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The Works of Thomas Carlyle

Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) was one of the most influential authors of the nineteenth century. Eagerly studied at the highest level of intellectual society, his satirical essays and perceptive historical biographies caused him to be regarded for much of the Victorian period as a literary genius and eminent social philosopher. After graduating from Edinburgh University in 1814, he published his first scholarly work on German literature in 1824, before finding literary success with his ground-breaking history of the French Revolution in 1837. After falling from favour during the first part of the twentieth century, his work has more recently become the subject of scholarly re-examination. His introduction of German literature and philosophy into the British intellectual milieu profoundly influenced later philosophical ideas and literary studies. These volumes are reproduced from the 1896 Centenary Edition of his collected works. Volume 1 contains his satirical philosophical essay *Sartor Resartus*.

The Works of Thomas Carlyle

Volume 1: Sartor Resartus

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

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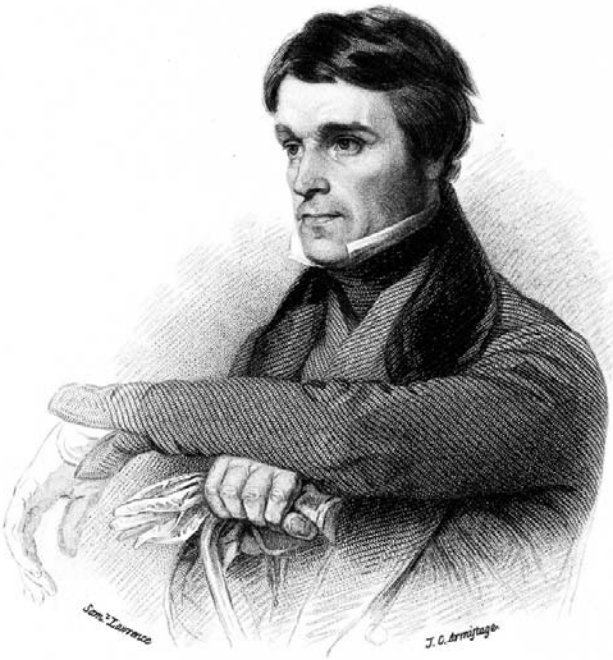
CENTENARY EDITION

THE WORKS OF THOMAS CARLYLE

IN THIRTY VOLUMES

VOL. I

SARTOR RESARTUS



Most faithfully Yours
T. Carlyle

THOMAS CARLYLE

SARTOR RESARTUS

THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF HERR TEUFELSDRÖCKH

IN THREE BOOKS

Mein Vermächtniß, wie herrlich weit und breit!
Die Zeit ist mein Vermächtniß, mein Acker ist die Zeit.
Goethe.

LONDON
CHAPMAN AND HALL
LIMITED
1896

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BOOK III

INTRODUCTION

TIME, the final judge of appeal from the verdicts of successive ages, is rather fond of 'reserving' his decisions. Often they are held over for a generation or more, under the formula of suspension known in the somewhat 'late' Latinity of the lawyers, as *Curia advisari vult*. But sitting as Lord Justice on that supreme appellate tribunal which examines the claims of departed writers, Time has been 'swift of despatch' in the case of Thomas Carlyle. His award has been delivered within fifteen years of Carlyle's death, and it confirms the judgment of his contemporaries as to his literary greatness. The appeal of his posthumous detractors is dismissed with costs.

We cannot exactly condole with the defeated appellants: they hardly deserve that. But we can make some allowance for them, for, in truth, we can now more clearly see what grounds they had for taking the case to a higher court. Nay, we can even admit that their excuse has been in part provided for them by the victorious respondent himself. No great man of letters has ever so persistently be-littled the mere *art* of literature as Carlyle. It is true that he had his literary heroes to point his discourses on hero-worship—his Johnson, his Rousseau, his Burns: surely as strange a leash as were ever strung together,—and of course not even he could fail to disengage the matchless art of Shakespeare from his philosophy, his morality, his profound thoughts on life, and what not else among those high matters in which alone Carlyle was interested. But as a rule, it is the direct dogmatic teaching of a work of literature (which is its accident) and not the manner of it, the æsthetic charm, the emotional appeal, the intel-

lectual delight, the spiritual refreshment of it (which are of its essence) that he values: so that when, as in Scott's romances, he came across work which consists wholly of the essentials of literature, detached from its accidents, the contact with it produced a memorable and lamentable effect on his critical faculty. Allowing, in short, for a few inconsistencies, Carlyle's attitude towards literature pure and simple,—literature as literature—is uniform. On scores of pages, in hundreds of passages, he enounces or reveals the opinion that, dissociated from direct didactic purpose, it is but as sounding brass, and as a tinkling cymbal. The preacher with him is immeasurably ahead of the mere man of letters, as perhaps the man of action is of both.

