

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Books of enduring scholarly value

History

The books reissued in this series include accounts of historical events and movements by eye-witnesses and contemporaries, as well as landmark studies that assembled significant source materials or developed new historiographical methods. The series includes work in social, political and military history on a wide range of periods and regions, giving modern scholars ready access to influential publications of the past.

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 10 contains his social commentary *Past and Present*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection will bring back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

The Works of Thomas Carlyle

VOLUME 10:
PAST AND PRESENT

EDITED BY HENRY DUFF TRAILL



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108022330

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2010

This edition first published 1897

This digitally printed version 2010

ISBN 978-1-108-02233-0 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

Cambridge University Press wishes to make clear that the book, unless originally published by Cambridge, is not being republished by, in association or collaboration with, or with the endorsement or approval of, the original publisher or its successors in title.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CENTENARY EDITION

THE WORKS OF
THOMAS CARLYLE
IN THIRTY VOLUMES

VOL. X

PAST AND PRESENT

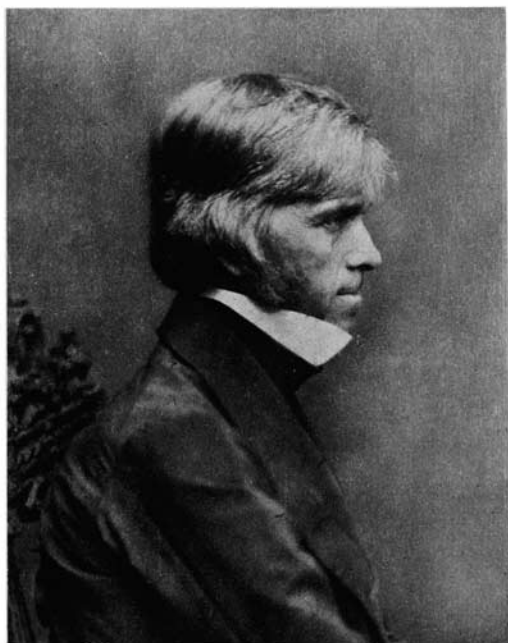
Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)



From a photograph taken 31st July, 1854.

Ever yours
T. Carlyle

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THOMAS CARLYLE

PAST AND PRESENT

IN ONE VOLUME

Ernst ist das Leben

SCHILLER

LONDON
CHAPMAN AND HALL
LIMITED

1897

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Originally published 1843

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| INTRODUCTION | PAGE ix |
|------------------------|------------|

BOOK I

PROEM

| | | |
|--|--|----|
| CHAP. | | |
| I. MIDAS | | 1 |
| II. THE SPHINX | | 7 |
| III. MANCHESTER INSURRECTION | | 14 |
| IV. MORRISON'S PILL | | 23 |
| V. ARISTOCRACY OF TALENT | | 27 |
| VI. HERO-WORSHIP | | 33 |

BOOK II

THE ANCIENT MONK

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| I. JOCELIN OF BRAKELOND | 39 |
| II. ST. EDMUNDBURY | 46 |
| III. LANDLORD EDMUND | 50 |
| IV. ABBOT HUGO | 57 |
| V. TWELFTH CENTURY | 62 |
| VI. MONK SAMSON | 66 |
| VII. THE CANVASSING | 73 |
| VIII. THE ELECTION | 76 |

a 2

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

vi PAST AND PRESENT

| CHAP. | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| IX. ABBOT SAMSON | 84 |
| X. GOVERNMENT | 90 |
| XI. THE ABBOT'S WAYS | 94 |
| XII. THE ABBOT'S TROUBLES | 99 |
| XIII. IN PARLIAMENT | 104 |
| XIV. HENRY OF ESSEX | 106 |
| XV. PRACTICAL-DEVOTIONAL | 110 |
| XVI. ST. EDMUND | 118 |
| XVII. THE BEGINNINGS | 126 |

