

Athenæum Press Series

CARLYLE
SARTOR RESARTUS

EDITED BY

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PREFACE.

AMERICA'S part in Carlyle is not small. When he was still, in his own country and among his own people, a prophet without honor and sometimes almost without bread, he received from New England the three things he needed most, — money, literary recognition, and a friend. It is not too much to say that the chance visit of an American proved to be the turning-point in Carlyle's career. To Emerson's memorable voyage of discovery to Craigenputtoch in 1832, the beginnings of Carlyle's worldly prosperity and of his influence on this side of the Atlantic, are directly traceable. But for Emerson's generous admiration of them, Carlyle's earliest works would certainly not have been published in Boston before they had made head in London; and but for the unselfishness and business talent of Concord's philosophical dreamer, the proceeds of the sales might never have reached the rightful owner in Cheyne Row. Not in vain did he "summon all the Yankee" in him, and "multiply and divide like a lion." But money and fame were as dust in the balance, weighed against the treasure of a true friendship. What value Carlyle set upon it is to be seen in almost every page of the Emerson correspondence. Again, in criticism no earlier praise is so just or so ample as Thoreau's. Carlyle's very insult to the Republic in the hour of its extremity, followed as it was at once by

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his earnest desire for reparation, bound him closer to that new world he never saw. When the time came for him to set his house in order, he left to an American university as well as to his own Edinburgh, a token of affectionate regard, an appropriate peace-offering of his books. Since his death, an American man of letters has proved the truest friend of his reputation by putting in the way of every one who cares to make the trial, those personal documents which correct the inadvertent errors, and downright distortions of Carlyle's great biographer and literary executor. It was from an American city, sixty years ago, that the first edition of *Sartor Resartus* issued in book form; and it is not unfitting that from the same city should now come, this, the first attempt to deal systematically with the difficulties the book presents.

The aim of the present edition is threefold: to make a book, which is admitted to be worthy of study, and has the name of being dark, easier of comprehension to the average undergraduate and general reader; to show clearly and in detail the relations between this spiritual autobiography and the actual life of Carlyle, which have hitherto been either vaguely stated or only suspected to exist; and to demonstrate the process by which the book grew. The first intention includes the other two, and is the most important of all. The study of the writings necessary for these two lesser purposes has brought about this desirable result; — the editor has been kept in the background, and the great man has himself furnished the commentary to his own text. Incidentally, the close scrutiny of *Sartor* has brought to light a number of curious errors, such as may befall even a man of genius, when he leans too hard upon the best of

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memories, and writes at a distance from his works of reference. These have been noted in no spirit of vainglory, but with the natural hesitation of the novice on whom it is laid to change places for the moment with his master.

The task of preparing this work, though thoroughly congenial, and taken up lightheartedly enough, proved heavier as it neared completion. Carlyle's course through the world of books is as incalculable as a bee's in a clover-field. He is besides a giant—in seven-league boots; and Hop o' my Thumb's chances of keeping him in sight are not brilliant. Though I have striven to avoid the usual jeers at commentators and their farthing candles, I cannot hope that all readers will find "each dark passage" sufficiently illuminated. There are still a few holes in *Sartor's* coat which remain to be neatly darned, and some regrettable gaps in my information. These are indicated in the hope that more learned critics may fill them up. As I have been forced to work without the aid of a modern, adequate library, my references are not always made to the best or most accessible editions; though they are, I trust, clear and in every case to be relied on. To break a road through new country is rough work, and much may be forgiven the pioneer, if the way he opens up is found to be merely passable.