There is thus a certain poetical justice about the resistance offered in certain quarters to his decree of canonisation. By insisting, in fact, on the superior dignity of the prophet-preacher, and by idealising the silent man of action—exalting him who *does* nobly, to a level so vastly higher than his who merely writes nobly of noble deeds—Carlyle was in fact 'briefing' a 'devil's advocate' against himself. For he has now become a prophet whose prophecies are of little account; while in the domain of action and conduct, his figure as viewed in the light thrown on it by his famous biographer, shows distinctly less heroic than it was supposed to have been. The disclosure of his personal weaknesses —his egoism, his ill-tempers, his peasant-bred envy, his undue self-pity—passed harmlessly, as all such disclosures should, and will pass, by those whose admiration had always centred on the writer and not on the man; but it fell at first with a most agitating shock upon those to whom the man, the leader, the master and doctor, the teacher,—by example, as was assumed, as well as by precept,—counted for so much more than the writer. The echo of their outcries of disenchantment had to die away before a hearing could be obtained for the truth that Carlyle is neither political prophet nor ethical doctor, but simply a great master of literature who lives for posterity by the art which he despised.

Neither prophet nor doctor: no, nor yet philosopher either. The word 'philosophy' and its derivatives are among the hardest-worked vocables in the language. The substantive has been applied to everything, from a theory of the universe to the minutest researches in a single branch of physical science; its adjectival form is used indiscriminately to describe a variety of the human temperament, and the contents of an optician's shop. Men, who never so much as heard of the Stoics, have been called 'philosophers' for meeting adversity with fortitude; quadrants and sextants have been dignified with the name of 'philosophical' instruments. And there was hardly less laxity in the employment of the word 'philosophy' as applied to the teachings of Carlyle, a writer who was alike ignorant of philosophical systems, and contemptuous of philosophical method, dismissing the former as 'word-spinning,' and the latter as 'logic chopping,' and whose own metaphysic was a mere tissue of poetic rhapsodies, as his ethic was a mere series of intuitional and unreasoned dogmas. One hardly knows whether Carlyle himself was aware of the popular designation of him in later years as the 'philosopher of Chelsea,' or, if he was, what he thought of the cognomen. But there can, at least, be no doubt that the appellation was one which he ought in common consistency to have emphatically, if not indignantly, repudiated.

It is interesting, indeed, to inquire what system of philosophy the disciples of the master could have managed to extract from his writings. A philosopher, whether so self-styled or not, may be expected either to suggest some speculative solution of the problems of man's origin, man's destiny, man's duty, and above all, man's relation to the external world, or, if he is a pure sceptic, definitely to pronounce these problems unsoluble. But, while Carlyle would presumably have rejected pure dogmatic scepticism, such as Hume's, with impatience, there is, nevertheless, not one of the questions connected with these high matters, to which he has any definite answer to propound. To some of them he offers no reply at all; to others he replies according to the personal

mood, or the controversial exigencies, of the moment, and therefore in half-a-dozen different ways. He seems on the metaphysical side to have been more or less unconsciously a Fichtean Idealist: at any rate no transcendental German of them all, has insisted more strongly on the supremacy and even the solitude of the individual consciousness, and on the shadowy nature of the external world of sense Yet the ethical affinities of this theory of perception, and its easy avenues of exit into indifferentism, fatalism, hedonism, and many other 'isms,' which he would have heartily objurgated, never seems to have occurred to him. There is no sign of his having appreciated the difficulty, yet the necessity, of fitting his metaphysical idealism into the framework of his essentially and austerely realistic ethics.

