid*. Hence, a primary and almost incurable defect in the art of narration, which only the very best can so much as approximately remedy. N. B. I understand this myself, I have known it for years, and have written it now, with the purpose, perhaps, of writing it at large elsewhere." His historical writings are clearly attempts in this direction. They are by no means the customary linear performances, flat surface

narratives. "The French Revolution" is like a transverse section, a geologist's map, rather than a topographer's. What abysses of power and meaning are laid bare!

If Carlyle had taken to the brush instead of to the pen, he would probably have left a gallery of portraits such as this century has not seen. In his letters, journals, reminiscences, etc., for him to mention a man is to describe his face, and with what graphic pen-and-ink sketches they abound. Let me extract a few of them, not the best, but of best-known men. Here is Rousseau's face, from "Heroes and Hero Worship": "A high but narrow contracted intensity in it: bony brows; deep, strait-set eyes, in which there is something bewildered-looking,—bewildered, peering with lynx-eagerness; a face full of misery, even ignoble misery, and also of the antagonism against that; something mean, plebeian there, redeemed only by *intensity*: the face of what is called a Fanatic—a sadly *contracted* Hero!" Here a glimpse of Danton: "Through whose black brows and rude, flattened face there looks a waste energy as of Hercules." Camille Desmoulins: "With the face of dingy blackguardism wondrously irradiated with genius, as if a naphtha-lamp burned in it." Through Mirabeau's "shaggy beetle-brows, and rough-hewn, seamed, carbuncled face there look natural ugliness, small-pox, incontinence, bankruptcy,—and burning fire of genius; like comet-fire, glowing fuliginous through murkiest confusions." On first meeting with John Stuart Mill, he describes him to his wife as "a slender, rather tall, and elegant youth, with small, clear, Roman-nosed face, two small, earnestly smiling eyes; modest, remarkably gifted with precision of utterance; enthusiastic, yet lucid, calm; not a great, yet distinctly a gifted and amiable youth." A London editor whom he met about the same time, he describes as "a tall, loose, lank-haired, wrinkly, wintery, vehement-looking flail of a man." He goes into the House of Commons on one of his early visits to London: "Althorp spoke, a thick, large, broad-whiskered, farmer-looking man; Hume also, a powdered, clean, burly fellow; and Wetherell, a beetle-browed, sagacious, quizzical old gentleman; then Davies, a Roman-nosed dandy," etc. He must touch off the portrait of every man he sees. De Quincey "is one of the smallest men you ever in your life beheld; but with a most gentle and sensible face, only that the teeth are destroyed by opium, and the little bit of an under lip projects like a shelf." Leigh Hunt: "dark complexion (a trace of the African, I believe); copious, clean, strong black hair; beautifully shaped head; fine, beaming, serious hazel

eyes; seriousness and intellect the main expression of the face (to our surprise at first).” One of his classmates at Edinburgh, of his name, with whom his professor often confounded himself, he describes as a “bigger boy with red hair, wild buck-teeth and scorched complexion, and the worst Latinist of all my acquaintance.” His Irish journey abounds in striking portraiture. “Dr. Murray—head cropped like stubble, red-skinned face, harsh gray Irish eyes; full of fiery Irish zeal, too, and rage, which, however, he had the art to keep down under buttery vocables.” “In white neckcloth, opposite side, a lean figure of sixty; wrinkly, like a washed blacksmith, in the face, yet like a gentleman, too,—elaborately washed and dressed, yet still dirty looking.” A face “wrinkled into stereotype of smile or of stoical frown, you couldn’t say which.” In one of his letters to Emerson there is a portrait of Webster. “As a logic-fencer, advocate, or parliamentary Hercules, one would incline to back him, at first sight, against all the extant world. The tanned complexion, that amorphous crag-like face; the dull black eyes under their precipice of brows, like dull anthracite furnaces, needing only to be *blown*; the mastiff-mouth accurately closed; I have not traced as much of *silent Berserker rage*, that I remember of, in any other man.” In writing his histories, Carlyle valued, above almost anything else, a good portrait of his hero, and searched far and wide for such. He roamed through endless picture-galleries in Germany searching for a genuine portrait of Frederick the Great, and at last, chiefly by good luck, hit upon the thing he was in quest of. “If one would buy an indisputably authentic *old shoe* of William Wallace for hundreds of pounds, and run to look at it from all ends of Scotland, what would one give for an authentic visible shadow of his face, could such, by art natural or art magic, now be had?” “Often I have found a portrait superior in real instruction to half a dozen written ‘biographies,’ as biographies are written;—or, rather, let me say, I have found that the portrait was a small lighted *candle* by which the biographies could for the first time be *read*, and some human interpretation be made of them.”

II.

CARLYLE stands at all times, at all places, for the hero, for power of will, authority of character, adequacy and obligation of personal force. He offsets completely, and with the emphasis of a clap of thunder, the modern leveling impersonal tendencies, the “manifest

destinies,” the blind mass movements, the merging of the one in the many, the rule of majorities, the no-government, no-leadership, *laissez-faire* principle. Unless there was evidence of a potent, supreme, human will guiding affairs, he had no faith in the issue; unless the hero was in the saddle, and the dumb blind forces well bitted and curbed beneath him, he took no interest in the venture. The cause of the North, in the War of the Rebellion, failed to enlist him, or touch him. It was a people’s war; the hand of the strong man was not conspicuous; it was a conflict of ideas, rather than of personalities; there was no central and dominating figure around which events revolved. He missed his Cromwell, his Frederick. So far as his interest was aroused at all, it was with the South, because he had heard of the Southern slave-driver; he knew Cuffee had a master, the vagabond must work, and the crack of the planter’s whip upon lazy backs was sweeter music to him than the crack of antislavery rifles, behind which he recognized only a vague, misdirected philanthropy.