That the imperfections of this work are not more numerous than they are, is largely due to the kindness of many friends who supplied information or transcribed extracts, or verified references which were inaccessible to me. To my colleagues at Dalhousie my thanks are first due, to Profs. C. MacDonald, J. Johnson, J. Liechti, J. G. MacGregor, W. C. Murray, and H. Murray, also to Prof. W. M. Tweedie of Mt. Allison University, the Rev. Wm. King of Christ

Church, Cambridge, W. C. Desbrisay, Esq., of Ottawa, T. Heath Haviland, Esq., of Charlottetown, P. E. I., and chiefly to Prof. Charles Eliot Norton, who lent me his precious manuscript copy of Carlyle's Journals, and in other ways encouraged this present work; to Prof. G. L. Kittredge whose editorial zeal enabled him to endure the whole corpus of notes at one memorable sitting; to my old friend Dr. F. H. Sykes of the Western University, whose affection has survived the ordeal of reading many proof-sheets; and to one other friend I need not name, who aided in the tedious task of collating texts. The list is too long for any claim of independence, but not for gratitude.

The Glass House, Dutch Village,

HALIFAX, July 26, 1895.

Postscript. I gladly avail myself of the opportunity afforded by a new impression to thank also Prof. J. T. Hatfield, Miss Mary S. Jordan of Smith College, Prof. Tweedie of Mount Allison University, and Prof. Richard Jones of Vanderbilt University for valuable notes and corrections.

A. M.

JUNE 12, 1905.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

IN the year 1830,¹ Carlyle was living with his wife in the lonely moorland farm-house of Craigenputtoch, which is by interpretation, "Hill of the Hawks," on the western border of his native shire, Dumfries. He was no longer young, and neither a successful nor a happy man. The eldest son of a stone-mason, he had followed the usual career of the ambitious Scots peasant, by preparing for the ministry. His father gave him the best education in his power, paying his expenses first at a good academy near home and afterwards at the university of Edinburgh. Though Carlyle acquiesced in the choice of profession made for him by his parents so far as to preach two formal sermons at Divinity Hall, he found at the close of his university career that he was unfitted for the pulpit, and chose the usual alternative, the schoolmaster's desk. He disliked the profession of teaching and soon abandoned it, but his short apprenticeship to the distasteful calling gave him an influential and life-long friend, the only human being he ever saw face to face,

¹ The biographies of Carlyle are so many and so easy to obtain, that I have not thought it well to load my introduction with any biographical facts but those which directly explain the origin of *Sartor*. After Froude's copious work, the best is Dr. Garnett's "Life" in the Great Writers Series (Walter Scott, London). This contains Anderson's invaluable bibliography. Prof. Nichol's memoir (English Men of Letters Series), though meritorious, is not so pleasant in tone, nor so admirably compressed.

whose superiority to himself he in any way recognized. This was the handsome, genial, brilliant Edward Irving. Although they had met before, they grew intimate only when fate threw them together as village dominies in the quaint little town of Kirkcaldy. Irving was at this time Carlyle's intellectual peer, and the two young men of genius read and studied together, or walked and talked endlessly along the pleasant sands beside the sea. Their ways soon parted. Irving, who was rising rapidly into notice, went to Glasgow to be assistant to Dr. Chalmers. His translation to London in 1821,¹ marked an epoch in the life of his obscure friend, as well as in his own. Irving became the fashionable preacher of the metropolis; and it was at his instance that Carlyle first visited the city which was to be his home for half his life. A Mrs. Buller, whose sister had been attracted to the Caledonian Chapel by Irving's preaching, asked him to recommend a tutor for her sons. Like a true Scot, he remembered his countryman; and the young Bullers had the good fortune to have for tutor perhaps the most remarkable man of his age in Great Britain. This was the second position of the kind Carlyle had undertaken and by far the more agreeable. The English boys were not only clever but well-mannered and affectionate. Charles, the elder, was destined to assist in giving England's greatest colony responsible government and to die on the threshold of a wider fame. Tutor and pupil became friends to the benefit of both. To a man of Carlyle's simple habits, £200 a year was riches. The first use he made of his wealth was to pay for his brother John's education and to assist the rest of the family in every possible way. Contact with the refinement of the Bullers and their friends was good for the raw peasant scholar; but for several reasons he resigned his position after a tenure of two years.

¹ *Rem.*, II, 99 and n.