As to those ethics themselves, and the moral cosmology, so to call it, with which they were associated, what do they amount to? That there is a Divine Creator and Governor of the universe, and a prescribed law of human conduct which man will violate at his peril; that the distinctions between right and wrong are fixed from eternity, and the recognition of them implanted ineradicably in the heart of man; that truth is supreme and will ultimately and irresistibly prevail over falsehood; and that suffering is attached to ill-doing by a law of inevitable sequence—these, and a few other correlated *dicta* of equal simplicity, sum up the whole of Carlyle's theology, just as they composed the entire theological equipment of the Greek tragedians. As to his ethics: that the world is not a hunting-ground of pleasure but an arena of duty; that man must learn to dispense with the happiness of gratified longings, and to seek and ensue only the blessings of right action; and that whether there be or be not a future state of rewards and punishments, the obligation to such action is no less imperative—in these maxims, and their like, are contained the whole ethical law and prophets for Carlyle as for the Stoics before him. There is nothing in the one set of doctrines which is not to be found in Sophocles, nor anything in the other which we could not

have learned from Marcus Aurelius; and since the dramas of the Athenian poet, and the meditations of the Roman emperor are still extant, there would be no need for them to rise from the dead, and seek a joint re-incarnation in the person of Carlyle.

How came it then, it will be asked, that this philosopher without a philosophy exerted so powerful an influence over English thought throughout the second thirty years of the present century? and how comes it that now, though that influence has long since spent itself, he still wields, and promises to wield for an indefinite time to come, a power of another kind? Answers to both these questions are not far to seek. The former of the two phenomena is to be explained by the fact that though Carlyle was no teacher in the proper philosophic sense of the word, he was during the day of his influence such a *preacher* as the world has rarely seen. It is common and perhaps natural enough to confuse the two functions of 'teaching' and 'preaching,' but their distinction is, nevertheless, fundamental. To teach is, in strictness, to impart knowledge to a learner which he did not possess before; while the distinctive purpose of preaching is to give vitality and motive power to knowledge which he already possesses. The fact that in some cases the imparted knowledge is itself new, and the teacher to that extent a preacher also, is an immaterial accident not affecting the essence of his function. Otherwise a Christian missionary to the heathen would stand on the same level as the Founder of his faith. In nineteen cases, moreover, out of twenty the preacher is not addressing the heathen. He does not deal in new, but in forgotten, truths. His object is not to enlarge deficient knowledge, but to awaken slumbering attention; and his success in the attempt will of course be measured partly by his own power of applying the required intellectual or moral stimulus, and partly by the readiness of his hearers to receive it.

Seldom has the concurrence of these two conditions been more complete than it was during the period covered by Carlyle's earlier writings. Then, if ever in human history, the hour and

the man had met. The Genius of the eighteenth century—that age of victorious but unsatisfying common sense—lay at its last gasp. It had indeed received its mortal wound in that revolt of the human spirit against its contented optimism, from which the French Revolution sprang: and its death, though it might be postponed, was impossible to avert. Eighty-Nine—if Eighty-Nine had borne no Jacobin children—would have killed it outright; and Coleridge and Wordsworth would have sung a new Song of Deborah over its destruction. But Eighty-Nine unfortunately was too soon succeeded by Ninety-Three; and the moribund Genius received a new lease of life amid loud rejoicings, in which Coleridge and Wordsworth joined. But by 1830 this lease had run out, and the long delayed reaction came. The new generation were tired to death of the eighteenth century tradition, and profoundly disgusted with the intellectual and spiritual patrimony which they had inherited from it. They were sick of its sandy Utilitarianism, its cast-iron economics, its uninspired and uninspiring theology, the flat and deadly prose of its theory of life. They were ripe, especially the younger among them, for rebellion against a system which however eminently conformable to the practical reason, had no word of response to utter, no shred of satisfaction to offer to those two most importunate claimants in human and especially in youthful human nature—the energies and the emotions. The new generation were crying out for at least a religion of action if they could hold no longer by any religion of speculative belief. They wanted a politico-social creed which would find room for the new ideas and aspirations rejected, or coldly viewed by the politicians of the old order. Above all they passionately longed, as did the newly risen Romanticists in France—for a presentment of human life in literature with all the wealth of colour and animation of movement which belong to it in every age, and which they felt were not wanting to it in their own. They were unutterably weary of contemplating the world as a mere store-house of facts and figures, or as a mechanical creation of laws,

forces and formulæ; and they were eager to realise it once more as the scene of the endless drama of human action and passion, of struggle, and triumph and defeat.