BOOK III

THE MODERN WORKER

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| I. PHENOMENA | 136 |
| II. GOSPEL OF MAMMONISM | 144 |
| III. GOSPEL OF DILETTANTISM | 150 |
| IV. HAPPY | 153 |
| V. THE ENGLISH | 157 |
| VI. TWO CENTURIES | 166 |
| VII. OVER-PRODUCTION | 170 |
| VIII. UNWORKING ARISTOCRACY | 174 |
| IX. WORKING ARISTOCRACY | 182 |
| X. PLUGSON OF UNDERSHOT | 188 |
| XI. LABOUR | 196 |
| XII. REWARD | 200 |
| XIII. DEMOCRACY | 209 |
| XIV. SIR JABESH WINDBAG | 222 |
| XV. MORRISON AGAIN | 225 |

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CONTENTS

vii

BOOK IV

HOROSCOPE

| CHAP. | PAGE |
|------------------------------------|------|
| I. ARISTOCRACIES | 239 |
| II. BRIBERY COMMITTEE | 252 |
| III. THE ONE INSTITUTION | 257 |
| IV. CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY | 270 |
| V. PERMANENCE | 277 |
| VI. THE LANDED | 282 |
| VII. THE GIFTED | 288 |
| VIII. THE DIDACTIC | 293 |
| SUMMARY | 299 |
| INDEX | 313 |

PORTRAIT OF THOMAS CARLYLE *frontispiece*

From a photograph taken 31st July 1854

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

CARLYLE, it was affirmed in the pages prefatory to the First Volume of this series, 'is neither political prophet nor ethical doctor, but simply a great master of literature who lives for posterity by the art which he despised.' This pronouncement has been challenged in some quarters, as it was inevitable that it should be; but it has, on the whole, been received with a greater amount of assent, express or tacit, than one would have ventured to count upon when the sentence was originally penned. To those who still find it a stumbling-block I would respectfully commend a careful perusal of the volume to which this is the Introduction. Nowhere, as it seems to me, is the contrast between the prophet who has perished and the writer who is immortal more ironically presented to us than in the pages of *Past and Present*. The irony enters into the very title; for it is the Present of Carlyle's description which has now passed so completely away as to carry with it into the limbo of futilities the predictions which he based upon it; while it is the Past of his fond retrospect which his literary genius has made to live again for us with a reality to which our conceptions of his and even of our own Present seldom attain, and which they hardly ever surpass. In the first six chapters of this volume, which form Book I., and are entitled 'Proem,' as also to a considerable extent in Books III. and IV., we have to do with a political pessimist who mistook a passing phase of trouble in the history of a nation for a crisis, probably a fatal crisis, in its fortunes; and his boding prophecies, stormily eloquent, grimly humorous as is the form of their expression, are marred for us of to-day by an ever-present consciousness of their subsequent falsification. But in Book II. the preacher

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

x PAST AND PRESENT

and teacher retire into the background, the unrivalled master of historical narrative, the magical rebuilders of the past, assume their places, and the result appears in a picture of mediæval monasticism which will live as long as anything that Carlyle ever wrote. More than one professed romancer of the highest genius has dealt with the cloistral life; and the quaint mixture of nobility and *naïveté*, of dignity and childishness, of the pathetic and the absurd, which meets one in the typical monkish character, has attracted poets and humorists in all ages. But none among them has ever done fuller justice to it than the author of the wonderful sketch of Abbot Samson and the St. Edmundsbury monks. Perhaps if one were challenged to name ten pages in which Carlyle has most brilliantly exhibited the whole array of those gifts by virtue of which he makes history live again, one would do well to seek them, not in the dramatic pages of the *French Revolution*, but in the two short chapters of *Past and Present* wherein he describes the canvassing for the new Abbot of St. Edmundsbury, and the final election of Samson *Subsacrista* to that exalted office. The preliminary chattering of the monks among themselves; the despatch of the thirteen delegate electors to Henry II. at Waltham; their journey thither; and the formidable figure, dashed in with a few strokes, of the great King himself—it is all done in Carlyle's inimitable manner, with that force and truth and humour and swift unerring touch that marks his handling of any historic incident which had once taken hold of his imagination. Jocelin of Brakelond's narrative, is his sole authority throughout; but how vividly do the figures stand out on the faded tapestry of the monkish chronicler! And when at last the names of the competing candidates are one by one struck off, and the electors make their final unexpected presentment of the *Subsacrista*, how intensely real is the scene which follows!—