Carlyle was not the relic of a former period, as Taine calls him—a mastodon strayed into a world not made for him. Probably no man is ever to be regarded as such, certainly not this man. He is as much a resultant of modern democracy as Walt Whitman; the compensation for its aridness and flatness; the one signal reaction against it that has head and force enough to stand, that we are bound to respect and heed; a tremendous counterweight whose final effect is as an equalizer and distributor of power. In him is stored up such momentum upon the significance of personal worth, veracity, heroism, the inequality of men, that democracy will ever move the steadier and safer for it. The condition of the masses, of the laboring man, of the poor, occupied his thought for years. “Chartism,” “Past and Present,” and “Latter-Day Pamphlets” were the outcome of his wrestlings and agonizings upon these subjects. No literary man of our time has given so much serious thought to them, or uttered deeper words of warning and counsel concerning them.

I would fain get at the bottom of Carlyle’s opposition to democracy, to America, and find the meaning of it—the value of it. Of course, it arises primarily from the force with which he is shot in the direction I have indicated, the direction of heroes and hero-worship; but heroes may arise under a democracy. Indeed, where so free a field and so open a way? If a man have any insight and capacity in him above the common, where else can he find so sure and prompt an investment of it

as under a democracy? Here is no privileged class, no impossible barrier, no tragedy of a Burns, or neglect of a Johnson. True, in Nature's seed-field the tares choke down the wheat; but, unfortunately, we have no human wheat that we may guard and perpetuate, and raise a crop of Cromwells to order. The hero is and must always be a seedling, a wild, unbidden growth, and the danger that he will be choked down by the tares and nettles is, perhaps, less under free institutions than under any other.

"Democracy," Carlyle says, "is, by the nature of it, a self-canceling business, and gives in the long run a net result of *zero*." And, yet, we know that in every village and community, and in the great seed-fields of Time and continental areas, where nations and races are the competitors, the democratic principle is the only vitally active and triumphing one. The great prizes are not arbitrarily distributed, but more or less according to merit; they are carried off by the ablest, the bravest, the worthiest. Might, in the last analysis, means right. The race *is* to the swift; the battle *is* to the strong.

Carlyle's political writings are full of encouraging passages on this subject, as this, for instance, from "Past and Present": "The smallest item of human Slavery is the oppression of man by his Mock-Superiors; the palpablest, but, I say, at bottom the smallest. Let him shake off such oppression, trample it indignantly under his feet; I blame him not; I pity and commend him. But oppression by your Mock-Superiors well shaken off, the grand problem yet remains to solve: That of finding government by your Real-Superiors! Alas, how shall we ever learn the solution of that, benighted, bewildered, sniffing, sneering, God-forgetting unfortunates as we are? It is a work for centuries, to be taught us by tribulations, confusions, insurrections, obstructions; who knows if not by conflagration and despair!"

Yet, this is the American problem, the problem of all democracies—a difficult one, it is true, but perhaps not so difficult or important as Carlyle teaches; not so difficult, at least for us in this country, for it is to be, and in a measure has been, solved by education and a free ballot; not so important, because the political rulers, the law-makers and law-executors, in a free country, play but a small part in the sum-total of life there.

Let me quote a long and characteristic passage from Carlyle's "Latter-Day Pamphlets," one of dozens, illustrating his misconception of universal suffrage:

"Your ship cannot double Cape Horn by its excellent plans of voting. The ship may vote this and

that, above decks and below, in the most harmonious exquisitely constitutional manner; the ship to get round Cape Horn, will find a set of conditions already voted for and fixed with adamantine rigor by the ancient Elemental Powers, who are entirely careless how you vote. If you can, by voting or without voting, ascertain these conditions, and valiantly conform to them, you will get around the Cape; if you cannot,—the ruffian Winds will blow you ever back again; the inexorable Icebergs, dumb privy-councillors from Chaos, will nudge you with most chaotic 'admonition'; you will be flung half frozen on the Patagonian cliffs, or admonished into shivers by your iceberg councillors and sent sheer down to Davy Jones, and will never get around Cape Horn at all! Unanimity on board ship;—yes, indeed, the ship's crew may be very unanimous, which doubtless, for the time being, will be very comfortable to the ship's crew and to their Phantasm Captain if they have one; but if the tack they unanimously steer upon is guiding them into the belly of the Abyss, it will not profit them much! Ships accordingly do not use the ballot-box at all; and they reject the Phantasm species of Captain. One wishes much some other Entities—since all entities lie under the same rigorous set of laws—could be brought to show as much wisdom and sense at least of self-preservation, the *first* command of nature. Phantasm Captains with unanimous votings; this is considered to be all the law and all the prophets at present."