He was now twenty-nine years of age, without a profession, trade, or means of livelihood. As a student, he had done hack articles for Brewster's *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, and now he turned to literature in the hope of earning his bread. In the years of his tutorship he had studied German and translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. A copy sent to the author won the great man's regard. The work brought him in £180 and encouraged him to proceed. For two years he supported himself by his translations from the German and his articles on German literature. But his youth was slipping away. He was known only to a small circle as an eccentric and impracticable man of genius, which by no means accorded with his vast ambition. He suffered constantly from a painful but not dangerous disease. He was at war with himself, as his journals testify. At this time he married.

His friendship with Irving had paved the way for another and closer relationship. When Irving was master in Haddington Academy, he became deeply interested in Jane Baillie Welsh, the beautiful and clever daughter of a country surgeon of good family and sterling character. He was fresh from college and she was a mere child. His position as her tutor in her father's house favored the growth of intimacy, though neither of them seems to have known the real state of their feelings for each other. From Haddington Irving went to Kirkcaldy and there drifted into an engagement with the minister's daughter, Miss Isabella Martin. As time went on, he found that he had mistaken his feelings towards both women. To his betrothed wife he was indifferent; it was his quondam pupil who had his heart. He tried to free himself from his entanglement; but the Martins held him to his plighted word, and Jane Welsh, though she returned his love passionately, would not listen to him as long as his engagement lasted. The affair ended in Irving's

loveless marriage with the woman to whom he was bound in honor, to the ruin of his own happiness and that of the woman he loved. At first Carlyle's relation to the three was that of the friend, or mere bystander. He did not know the real state of the case till shortly before his marriage. In 1821, on a visit to Haddington with Irving, Carlyle met his future wife. With her keen insight, she soon divined his genius; but she was repelled by his rustic manners, and the rough strength of his character. Their first step towards intimacy was a literary correspondence which seems to have been carried on without any great break from their first meeting till their marriage. Miss Welsh was ambitious, and with Carlyle she had far more in common than with Irving. The story of their courtship has never been given to the world; but Mr. Froude has told us that there were rubs in its course. One episode was the interference of a friend, and another a lover's quarrel which almost ended in a final estrangement. The "taming of the mocking-bird" took time. Before he met Miss Welsh, Carlyle had been drawn to at least one woman; and it may be said without fear of contradiction that he could not possibly have made any woman happy. Still, there can be no doubt that he loved his wife with all the intensity of his fervid nature. The loss of her at the crowning moment of his life left him a broken man, and gave to our literature the record of a remorse as deep and heart-shaking as Lear's last agony over Cordelia. No merely imagined tragedy is darker than the true tale of his unwitting offence, the dramatic conjunction of his greatest triumph with his greatest loss, and his finding no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

At first, however, in spite of their narrow means and uncertain prospects, the skies were fair. The first year of married life¹ was spent in Edinburgh, in a comfortable, well-

¹ They were married at Templand on October 17th, 1826.

furnished house, with a certain amount of society; and then from motives of economy, they removed to Craigenputtock, a property of Mrs. Carlyle's in the wilds of Dumfries. Carlyle had hoped that marriage would work some sweeping change in his health and spirits; but in this he was disappointed, as he was in the hope of various university chairs at St. Andrews, Edinburgh, and London. In a mood almost of despair, he settled down in his "Dunscore Patmos" to read and meditate and write and make a way for himself in literature. At Comley Bank, his Edinburgh residence, he had begun a novel which he threw aside at the seventh chapter. The acceptance of an occasional article kept the wolf from the door; and from time to time, their friends supplied them with various necessities of life. Carlyle spent his day in his study, or wandered solitary over the moors afoot or on horseback. His young wife slaved at the housekeeping, lonelier than he. An occasional visitor broke the gray monotony of their lives; but no two people in Britain lived more retired. Crusoe, on the Island of Desolation, was hardly more completely shut out from his kind.