It was in the hour when this mood was dominant over the younger and more active minds throughout educated England that the man appeared. He came bringing with him all that they asked for, feeling all that they felt, hating everything that they hated (and a good deal more on his own account) and filled full of the same ardent if somewhat vague aspirations with which they too were bursting. His contempt for the accepted philosophy, the conventional theology, the current politics of his time was even more profound than theirs. The gritty Benthamism of his age was more irritating to his palate, the yoke of its cast-iron economics more galling to his shoulders. He was even more impatient of 'laws, forces and formulæ' than they, even more impressed than they with the superiority of action to thought and its immeasurable superiority to words. Had his powers of expression been only a little above the average; had his enthusiasm of the preacher glowed to no extraordinary pitch of ardour, he could not have failed to obtain a hearing. What wonder then, that with the passionate force of conviction which animated his utterances, and the marvellous mastery of language which went to the shaping of them, he should alike have stormed the heart and carried captive the intellect of his age?

This, of course, is not to say that the Preacher of the Thirties had anything like the congregation that 'sat under' him during the two succeeding decades—that the Carlyle of *Sartor Resartus* had a tithe of the following that attended on the Carlyle of *Past and Present*, and the *Latter Day Pamphlets*. No more is meant than that his earliest writings caught the ear of that *tribus prærogativa* of his countrymen whose suffrage in such cases is to be taken first, and who think to-day what the great body of their fellow-citizens will think to-morrow. Their suffrage however he certainly won—if not unanimously, yet at least, from all of them,

save those who still clung to the belief that salvation was to be found in politics, and who looked, inconsiderately enough, for a pioneer of the future in that new Radicalism which was essentially the offspring, and in many respects the degraded offspring, of the immediate past. But a very few years' experience of a Reformed Parliament sufficed to make converts of them also. They found that the new Radical was politically and philosophically as unhelpful as the old Whig whom he had supplanted; that his social ideals were no less inadequate and much more vulgar than those of his predecessor; and that his general views of the world and life were those of an infinitely more 'dreary dog.' By the end of the decade the process of disenchantment was complete. The same great turn of the political tide which swept the Liberals out of power, and brought in the great Conservative majority of 1841, had its intellectual counterpart in the movement which two years later brought a whole multitude of new disciples round the author of *Past and Present*. From this year we may perhaps most safely date the commencing growth of that strictly didactic influence which was to go on steadily increasing for the next quarter of a century.

As for the rest of Carlyle's countrymen—for that proportion of them (and it was no inconsiderable one), who remained uninfluenced by him for a yet longer time, and many of whom died, indeed, in their hardness of heart—their case also is intelligible enough. They were alienated and repelled by that very element in Carlyle's writings, which, now that his preachings are out of date, remains their one element of life—their literary quality. Nor should this appear a paradox even to those who were not born into the world until Carlyle had attained the position of an established and accepted master in letters. They should be able, imaginatively at any rate, to realise to themselves the distressing shock which was given to the elder world of literary purists by the first and yet more by the second publication of Carlyle in 'Carlylese,' and the effects of which survived among them, plainly perceptible down to a period well within the memory of men not

long past middle age. It was naturally *The French Revolution* which dealt the rudest blow at their susceptibilities. *Sartor Resartus* could be neglected as a mere subjective rhapsody; but the grave or professedly grave history of one of the gravest of modern events was another matter. A work of that description, from the pen of a writer already rising into celebrity compelled the attention of the whole educated public to its contents, and therewith of necessity to its style. And what a style! exclaimed the elder world of literary purists, absolutely aghast. Was it even a 'style' at all? Could you any more discuss it as a style, than you could debate the merits of 'oratory' which did not condescend to begin by being an articulate utterance? If excellence of style (they continued, breathless) consisted partly in the choice of words, and partly in their collocation, what was to be said of a writer who fetched his words from anywhere, and flung them down anyhow upon the page? Was it for this hotch-pot of vocabular monstrosities, this witches' caldron of disjointed sentences, outlandish compounds, fantastic nicknames, extravagant metaphors and obscure allusions, that the world was asked to exchange the gravity, the lucidity, the eloquence of the accepted masters of historical narrative—the simple but nervous English of Hume, the polished periods and majestic cadences of Gibbon? What would be the fate of our prose literature if the so-called style were to be tolerated and find imitators? And what, O! what would become of the 'dignity of history,' if this was how history was to be written in the future?