Here is the real crushing Carlylean wit and picturesqueness of statement, but is the case of democracy, of universal suffrage fairly put? The eternal verities appear again, as they appear everywhere in our author in connection with this subject. They recur in his pages like "minute-guns," as if in deciding, by the count of heads, whether Jones or Smith should go to Parliament or to Congress was equivalent to sitting in judgment upon the law of gravitation. What the ship in doubling Cape Horn would very likely do, if it found itself officerless, would be to choose, by some method more or less approaching a count of heads, a captain, an ablest man to take command, and put the vessel through. If none were able, then indeed the case were desperate; with or without the ballot-box, the abyss would be pretty sure of a victim. In any case, there would perhaps be as little voting to annul the storms, or change the ocean currents, as there is in democracies to settle ethical or scientific principles by an appeal to universal suffrage. But Carlyle was fated to see the abyss lurking under, and the eternities presiding over, every act of life. He saw everything in fearful gigantic perspective. It is true that one cannot loosen the latchet of his shoe without bending to forces that are cosmical, siderial; but whether he bends or not, or this way or that, he passes no verdict upon them. The temporary, the expedient—all those devices and adjustments that are of the nature of scaffolding, and that enter so largely into the administration of the coarser affairs of this world,

were with Carlyle equivalent to the false, the sham, the phantasmal, and he would none of them. As the ages seem to have settled themselves, for the present and the future, in all civilized lands—and especially in America—politics is little more than scaffolding; it certainly is not the house we live in, but an appurtenance or necessity of the house. A government, in the long run, can never be better or worse than the people governed. It is but the bark of the tree, the coarse outside rind,—a kind of scaffolding, very important it may be, and yet of no account in itself. In voting for Jones for constable, am I voting for or against the unalterable laws of the universe—an act wherein the consequences of a mistake are so appalling that voting would better be dispensed with and the selection of constables be left to the evolutionary principle of the solar system?

Yet Carlyle chose his ground, and took his bearings against universal suffrage, according to certain indisputable facts. These, namely, that wise men, the wisest men, are always in a minority, generally persecuted, rejected, crucified by the majority (Did not the multitude cry out, "Crucify him, crucify him"?); that the great books are read by the few, while the foolish book, the sensational novel, is eagerly read by the ten thousand; that the most transparent humbugs, if unblushingly pushed and noisily trumpeted abroad, are sure of the notice of the masses; that the quack doctor, the quack anything, by judicious advertising, thrives while patient merit starves; that virtue, integrity, sobriety, truthfulness, etc., are less taking to the multitude, are less sure of their votes, than pretentiousness, gilded falsehood, glibness, bribery, and skillful lobbying. Broad is the road that leads to perdition, a veritable democratic highway; the road that leads in the other direction is narrow and rugged and few walk therein. "Can it be proved that, since the beginning of the world, there was ever given a universal vote in favor of the worthiest man or thing? I have always understood that true worth, in any department, was difficult to recognize; that the worthiest, if he appealed to universal suffrage, would have but a poor chance." There is no disputing these facts, and if they really bear upon the question of popular government, of a free ballot, then the ground is clean shot away from under it. The world is really governed and led by minorities, and always will be. The many, sooner or later, follow the one. We have all become abolitionists in this country, some of us much to our surprise and bewilderment; we hardly know yet how it happened; but the time was when abolitionists were

hunted by the multitude. Marvelous to relate, also, civil service reform has become popular among our politicians. Something has happened; the tide has risen while we slept, or while we mocked and laughed, and away we all go on the current.

Universal suffrage as exemplified in America is productive of evils enough, it is true; but dare we say the government—municipal, state, national—is not in the long run fairly representative of the people; that our rulers and law-makers are not, on the whole, as good as we are; that Congress does not fairly embody what of virtue and wisdom there is in the country? We shall have purer and more exalted rulers when we are a purer and more exalted people. The fault is not in the suffrage: making it broader, if that were possible, or making it narrower, would not mend matters; but elevate the standard of wisdom and morality of all classes—that would mend matters.

There is probably not much difference in the aggregate popular amount of morbid virus, whether under a European monarchy or in an American democracy. The difference, to scientific estimate, is that the latter certainly does, and most intensely does, what the other abstains from, or goes against—brings all the bad stuff to the surface, where it can be seen of men, and its medication considered.

Necessity is the mother of heroes always. We cannot call them or choose them to rule over us, because in ordinary times we do not know them; they do not know themselves. "We know not what we are any more than what we shall be," says Carlyle writing on Voltaire. He leaves out of his counts entirely the competitive principle that operates everywhere in nature—in your onion-bed, as well as in political states and amid teeming populations—natural selection, the survival of the fittest. What a sorting and sifting process went on in our army during the secession war, till the real captains, the real leaders, were found; not Fredericks or Wellingtons, perhaps, but the best the land afforded. "Will the ballot-box raise the Noblest to the chief place? does any sane man deliberately believe such a thing?" Carlyle asks. But it may be the proximate way. It is not an air-line to the point, the course as the bird flies, as the idealist dreams, but the most feasible, actual road—devious, circuitous, up hill and down dale—that mankind have yet found out. If Carlyle had only suggested a better way, the way according to his survey of the ground to be passed over; but he did not. The lofty, inflexible idealist that he was, he cut his own way through life as imperiously and autocratically as a Russian czar, permitting no

swerving from a right line, and he insisted upon a like rectitude in the rest of mankind. The universe itself, he said, was a Monarchy and Hierarchy, and this is as practical a suggestion as we get from him.

America, he said, was "Anarchy *plus* a street constable," and most of the transfixing shafts aimed at this country were aimed at a man of straw of his own setting-up: he did not and could not appreciate our case. Yet he looked fondly and yearningly upon America, the country of Emerson, the country to which his own thoughts and hopes had once turned in the darkest hours of his life. What would have been the results to *him*, had he emigrated to our shores? Emigration, in the main, to the individual and to the race, means liberation; a loosening of old ties and customs, an escape from old ruts, and Carlyle would doubtless have in some measure been freed from the hags and demons that vexed his prophetic soul had he come to America.