In the journal, that refuge of the lonely and impulsive, Carlyle found a vent for his surcharged heart; and in 1829 resumed irregular entries in a book he had already used for the same purpose. The death of his sister Margaret in June, 1830, doubtless set his mind powerfully at work. "Often I think of many solemn and sad things which, indeed, I do not wish to forget,"¹ he writes his mother in this year. The month of September was particularly rich in the harvest of thought. About the 12th, he notes: "I am going to write — Nonsense. It is on 'Clothes.' Heaven be my comforter." On October 19th, he writes to his brother: "For myself here I am leading the stillest life; musing amid the pale sunshine, or rude winds of October Tirl-the-

¹ *Letts.*, 172.

trees, when I go walking in this almost ghastly solitude; and for the rest, writing with impetuosity. . . . What I am writing at is the strangest of all things: begun as an Article for *Fraser*; then found to be too long (except it were divided into two); now sometimes looking almost as if it would swell into a Book. A very singular piece, I assure you! It glances from Heaven to Earth and back again in a strange satirical frenzy; whether *fine* or not remains to be seen. . . .

"*Teufelsdröck* (that is the title of my present *Schrift*) will be done (so far — fifty pages) to-morrow."¹ Ten days later he is able to record its completion.

The article in this form was sent soon after to *Fraser*, but not accepted, perhaps not even read; for by February, 1831, Carlyle has his "long paper entitled *Thoughts on Clothes*" back and is busy recasting and expanding it into book form. "I can devise," he writes his brother John, "some more biography for *Teufelsdröck*; give a second deeper part, in the same vein, leading through Religion and the nature of Society, and Lord knows what. Nay, that very 'Thoughts,' slightly altered would itself make a little volume first."² This would seem to show that Book I of *Sartor* is the original "long paper," that the devising of "more biography" resulted in Book II, and the "second deeper part in the same vein" is Book III. From February till the end of July³ he is busy with the book, and by August 4th he is able to start for London with the completed manuscript. But the booksellers would have none of it, and after hawking it about among the leading publishers for some six weeks, Carlyle went home and laid the book aside for two years. Probably no changes were made in the text, in the interval, for Carlyle was now very busy with his great essays. Then, in November, 1833, the first four chapters

¹ *Lett.*, 173 f.

² *Ibid.*, 183.

³ *Ibid.*, 191, 212, 213, 221.

were printed in *Fraser*. The last instalment came out in August, 1834. In January and June it did not appear. For it, the author records, he received £82, 1 s., and fifty-eight "really readable copies of 107 pages"¹ struck off from the magazine types, which he distributed among friends north of the Tweed. Few of them were even courteous enough to acknowledge the receipt of it; and on the general reading public it made no impression, except repulsion and disgust. Mrs. Carlyle pronounced it "A work of genius, dear." But she was almost alone in her opinion. Father O'Shea in Cork, and Emerson in Concord, were apparently the only other persons in the world who saw anything in the book. To the American admirer belongs the honor of bringing out the real *editio princeps* anonymously in 1836 with a laudatory preface by Le Baron Russell. Though Emerson shore *Sartor* of the capitals wherein his heart delighted, he made a good bargain with the publishers, and saw that Carlyle received every dollar of his dues.² The first English edition did not appear till two years later, and a third was not needed for more than another decade. Before Carlyle's death, a popular edition of 30,000 copies had been printed and sold. The text was very correctly printed in *Fraser*; and between the first form of the book and the last, only the fewest changes have been made. The present edition reproduces the text of 1874, with a few corrections which are indicated in the notes.

II.

"The first genesis of *Sartor* I remember well enough and the very spot (at Templand) where the notion of astonishment at Clothes first struck me,"³ is Carlyle's own account

¹ *Lett.*, 442.

² See *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, I, 86, 98, 122, 131. Boston, 1886.