'The King's Majesty, looking at us somewhat sternly, then says: "You present to me Samson; I do not know him: had it been your Prior, whom I do know, I should have accepted him: however, I will

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

xi

now do as you wish. But have a care of yourselves. By the true eyes of God, *per veros oculos Dei*, if you manage badly, I will be upon you!" Samson, therefore, steps forward, kisses the King's feet; but swiftly rises erect again, swiftly turns towards the altar, uplifting with the other Twelve, in clear tenor-note, the Fifty-first Psalm, "*Miserere mei Deus*,

After thy loving-kindness, Lord,
Have mercy upon me;"

with firm voice, firm step and head, no change in his countenance whatever. "By God's eyes," said the King, "that one, I think, will govern the Abbey well."

And admirably, as we all know, is his government described in Book II. of this volume. We follow the history of the good Abbot's administration—its struggles, reforms, pieties, with the same strange sense of reality and nearness that we feel in reading of his election; and it is all too soon for us that Jocelin's Chronicle comes to an end, 'impenetrable time-curtains rush down,' the 'real phantasmagory of St. Edmundsbury plunges into the bosom of the Twelfth Century again,' and 'Monks, Abbot, Hero-worship, Government, Obedience, Cœur de Lion, and St. Edmund's Shrine vanish like "Mirza's Vision," leaving nothing but a mutilated black ruin amid green botanic expanses, and oxen, sheep, and dilettanti pasturing in their places.'

It is with some unwillingness that we pass from this picturesque and romantic episode to the two concluding books, and find ourselves again at hand-grips with professors of the dismal science, commercial capitalists, *laissez-faire* theorists, Plugson of Undershot, Sir Jabesh Windbag, and the rest of Carlyle's favourite bogies. They are all fallen silent—all gone dead to-day, and to fight the battle with them over again gives one, curiously enough, a far more 'phantasmagoric' feeling than that with which one joined in the struggles of Abbot Samson. Yet even now it is impossible not to observe with admiration how, again and again, in isolated passages, in whole chapters, the genius of Carlyle triumphs and preserves the vitality of his perishable materials. The

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02233-0 - The Works of Thomas Carlyle, Volume 10

Edited by Henry Duff Traill

Frontmatter

[More information](#)**xii PAST AND PRESENT**

fifth chapter of the Third Book, the chapter on 'The English,' is a case in point: nothing truer, more inspiring, or at the same time more human, more genially humorous, has ever been written on the national character than this study of John Bull, in all his strength and weakness, his confusions of the mind and his heroisms of the will.

And to distinguish—as it is more necessary to do with Carlyle than with any other writer—between merits of subject and those of treatment, we should have, in respect of certain great qualities of its author, to give *Past and Present* a very high place in his works. For unflagging spirit and inexhaustible animation it is surpassed by none of them, and surpasses many: as well it may indeed, seeing that, as Professor Nichol truly observes of it, it is the 'only considerable consecutive book, unless we also except the *Life of Sterling*, which the author wrote without the accompaniment of wrestlings, agonies, and disgusts.' As a matter of fact this volume of upwards of two hundred and fifty pages was completed 'from title-page to colophon,' during the first seven weeks of 1843, actually one of the 'four years of abstruse toil, obscure speculation, futile wrestling and misery,' which, as he afterwards complained, it had cost him to get together his materials for the *Cromwell*. In spite of this formidable preoccupation, he was able to dash off *Past and Present* literally 'at a heat.' But perhaps I should have written 'because' rather than 'in spite,' for it may well have been to the rebound of the bent bow—to the unspeakable relief of being able to exchange distasteful for congenial work—that the pages which follow are indebted for that varying but unceasing play of eloquence, humour, and passion by which they are irradiated from first to last.

H. D. TRAILL.