"America's battle," he said, in 1850, "is yet to fight; and we, sorrowful though nothing doubting, will wish her strength for it. New Spiritual Pythons, plenty of them; enormous Megatherions, as ugly as were ever born of mud, loom huge and hideous out of the twilight Future on America; and she will have her own agony, and her own victory, but on other terms than she is yet quite aware of." But he failed to recognize the real python that was threatening us in his own time, and when we were battling with it and all but "cracking our sinews," he mocked; his sardonic laugh came echoing over the waters in the "American Iliad in a nutshell." But we may love and reverence the irate Scotchman all the same. His opposition to America and to the American idea is self-cancelling. He really plays into our hands, he lays the emphasis upon the right things, upon that upon which America has staked her all. He bids up manliness, veracity, courage, earnestness, to such a pitch that they become too precious for any but free institutions where the reliance is entirely upon them. The right of the weak to be governed by the strong, of the blind to be led by those who have eyes, in no way contravenes the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

None knew better than Carlyle himself that, whoever be the ostensible potentates and law-makers, the wise do virtually rule, the natural leaders do lead. Wisdom will out: it is the one thing in this world that cannot be suppressed or annulled. There is not a parish, township, or community little or big, in this country or in England, that is not finally governed, shaped, directed, built up by what of wisdom there is in it. All the leading indus-

tries and enterprises gravitate naturally to the hands best able to control them. The wise furnish employment for the unwise, capital flows to capital hands as surely as water seeks water.

"Winds blow and waters roll
Strength to the brave."

There never is and never can be any government but by the wisest. In all nations and communities, the law of nature finally prevails. If there is no wisdom in the people there will be none in their rulers; the virtue and intelligence of the representative will not be essentially different from that of his constituents. The dependence of the foolish, the thriftless, the improvident, upon his natural master and director, for food, employment, for life itself, is just as real to-day in America as it was in the old feudal or patriarchal times. The relation between the two is not so obvious, so intimate, but it is just as vital and essential. How shall we know the wise man unless he makes himself felt or seen or heard? How shall we know the master unless he masters us? Is there any danger that the real captains will not step to the front, and that we shall not know them when they do? Shall we not know a Luther, a Cromwell, a Franklin, a Washington?

"Man," says Carlyle, "little as he may suppose it, is necessitated to obey superiors; he is a social being in virtue of this necessity; nay, he could not be gregarious otherwise; he obeys those whom he esteems better than himself, wiser, braver, and will forever obey such; and ever be ready and delighted to do it." Why all this pother, then, and this clamorous calling for a divinely appointed task-master? We have already got him in one shape or another, and never have been and never can be without him; we are the tools of stronger minds, of stronger hands than our own. If there are no heroes in our midst, no master hearts and heads, more's the pity, but there is no remedy. The soil of a country determines its crops, the character of a people determines its heroes. "Where the great mass of men is tolerably right," Carlyle again says, "all is right; where they are not right, all is wrong." Think in how many ways, through how many avenues in our times, the wise man can reach us and place himself at our head, or mold us to his liking, as orator, statesman, poet, philosopher, preacher, editor. If he has any wise thing to speak, any scheme to unfold, there is the rostrum or pulpit and crowds ready to hear him, or there is the steam power-press ready to disseminate his wisdom to

the four corners of the earth. He can set up a congress or a parliament and really make and unmake the laws, by his own fireside, in any country that has a free press. "If we will consider it, the essential truth of the matter is, every British man can now elect *himself* to Parliament without consulting the hustings at all. If there be any vote, idea, or notion in him, or any earthly or heavenly thing, cannot he take a pen and therewith autocratically pour forth the same into the ears and hearts of all people, so far as it will go?" ("Past and Present.") Or there is the pulpit everywhere waiting to be worthily filled. What may not the real hero accomplish here? "Indeed, is not this that we call spiritual guidance properly the soul of the whole, the life and eyesight of the whole?"

In more primitive times, and amid more rudely organized communities, the hero, the strong man, could step to the front and seize the leadership like the buffalo of the plains or the wild horse of the pampas; but in our time, at least among English-speaking races, he must be more or less called by the suffrage of the people. With respect, therefore, to this question of the leadership of the wisest, Carlyle seems to me like a man who denies the sun because the day is cloudy. Such light as there is is sunlight and not cloud-light; and such light of wisdom as there is in the world, by which we guide our steps, however much it may be dimmed and obstructed, is the light of the wise men in it tempered, it is true, by many potent half-rays or shadows representing other, perhaps conflicting, facts and influences (doubtless meaning something equally important), and by the capacity of the eyesight of the times to absorb true light; which latter contingency, one cannot too often repeat, is probably the main affair. The sky of every age and people is always more or less overcast; the pure rays of wisdom do not and cannot have unobstructed sway. The stupidity of men, the inefficiency of materials, and the dust and confusion of the strife that always hides the character of an age from itself, all balk and hinder it. We probably have little conception to what extent the proudest names in history were blurred and belittled to contemporary times. The soldier in battle knows little of the part his general played in the victory or in the defeat. At a sufficient distance from an age, its true lights and leaders appear; we look athwart the clouds; the temporary, the accidental, has fallen away, the dust and heat of battle are gone. We view the mountain range from a vantage-ground, and can easily pick out the highest peak. It is quite certain that had there been a seventeenth or eighteenth century Carlyle, he would not have

seen the hero in Cromwell, or in Frederick, that the nineteenth century Carlyle saw in each. In any case, in any event, the dead rule us more than the living; we cannot escape the past. It is not merely by virtue of the sunlight that falls now, and the rain and dew that it brings, that we continue here; but by virtue of the sunlight of eons of past ages.