Such were the alarmed inquiries and despairing cries which Carlyle's writings drew from the elder generation, and the echo of which was still clearly audible until the majority of that generation had passed away. Well on into the Sixties it was still to be heard, and some of us who were then in our own twenties will remember how many grey-beards were then extant, who, while fully abreast of the time in most of their ideas, nay, often admirers of the genius, and even adherents to the opinions of Carlyle, continued

still to deplore the form of their expression, and sometimes to declare roundly that all their interested and approving study of his works had not even yet reconciled them to his 'jargon.' The young men of the period, or those of them who were growing up into Carlyle's public, were not of course partakers with their seniors in this holy horror, but they could not help being to some extent impressed by it. The fascination which he exercised over them was extraordinary; one despairs of ever making it intelligible to the youth of a generation for whom Carlyle's proportions though imposing are no longer heroic: but there was always a guilty after-feeling about their enthusiasm for him, and they indulged it privily, like a secret vice. Their consciousness of absolute surrender to this 'corrupter of pure English' cost them frequent searchings of heart. Many a time and oft did they ask themselves, whether it might not be the novelty and originality of Carlyle's matter which made them not merely tolerate, but fancy that they delighted in, the 'jargon' in which it was written, and whether, therefore, when the attraction of the matter ceased for them, the 'jargon' might not become detestable? Time has answerered their question for them; and the doubts which disturbed the youth of twenty no longer trouble him who has 'come to fifty year.' The novelty of Carlyle's writings has long since disappeared; all of their supposedly didactic, and much even of their hortatory, influence is extinct; but their charm is imperishable, and the belief once so confidently declared that no prose literature which did not conform to correct and classic models could hope to stand the test of time has thus far derived no confirmation from the case of Carlyle.

We can still see and admit that there was an element of reason in the fears of our parents, and an element of truth in their contention; but we can now also discern the due limits both of the one and of the other. There was ground for the apprehension that the literary example of Carlyle would be mischievous, and, in so far as he has found imitators, it has so proved. But such imitators

have been almost invariably mere mimics of his mannerisms, with no thoughts of their own to express, nor probably any natural manner of their own to spoil by the affectation; and the Carlylian style is too distinctively shaped and coloured by the Carlylian individuality to tempt any writer with an individuality of his own to adopt it. English prose, in short, appears on the whole to be much what it would have been if Carlyle had never lived; he has made not a hundredth part of the impression on it that it received, for instance, from Macaulay. There was justice again in the contention that that prose style of ours which has been slowly perfecting itself throughout the two centuries that have passed since the day of Dryden, is the best possible mould in which the historian can cast his narrative, or the philosopher his thoughts. Carlyle wherever he has a commonplace tale to tell is himself the witness; he has proved the point over many a long dry tract of his *Frederick*, where the jerky emphasis of his manner of narrating what could not be narrated too unemphatically, becomes a mere weariness to the flesh. But this contention of his censors overlooks the fact that rules without exceptions are as rare in literature as in life, and that to a genius of exceptional and indeed unique character rules of style must bend. It fails to recognise that—in the literary art at any rate—the claim of symmetry, of formal beauty, though great, is not paramount, but that the *adequacy* of the medium of expression to the thing to be expresssed, must always be the first consideration. For so many-sided and many-coloured a genius as Carlyle's with his throng of commanding faculties—his fiery eloquence, his rugged pathos, his grim and caustic humour, his unrivalled talent for word-portraiture and picturesque description—all struggling, sometimes almost simultaneously, to express themselves, there was but one possible language—the Carlylese. And whatever may happen to the 'claim of style,' whatever may become of the 'dignity of history,' we may be sure that so long as eloquence, and pathos, and humour, and vivid portraiture and picturesque description retain their power to

move and delight mankind, Carlyle's place in the admiration of posterity will be secure.