³ *Rem.*, II, 190.

of how the book originated ; but this moment of illumination is plainly a case of unconscious memory. The germ idea, as has been often pointed out, is contained in the *Tale of a Tub*. That Carlyle knew Swift familiarly is indisputable. To his college friends he was known as "Jonathan" and "the Dean," as much from his known liking for Swift's writings as his natural satiric bent; and he recommends the *Tale of a Tub*, by name, to his brother John. To put the matter beyond the shadow of a doubt, Carlyle himself refers, in *Sartor*, to Swift and the passage quoted below.¹

"The worshippers of this deity had also a system of their belief which seemed to turn upon the following fundamental. They held the universe to be a large suit of clothes which invests everything; that the earth is invested by the air; the air is invested by the stars; and the stars are invested by the *Primum Mobile*. Look on this globe of earth, and you will find it to be a very complete and fashionable dress. What is that which some call land but a fine coat faced with green, or the sea but a waistcoat of water-tabby? Proceed to the various works of the creation, you will find how curious journeyman Nature hath been to trim up the vegetable beaux; observe how sparkish a periwig adorns the head of a beech, and what a fine doublet of white satin is worn by the birch. To conclude from all, what is man himself but a microcoat, or rather a complete suit of clothes with all the trimmings? As to the body there can be no dispute, but examine even the acquirements of his mind, you will find them all contribute in their order towards furnishing out an exact dress. To instance no more, is not religion a cloak, honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt, self-love a surtout, vanity a shirt, and conscience a pair of breeches?"² (I omit the drastic Swiftian conclusion which must have found favor in the

¹ Bk. III, cap. xi.

² *Tale of a Tub*, Sect. III.

eyes of the man who wrote Count Zaehdarm's epitaph.) Here undoubtedly is the seed thought which lay chance-sown so long in Carlyle's mind that he had forgotten its existence and when it sprang up and bore fruit a hundred-fold, imagined it to be some spontaneous, self-derived tilth. While this is admitted, there is between the passage in Swift and the completed *Sartor* all the difference between the bushel of seed-corn and the bursting garner. The seed fell in rich soil and it was most assiduously cultivated. A very large part of the book owes nothing at all to Swift. In the second portion, the story of Teufelsdröckh's life, his clothes-philosophy sinks out of sight altogether; and such chapters as the fifth and eighth of the third book are too weighty and earnest to be really part and parcel of what was in the first instance a jest. The influence of Swift's thought is strongest in the first or original portion. The rest is really made up of Carlyle's own experience of life, and his brooding over all problems that can engage the active brain, from the reality of the universe and the existence of God to the condition of the poor and the phenomenon of the man of fashion. The book is to be regarded as the epitome of all that Carlyle thought and felt in the course of the first thirty-five years of his residence on this planet. Many things which he wishes to say that cannot be ranged under any rubric of the philosophy of clothes, such as his criticism of duelling, are, notwithstanding, given room. This position I hope to make good.

Such an explanation of *Sartor* as Mr. Larkin's¹ must be regarded as an exercise of pure fancy, in a line with the old-fashioned allegorical expositions of Scripture, like Dr. Alabaster's sermon on Adam, Sheth, Enosh. If, instead of assuming the book to be an enigma, we simply examine the

¹ Henry Larkin, *Carlyle and the Open Secret of his Life*, caps. i-iv. Lond., 1886.

process by which it grew, light breaks upon us, and its significance becomes unmistakable. The sources of it can be demonstrated to be fourfold. The first in importance is the journal which Carlyle kept at Craigenputtoch from 1828 to 1830. Extracts from this have been printed with grotesque inaccuracy by Mr. Froude in his *Carlyle's Early Life*, and can be consulted there. A much safer authority is a MS. copy in the possession of Professor Norton, which he kindly allowed me to use. The second source is Carlyle's novel *Wotton Reinfred*, which never got beyond the seventh chapter. From this not only were many long passages transferred bodily to *Sartor*, but also the main outlines of the love-story in Book Second. His essays form the third source, notably the *Signs of the Times*.¹ *Characteristics*,² also contains much of *Sartor's* thought. The fourth source is his translations from the German; and this is not a scanty stream. It is, however, of less importance than those mentioned. From Goethe he gets fundamental thought, it is true, but from Richter, Schiller, Musaeus, Tieck and Hoffmann, he takes chiefly ornamental phrases, and illustrations. All those I have discovered are indicated in the Notes. In many cases the thought is found moulded into two or three different shapes before it takes the final impress of Carlyle's signet in *Sartor*.³ His use of his material is characteristically "canny." No good thing is allowed to pass unused, nothing is wasted, and many places show the labor of the file. Often his borrowings were simply held in his wonderful memory and set down unwittingly; but again, the process was distinctly conscious. Long extracts are copied word for word from *Wotton Reinfred*,—notably the account of Teufelsdröckh's meeting with Blumine and