"This land of England has its conquerors, possessors, which change from epoch to epoch, from day to day; but its real conquerors, creators, and eternal proprietors are these following and their representatives if you can find them: all the Heroic Souls that ever were in England, each in their degree; all the men that ever cut a thistle, drained a puddle out of England, contrived a wise scheme in England, did or said a true and valiant thing in England." "Work? The quantity of done and forgotten work that lies silent under my feet in this world, and escorts and attends me and supports and keeps me alive, wheresoever I walk or stand, whatsoever I think or do, gives rise to reflections!" In our own politics, has our first President ever ceased to be President? Does he not still sit there the stern and blameless patriot uttering counsel? Let me make a nation's dead rulers, and I care not who makes the living.

Carlyle had no faith in the inherent tendency of things to right themselves, to adjust themselves to their own proper standards; the conservative force of nature, the checks and balances by which her own order and succession is maintained; the astronomic principle by which the systems are kept in poise in the spheral harmony; the Darwinian principle according to which the organic life of the globe has been evolved, the higher and more complex forms mounting from the lower, the principle or power, name it Fate, name it Necessity, name it God, or what you will, which finally lifts a people, a race, an age, and even a community above the reach of choice, of accident, of individual will, into the region of general law. So little is life what we make it, after all; so little is the course of history, the destiny of nations, the result of any man's purpose, or direction or will, so great is Fate, so insignificant is man! The human body is made up of a vast congeries or association of minute cells, each with its own proper work and function at which it toils incessantly night and day, and thinks of nothing beyond. The shape, the size, the color of the body, its degree of health and strength, etc., no cell or series of cells decides these points; a law above and beyond the cell determines these points. The final destiny and summing up of a nation is,

perhaps, as little within the conscious will and purpose of the individual citizens. When you come to large masses, to long periods, the law of nature steps in. The day is hot or the day is cold, the spring is late or the spring is early; but the inclination of the earth's axis makes the winter and summer sure. The wind blows this way and blows that, but the great storms gyrate and travel in one general direction. There is a wind of the globe that never varies, and there is the breeze of the mountain that is never two days alike. The local hurricane moves the waters of the sea to a depth of but a few feet; but the tidal impulse goes to the bottom. Men and communities in this world are often in the position of arctic explorers, who are making great speed in a given direction, while the ice-floe beneath them is making greater speed in the opposite direction. This kind of progress has often befallen political and ecclesiastical parties in this country. Behind mood lies temperament; back of the caprice of will lies the fate of character; back of both is the bias of family; back of that the tyranny of race; still deeper the power of climate, of soil, of geology, the whole physical and moral environment. Still, we are free men only so far as we rise above these. We cannot abolish fate, but we can in a measure utilize it. The projectile force of the bullet does not annul or suspend gravity; it uses it. The floating vapor is just as true an illustration of the law of gravity as the falling avalanche.

Carlyle, I say, had sounded these depths that lie beyond the region of will and choice, beyond the sphere of man's moral accountability; but in life, in action, in conduct, no man shall take shelter here. One may summon his philosophy when he is beaten in battle, and not till then. You shall not shirk the hobbling Times to catch a ride on the sure-footed Eternities. The times are bad; very well, you are there to make them better. "The public highways ought not to be occupied by people demonstrating that motion is impossible." ("Chartism.")

III.

CAROLINE FOX, in her "Memoirs of Old Friends," reports a smart saying about Carlyle, current in her time, which has been current in some form or other ever since, namely, that he had a large capital of faith uninvested,—carried it about him as ready money, I suppose, working capital. It is certainly true that it was not locked up in any of the various social or religious safe deposits. He employed a vast deal of it in

his daily work. It took not a little to set Cromwell up and Frederick. Indeed, it is doubtful if among his contemporaries there was a man with so active a faith—so little invested in paper securities. His religion as a present living reality went with him into every question. He did not believe that the Maker of this universe had retired from business, or that he was merely a sleeping partner in the concern. "Original sin," he says, "and such like are bad enough, I doubt not; but distilled gin, dark ignorance, stupidity, dark corn-law, bastille, and company, what are they?" For creeds, theories, philosophies, plans for reforming the world, etc., he cared nothing, he would not invest one moment in them; but the hero, the worker, the doer, justice, veracity, courage, these drew him,—in these he put his faith. What to other people were mere abstractions were urgent, pressing realities to Carlyle. Every truth or fact with him has a personal inclination, points to conduct, points to duty. He could not invest himself in creeds and formulas, but in that which yielded an instant return in force, justice, character. He has no philosophical impartiality. He has been broken up; there have been moral convulsions; the rock stands on end. Hence the vehement and precipitous character of his speech—its wonderful picturesqueness and power. The spirit of gloom and dejection that possesses him, united to such an indomitable spirit of work and helpfulness, is very noteworthy. Such courage, such faith, such unshaken adamant belief in the essential soundness and healthfulness that lay beneath all this weltering and chaotic world of folly and evil about him, in conjunction with such pessimism and despondency, was never before seen in a man of letters. I am reminded that in this respect he was more like a root of the tree of Igdrasil than like a branch; one of the central and master roots with all which that implies, toiling and grappling in the gloom, but full of the spirit of light. How he delves and searches; how much he made live and bloom again; how he sifted the soil for the last drop of heroic blood. The fates are there, too, with water from the sacred well. He is quick, sensitive, full of tenderness and pity; yet he is savage and brutal when you oppose him or seek to wrench him from his holdings.