It would be superfluous in this place, I think, to attempt anything like a complete biography of Carlyle, in however condensed a form. The main incidents of his life, and in particular the history of his middle and later years, must be already too familiar to most readers not only from Mr. Froude's pages, but from the flood of studies, sketches, letters, reminiscences, and the like, which has poured forth in such unbroken volume since his death. It will be more to the purpose of an introduction to the first volume of this new edition of his works, to confine myself mainly to such details of the author's life as are to be gathered from those passages of *Sartor Resartus*, which can with reasonable certainty be identified as autobiographical. In a sense, no doubt, it might be said that this remarkable work—by some admirers regarded as the greatest, and by none denied to be the most characteristic, of all his writings—is autobiographical from first to last. It is unquestionably a minute and faithful history of Carlyle's intellectual and spiritual experiences, which, of course, is the main thing. There can be no doubt, for instance, that Pedagogy (Book II., chap. iii.) records the author's bitter memories of what he deemed his perverse and unintelligent schooling, and barren University course. We know as a fact, that the three great chapters in this same Book II. 'The Everlasting No,' 'Centre of Indifference,' and 'The Everlasting Yea,' give the history of the shipwreck of his early faith, his fierce struggle in the waters of blank materialism, and his ultimate winning to that bleak, but at least habitable, island of the Stoics whereon he spent the remainder of his days. We know, or believe ourselves to know the exact date and place of these memorable wrestlings; that their crisis occurred in the month of June 1821, in Edinburgh (the so-called 'French Capital' of Book II., chap. vii.) and that the *Rue Saint-Thomas d'Enfer*, in which the wrestler 'shook base fear away from him for ever,' is no other than Leith Walk in that city.

So too, we can plausibly identify the days of his schoolmastership at Kirkcaldy; and the probable or possible original of 'Blumine,' the heroine of the exquisite chapter entitled 'Romance,'—that solitary meadow, green and sunlit, that breaks the stern mountain scenery of the Third Book—has been it seems discovered in the person of Miss Gordon, an ex-pupil of Edward Irving's. We can trace his earliest introduction to London society, and his discontent with it; we can find a distinct enough adumbration of his mother in Gretchen Futteral, if little or none of his father in Andreas; and, indeed, it is likely enough, I suppose, that an acute and diligent student of *Sartor Resartus*, with a biography at hand for constant reference, might be able to track Carlyle under the disguise of Herr Von Teufelsdröckh along the highway of life, past all those sixteen year-stones which divide the Edinburgh student days of 1818 from the date of the first startling apparition of *Sartor* in Fraser's Magazine for November 1833.

But it must of course be borne in mind that any strict parallelism between the author and his creation is not to be expected. With his head full of German literature and thought—the only subject on which for several years past he had been able to obtain a hearing in the London periodical press, it was natural enough that Carlyle should have made an imaginary German Professor the vehicle of his opinions. But to have 'stood' for the portrait in every detail would have defeated his own purpose, since it would have made it impossible for him without the appearance of undue egotism to enlarge as admiringly as, both for didactic and artistic reasons, he required to do on the moral attractions and intellectual powers of the author of the Clothes Philosophy. Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that, for instance, in the following criticism of the Professor's literary style, he was humorously 'posing' Thomas Carlyle as the model for his portrait of Diogenes von Teufelsdröckh:—

'In respect of style our Author manifests the same genial capability, marred too often by the same rudeness, inequality, and apparent want of

intercourse with the higher classes. Occasionally, as above hinted, we find consummate vigour, a true inspiration; his burning thoughts step forth in fit burning words, like so many full-formed Minervas, issuing amid flame and splendour from Jove's head; a rich, idiomatic diction, picturesque allusions, fiery poetic emphasis, or quaint tricksy turns; all the graces and terrors of a wild Imagination, wedded to the clearest Intellect, alternate in beautiful vicissitude. Were it not that sheer sleeping and soporific passages; circumlocutions, repetitions, touches even of pure doting jargon, so often intervene!'

'On the whole,' he continues,—and here the keen and caustic analysis discloses itself even more obviously as self-criticism,—'Professor Teufelsdröckh is not a cultivated writer.'

'Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs; the remainder are in quite angular attitudes, buttressed-up by props (of parentheses and dashes), and ever with this or the other tagrag hanging from them; a few even sprawl-out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered.'