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, No. 98 (1829), and *Essays*, II, 135-162.

² *Ibid.*, No. 108 (1831), and *Essays*, III, 5-49.

³ See I, 19, n. and *passim*.

Towgood on their wedding-journey. In this case the patching is clumsy. Teufelsdröckh cannot ride up the mountain-road which is still practicable for a barouche-and-four. And why should the wedding-party be bound south for England? The passage fits into its context in *Wotton Reinfred*, but torn from it only shows the author's haste and that the end forgot the beginning. Carlyle's task from February to August in 1831 was drawing into the compass of a single volume all the best that he had thought in his past life.

III.

The statement made by Carlyle that nothing in *Sartor* is true, "symbolical myth all," has been repeated by Mr. Froude¹ and other biographers, in spite of the fact that Carlyle contradicts himself. The only fact he admits as biographical is the famous episode in the Rue St. Thomas de l'Enfer, otherwise Leith Walk; but in the same work Carlyle confesses to various other facts which are more than "symbolical," such as his first day at school.² Indeed, even brief and limited research makes it clear that a very large meaning must be attached to the term, "symbolical myth," and I do not hesitate to say that the title "Life and Opinions of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh" is simply the usual innocent device of authors to avoid taking the public openly into their confidence, when their books are of an intimate and personal character, like Mrs. Browning's "Sonnets from the Portuguese." This has, heretofore, been generally suspected; it can now be clearly proven. *Sartor* is not only the epitome of all that Carlyle had thought; it contains the fine essence of all that he had felt.

The first draft of *Sartor* was the novel *Wotton Reinfred*. This was begun in January, 1827, in the first months of

¹ *C. E. L.*, I, 103.

² *Rem.*, I, 46.

Carlyle's wedded life, and finally thrown aside about June 4th of the same year. His letters¹ of this time show how hard he worked at it, and what an interest Mrs. Carlyle took in it. The statement that it was given wholly to the flames cannot be correct, for it has been since published. While it is not interesting in itself, it is of the utmost importance for the student of *Sartor* and of Carlyle's literary methods. This will be plain from a glance at its contents. The book consists of seven chapters, which are carefully finished and ready for the press. The hero is a young man of morose temperament who has been crossed in love. The object of his devotion, Jane Montagu, has been carried off by a "tiger-ape" of an Indian officer; and the unhappy lover is plunged into the deepest despair. In the first chapter his friend is trying to bring him to reason, and prescribes a visit to a certain physician of souls, called Moseley.

The second chapter gives Wotton's history to the time of his unfortunate love-affair. He has been brought up in a secluded part of the country by his mother, a truly religious woman. At school he is bullied by the other boys and nicknamed "weeping Wotton," till he thrashes one of his tormentors. The death of a little sister makes a deep impression upon his shy, sensitive nature, and increases his natural tendency to sadness. In due course, he attends the university in a distant city, where he reads much, especially mathematics. He finds his fellow-collegians uncongenial, and repels all advances by his reserved and sarcastic manner. There is also little in the university system of discipline and instruction for him to admire. Thrown back thus upon himself, he thinks much on the fundamental problems of life, studies the skeptical writers of modern France, and begins to doubt the creed in which he has been brought up. He ends in blank unbelief, and something

¹ *Lett.*, 20, 23, 32, 45 f.