"The quantity of sorrow he has, does it not mean withal the quantity of *sympathy* he has, the quantity of faculty and victory he shall yet have? 'Our sorrow is the inverted image of our nobleness.' The depth of our despair measures what capability, and height of claim we have, to hope." ("Cromwell.")

Carlyle was like an unhoused soul, naked and bare to every wind that blows. He felt

the awful cosmic chill. He could not take shelter in the creed of his fathers nor in any of the opinions and beliefs of his time. He could not and did not try to fend himself against the keen edge of the terrible doubts, the awful mysteries, the abysmal questions and duties. He lived and wrought as in the visible presence of God. This was no myth to him, but a terrible reality. How the immensities open and yawn about him! He was like a man who should suddenly see his relations to the universe, both physical and moral, in gigantic perspective, and never through life lose the awe, the wonder, the fear, the revelation inspired. The veil, the illusion of the familiar, the commonplace, is torn away. The natural becomes the supernatural. Every question, every character, every duty, was seen against the immensities, like figures in the night against a background of fire, and seen as if for the first time. The siderial, the cosmical, the eternal,—we grow familiar with these or lose sight of them entirely. But Carlyle never lost sight of them; his sense of them became morbidly acute, preternaturally developed, and it was as if he saw every movement of the hand, every fall of a leaf, as an emanation of solar energy. "That haggard mood of the imagination" (his own phrase) was habitual with him. His moral nature was thrown into peaks and chasms—the strata were rent asunder. He could see only the tragical in life and in history. Events were imminent, poised like avalanches that a word might loosen. We see his friends perpetually amazed at his earnestness, the gradations in his mind were so steep; the descent from the thought to the deed was so swift and inevitable.

"Daily and hourly," he says (at the age of 38), "the world natural grows more of a world magical to me; this is as it should be. Daily, too, I see that there is no true poetry but in *reality*." "The gist of my whole way of thought," he says again, "is to raise the natural to the supernatural." To his brother John he wrote, in 1832: "I get more earnest, graver, not unhappier every day. The whole creation seems more and more divine to me, the natural more and more supernatural." His eighty-five years did not tame him at all, did not blunt his conception of the "fearfulness and wonderfulness of life." The anodyne of life acted rather as an excitant upon Carlyle, and instead of quieting or benumbing him, filled him with portentous imaginings and fresh cause for wonder. There is a danger that such a mind, if it takes to literature, will make a mess of it. But Carlyle is saved by his tremendous gripe upon reality. Do I say the ideal and the real

were one with him? He made the ideal *the* real, and the only real. Whatever he touched he made tangible, actual, and vivid. Ideas are hurled like rocks, a word blisters like a branding-iron, a metaphor transfixes like a javelin. There is something in his sentences that lays hold of things, as the acids bite metals. His subtle thoughts, his marvelous wit, like the viewless gases of the chemist, combine with a force that startles the reader.

Carlyle differs from the ordinary religious enthusiast in the way he bares his bosom to the storm. His attitude is rather one of gladiatorial resignation than supplication. He makes peace with nothing, takes refuge in nothing. He flouts at happiness, at repose, at joy. "There is in man a *higher* than love of happiness; he can do without happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness." "The life of all gods figures itself to us as a sublime sadness—earnestness of infinite battle against infinite labor. Our highest religion is named the 'Worship of Sorrow.' For the Son of Man there is no noble crown, well worn or even ill worn, but is a crown of thorns." His own worship is a kind of defiant admiration of Eternal Justice. He asks no quarter, and will give none. He turns upon the grim destinies a look as undismayed and as uncompromising as their own. Despair cannot crush him; he will crush it. The more it bears on, the harder he will work. The way to get rid of wretchedness is to despise it; the way to conquer the devil is to defy him; the way to gain heaven is to turn your back upon it, and be as unflinching as the gods themselves. Satan may be roasted in his own flames; Tophet may be exploded with its own sulphur. "Despicable biped!" (Teufelsdröckh is addressing himself.) "What is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, death; and say the pangs of Tophet, too, and all that the devil and man may, will, or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart? Canst thou not suffer whatso it be, and as a child of freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet it and defy it." This is the "Everlasting No" of Teufelsdröckh, the annihilation of self. Having thus routed Satan with his own weapons, the "Everlasting Yea" is to people his domain with fairer forms; to find your ideal in the world about you: "Thy condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same ideal out of: what matters whether such stuff be of this sort or of that, so the form thou give it be heroic, be poetic?" Carlyle's watchword through life, as I have said, was the German word "*Entsagen*," or renunciation. The perfect flower of

religion opens in the soul only when all self-seeking is abandoned. The divine, the heroic attitude is: "I seek not Heaven, I fear not Hell; I crave the truth alone, whithersoever it may lead." "Truth! I cried, though the heavens crush me for following her: no falsehood, though a celestial lubberland were the price of apostasy." The truth—what is the truth? Carlyle answers that which you believe with all your soul and all your might and all your strength, and are ready to face Tophet for,—that, for you, is the truth. Such a seeker was he himself. It matters little whether we agree that he found the truth or not. The law of this universe is such that where the love, the desire, is perfect and supreme, the truth is already found. That is the truth, not the letter, but the spirit; and the seeker and the sought are one. Can you by searching find out God? No; but make your actions Godlike, and He is already with you. This is Carlyle's position, so far as it can be defined. He hated dogma as he hated poison. No direct or definite statement of religious belief or opinion could he tolerate. He abandoned the church for which his father designed him, because of his inexorable artistic sense; he could not endure the dogma that the church rested upon, the pedestal of clay upon which the golden image was reared. The gold he held to as do all serious souls, but the dogma of clay he quickly dropped. "Whatever becomes of us," he said, referring to this subject in a letter to a friend when he was in his twenty-third year, "never let us cease to behave like honest men."