Fascinating however as the hunt for autobiographical touches in *Sartor Resartus* may be to the reader of to-day, it had of course no interest for the reader of sixty years ago. *He* was thrown back on the thought, the poetry, the humour, the general drift and purpose of the book, and he had to make what he could of it in that way. In many cases probably the unfortunate man endeavoured to read it 'for the story,' though if the effect of attacking Sir Charles Grandison in that spirit would have been as Johnson held, to drive the student to suicide, the study of *Sartor Resartus* on the same principle would assuredly seem the path of madness. It may be that a grim sense of the comedy of this mystification led Carlyle to exaggerate his obscurity, perversity, eccentricity, of malice prepense. He had as we know an immense admiration for Sterne, and the notion of applying the method of 'Tristram Shandy' on a cosmic scale so to speak, may well have jumped with his sardonic humour. And that, no doubt, is why to the genuine lovers not merely of the dramatically comic in Sterne's masterpiece (which is his sole attraction for most readers), but of the subjectively fantastic in Sterne himself

(which is not near so extensively appreciated), the very manner and arrangement of *Sartor Resartus* contribute to its charm.

Its central conception, its *grund-idee*, as Professor Teufelsdröckh would have called it, lends itself with admirable aptitude to the Sternian style of treatment. For the Clothes Philosophy, as formulated by Carlyle, through the mouth of the Professor, affords perpetual opportunities of the abruptest transit from the infinitely great to the infinitesimally little. The constant suggestion of gigantic incongruity—its perpetual temptation to the author, after lifting his reader into the transcendental empyrean, suddenly to 'dump him down' on the flattest flats of the earthly-ignoble world, has often proved irresistible to many a lesser humorist than Carlyle. But, with him it is never resisted: nor can any judicious critic desire that it should be. For, even if we were to deduct from *Sartor Resartus* the pure poetic, the pure picturesque, the eloquence, passion, and profoundity with which the book abounds, it would still remain a monument of 'world-humour,' such as has been rarely raised in such Titanic dimensions in the world's history. This would be so, even if the humoristic treatment of the idea were less richly imaginative than it is. To have carried the 'Clothes Philosophy from earth to heaven—from the uniform of the Dandiacal Body' to the *lebendiges Kleid der Gottheit*; to have traced the principle of the symbolic from its highest to its lowest manifestations, and to have so displayed all matter as the mere vesture of spirit that the mind at once recognises the essential affinity between the visible Cosmos and the beadle's cocked hat—this was an achievement in the transcendental-humorous, which in itself deserves to be held in everlasting remembrance, not only in the record of literature, but in the history of human thought.

How could such a thesis have been methodically treated? If its treatment had not partaken of the vast incongruity of the subject it would have been artistically amiss. Worthy, but too serious souls have striven, and will no doubt for ever strive to find in

Sartor Resartus a consistent and continuously developed 'argument'; but in vain! You may construct a theory of the matter which will carry you along for a time; but it will 'throw' you in the end. Book II. for instance, contains no doubt the fairly straightforward and consecutive 'Story of a Soul,'—Carlyle's or another's, in all probability Carlyle's; and encouraged by its coherence a sanguine reader attacks the third and last Book, in full belief that here at least 'the bearing' of the Professor's 'remarks' will be found to 'lie in the application of them.' But alas! the Professor is 'neither to hold nor to bind.' After three chapters of sufficiently plain sailing on the decay of creeds and churches, Teufelsdröckh is off in Chapter IV. in hot pursuit of a Socialistic hare. In the fifth he is eloquently describing the rise of a new Society, Phœnix-like, from the ashes of the old, and in the Sixth he is in Monmouth Street moralising over its cast clothes! Then, in the next chapter but one to that masterpiece of solemnly sustained burlesque, we are being borne along through the wonderful chapter on 'Natural Supernaturalism' to its magnificent close, perhaps the grandest and most awe-inspired exercise on the everlasting theme 'O World, O Life, O Time!' that exists in human language. And then—well then, within three pages, we are revelling in the broad buffoonery of 'The Dandiacal Body,' and the sardonic irony of the plea for Tailors. After which—Chapter the Last and Farewell.

No! Let the commentator too enamoured of method desist from his useless labours and leave *Sartor Resartus* to stand for what it is—a fantastic but splendid rhapsody, laden with thought, glowing with imagination and passion, pungent with irony; to the prosaic a stumbling-block, and to the humourless foolishness, but to all who bring to the reading of it some slight share of its own qualities an unfailing source of spiritual refreshment and intellectual delight.

H. D. TRAILL.

SARTOR RESARTUS