It was this artistic sense, this refusal to name the unspeakable, to translate the emotions of the soul in the presence of the Infinite Mystery into the language of the understanding that so bewildered the elder Henry James. Carlyle was before all things an artist, though no man hated so royally the current cant and twaddle about art. He was an artist in this: he must have and would have concrete realities and identities. He said to Emerson, apropos of some visionary Emerson had sent him: "I can do nothing with vapors, but wish them *condensed*." Realities, but realities impelled by the ideal as a ship by the gale.

It may be added that Carlyle was one of those men whom the world can neither make nor break,—a meteoric rock from out the fiery heavens, bound to hit hard if not self-consuming and not looking at all for a convenient or a soft place to alight,—a blazing star in his literary expression, but in his character and purpose the most tangible and unconquerable of men.

"Thou, O World, how wilt thou secure

thyself against this man? Thou canst not hire him by thy guineas; nor by thy gibbets and law penalties restrain him. He eludes thee like a Spirit. Thou canst not forward him, thou canst not hinder him. Thy penalties, thy poverties, neglects, contumelies: behold, all these are good for him."

SINCE the foregoing pages were written, the letters of Mrs. Carlyle have been given to the world, and it may be worth our while to glance briefly at the woman of whom we have heard so much, and over whose fate so much sympathy has been indulged in. No new light of consequence is thrown upon the great author himself by the publication, but the wife whom he so lauds in his "Reminiscences," and over whose memory he is so remorseful and self-accusing, stands clearly and definitely before us. Clearness and definiteness are among her most marked characteristics. She always knows her mind, can reach a decision quickly, and hits the mark every time. Carlyle said her eye could correct the plumb and square of the carpenter. The tone of the letters is as clear as a bell, not a false note in them; but, apart from the ill health of which they are the record, they reveal a terribly unhappy mind, and a sort of suppressed life like that of a plant under a stone. The stone, it will be quickly said, as has been said over and over again, was her husband; which is true, but in no sense for which he can be held responsible; every husband, intensely preoccupied, his whole heart and soul in his work, is in the same way a stone to the wife who does not glory in his preoccupation, and who has not ample and worthy outlets and occupations of her own. The wife must either find her happiness in merging her life in that of her husband's, making his aims and his successes her own, or she must have ample original resources to fall back upon. Mrs. Carlyle did not do the former and she had not the latter. She was jealous of her husband's absorption in his work; and in the menial service which she was so assiduous in rendering him,—shielding him from cocks, dogs, donkeys, parrots, pianos, servants, and all household annoyances and interruptions, mending his trowsers and making his puddings,—she found no worthy outlet for the genius that was in her. That was not her proper mission. Just what her mission was, she herself was in much doubt. She said she had a devil in her, always calling to her "'March! march!' and bursting into infernal laughter when requested to be so good as to specify whither." This was the gipsy element in her to which she confesses, and which was bound to give her trouble.

She said she had thought that in a civil war she might possibly find her work. One could almost fancy in her another Joan of Arc; easy enough, another Charlotte Corday. In any case, a childless marriage with a man whose genius overtopped her own, and whose ways were the ways of fate, was not the best lot for her. Hence, one is not surprised to find her writing to Forster: "I do think there is much truth in the Young German idea that marriage is a shockingly immoral institution, as well as what we have long known it for—an extremely disagreeable one." The fire that melts a woman's heart is not the fire that fills the prophet's soul; nor yet is it the furnace heat that smelts such mountains of crude ore as that out of which "Frederick" and "Cromwell" came.

With a will of adamant and a preoccupation like that of Hercules cleansing his stables or descending into Hades, it is certain in advance that Carlyle will prove in some respects an unsatisfactory husband and lover. He was not lacking in heart and sympathy, but he was probably deficient in, and blind to, the sentiment of the sexes; and hence his shortcomings as a husband appear to have been in those little attentions, flatteries, caresses, intimacies, etc., that a woman expects of her lover.

"In great matters," says his wife, "he is always kind and considerate; but these little attentions which we women attach so much importance to he was never in the habit of rendering to any one; his up-bringing and the severe turn of mind he has from nature had alike indisposed him toward them." Yet how the dear woman whistles to keep her courage up. "It is odd," she says, "what notions men seem to have of the scantiness of a woman's resources. They do not find it anything out of nature that they should be able to exist by themselves; but a woman must always be borne about on somebody's shoulders, and dandled and chirped to, or it is supposed she will fall into the blackest melancholy." Now, Mrs. Carlyle was intensely womanly in this; she laid great stress upon little matters, and she was famishing for the little caresses and attentions she sneered at.

Her power over men, quite depriving them of their wits for the time being, even infatuating old Sterling, and leading him to write to her in a way that angered her very much, means a good deal. It means, among other things, the possession of charms, to which Carlyle, by the nature of him, was unresponsive, and that wasted their sweetness on the desert air.

More than that, she allowed her life to be absorbed in little things. She was the victim

of trifles. Her letters are mainly a record of the petty ills and annoyances of one's life. She chronicles all her tears, woman fashion, and all her tremors and hysterical spasms. She says: "It is not only a faculty with me, but a necessity of my nature, to make a great deal out of nothing." Her letters are all to be read in the light of this confession. She was a finely organized creature, and had that "preternatural intensity of sensation" (her own phrase) which so magnifies the little. The sting of a wasp nearly killed her (letter 114), and she fairly broke her heart over her husband's innocent admiration for Lady Ashburton. She says in a letter to her husband, a few weeks before her sudden death: "I don't pretend to be an ordinary man or woman; I am perfectly extraordinary, especially in the power I possess of fretting and worrying myself into one fever after another, without any cause to speak of." The dear, honest creature! Fatigue, she says, which makes a healthy human being sleepy, makes her delirious. Her lot was exceptionally severe only in the matter of ill health; in other respects, fortune was more than kind to her. She magnifies all her trials in a way worthy her husband himself, who wrote to his brother John, that getting settled in the house at Craigenputtock was a battle like that of St. George and the Dragon. Her intellectual narrowness (in this case blindness) is shown in the remark that Emerson had no ideas of his own (but mad ones) except what he had got from Carlyle.

Then, like her husband, she was not made for happiness. She is reported as saying she hated joy, and in one of her letters she says, "Happiness is but a low thing." She had no wholesome human indifference, none of that unctuous, self-complacent quality that turns aside so many of the petty ills and annoyances of this world, and that is to the human sensibilities what the oil is to the duck's back. With Mrs. Carlyle every drop penetrated, found the pores open, and her spirits are habitually bedraggled. It was a trick or vanity of both man and wife, and unworthy them both, never to acknowledge they took pleasure in anything. The wife protests that she hates letter-writing, and often wrote with the back of the pen; and yet few women have ever written such bright, readable letters. Carlyle detested lecturing, and yet those who heard him say he spoke as one inspired. Neither had any reticence upon the subject of their ills and miseries, though here, perhaps, the husband groans the louder, because he is the stronger. To suffer and be silent was not a virtue of either. Indeed, in many ways, this famous couple were much alike; too much so, one would say. They did not complement

and offset each other at enough points. Before their marriage, Carlyle wrote: "It is the earnest, affectionate, warm-hearted, enthusiastic Jane that I love. The acute, sarcastic, clear-sighted, derisive Jane I can at best but admire." Now both had just this dual nature, and you are never sure which side of the penny will turn up. The wife shows the acute and sarcastic side to the husband very often in this correspondence; as to which side he shows in his letters to her, we have Froude's testimony that he is uniformly tender and affectionate.

All the husband's ills and annoyances reappear in the wife in an exaggerated form. She is more sleepless than he is; more addicted to blue pills and morphia; more disturbed by dogs, cats, bugs, cocks, donkeys, parrots, locomotives; more used up by travel, boats, hotels, etc. When he takes snuff, she sneezes with a vengeance. His worry becomes almost distraction in her. When he is compelled to serve on a jury, she is nearly made sick; when she hears him jump out of bed at night in the room above her, unable to sleep, her heart is in her throat till he turns in again; when she makes the awful discovery that a cock and hens have suddenly appeared in the next yard, she is in torment till she has bought the owner up; in short, when the husband has indigestion, the wife has nightmare; and this through her genius for worryment; she catches it, and a spark in others becomes a flame in her. She was acute in every sense; all her maladies take an acute

form; her colds and headaches are severer than those of other people, and she at last dies of some acute nervous disease—chronic in its obstinacy, but acute in its intensity.

Yet, probably, she was happier with Carlyle than she could have been with any other man. Writing to his mother, in 1837, she says of Carlyle: "Numbers of people love me often, after their fashion, far better than I deserve; but then his fashion is so different from all these, and seems alone to suit the crotchety creature that I am."

The most serious want one feels in Mrs. Carlyle's relation to her husband, as already intimated, is that she did not share in any adequate measure, or apparently aspire to share, his high and heroic life, only his petty, humdrum kitchen life; she was not his companion or helpmate in the writing of his books, did not even read them all, but was jealous of his absorption in them. His tasks, he says, were no choice of hers, but fell upon her like ill-health or foul weather; and remembering her silent indifference, he reproaches himself for talking to her, night after night, of the battle of Molwitz, while he was writing "Frederick." Interest in remote persons or events, or in general questions, she had not; yet that she was the most bright and intelligent of women, these letters abundantly testify; and that she was an extremely lovable one, winning the hearts of both old and young wherever she went, and keeping them, is equally certain.

John Burroughs.

THE VOICE OF D. G. R.

FROM this carved chair wherein I sit to-night,
 The dead man read in accents deep and strong,
 Through lips that were like Chaucer's, his great song
 About the Beryl and its virgin light;
 And still that music lives in death's despite,
 And though my pilgrimage on earth be long,
 Time cannot do my memory so much wrong
 As e'er to make that gracious voice take flight.
 I sit here with closed eyes; the sound comes back,
 With youth, and hope, and glory on its track,
 A solemn organ-music of the mind;
 So, when the oracular moon brings back the tide,
 After long drought, the sandy channel wide
 Murmurs with waves, and sings beneath the wind.

Edmund W. Gosse.