

CHAPTER VI

THE MINOTAUR

[1853-1866]

CARLYLE was now engaged on a work which required, received, and wellnigh exhausted all his strength, resulting in the greatest though the least generally read of all his books. *Cromwell* achieved, he had thrown himself for a season into contemporary politics, condescending even, contrary to his rule, to make casual contributions to the Press; but his temper was too hot for success in that arena, and his letters of the time are full of the feeling that the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* had set the world against him. None of his generous replies to young men asking his advice are more suggestive than that in which he writes from Chelsea (March 9th 1850):—

If my books teach you anything, don't mind in the least whether other people believe it or not; but lay it to heart . . . as a real message left with you, which you must set about fulfilling, whatever others do. . . . And be not surprised that "people have no sympathy with you." That is an accompaniment that will attend you all your days if you mean to live an earnest life.

But he himself, though "ever a fighter," felt that, even for him, it was not good to be alone. He decided there "was no use railing in vain like Timon"; he would go back again

from the present to the past, from the latter days of discord to seek countenance in some great figure of history, under whose ægis he might shelter the advocacy of his views. Looking about for a theme, several crossed his mind. He thought of Ireland, but that was too burning a subject; of William the Conqueror, of Simon de Montfort, the Norsemen, the Cid; but these may have seemed to him too remote. Why, ask patriotic Scotsmen, did he not take up his and their favourite Knox? But Knox's life had been fairly handled by M'Crie, and Carlyle would have found it hard to adjust his treatment of that essentially national "hero" to the "Exodus from Houndsditch." "Luther" might have been an apter theme; but there too it would have been a strain to steer clear of theological controversy, of which he had had enough. Napoleon was at heart too much of a gamin for his taste. Looking over Europe in more recent times, he concluded that the Prussian monarchy had been the main centre of modern stability, and that it had been made so by its virtual creator, Friedrich II., called the Great. Once entertained, the subject seized him as with the eye of Coleridge's mariner, and, in spite of manifold efforts to get free, compelled him, so that he could "not choose but" write on it. Again and again, as the magnitude of the task became manifest, we find him doubting, hesitating, recalcitrating, and yet captive. He began reading Jomini, Preuss, the king's own Memoirs and Despatches, and groaned at the mountains through which he had to dig. "Prussian Friedrich and the Pelion laid on Ossa of Prussian dry-as-dust lay crushing me with the continual question, Dare I try it? Dare I not?" At length, gathering himself together for the effort, he resolved, as before in the case of Cromwell, to visit the scenes of which he was to write. Hence the excursion to Germany of 1852, during which, with the kindly-offered guidance of Mr.

Neuberg, an accomplished German admirer of some fortune resident in London, he made his first direct acquaintance with the country of whose literature he had long been himself the English interpreter. The outlines of the trip may be shortly condensed from the letters written during its progress to his wife and mother. Reaching Rotterdam on September 1st, after a night made sleepless by "noisy nocturnal travellers and the most industrious cocks and clamorous bells" he had ever heard, he sailed up the river to Bonn, where he consulted books, saw "Father Arndt," and encountered some types of the German professoriate, "miserable creatures lost in statistics." There he met Neuberg, and they went together to Rolandseck, to the village of Huneſ among the Sieben-Gebirge, and then on to Coblenz. After a detour to Ems, which Carlyle, comminating the gaming-tables, compared to Matlock, and making a pilgrimage to Nassau as the birthplace of William the Silent, they rejoined the Rhine and sailed admiringly up the finest reach of the river. From Mainz the philosopher and his guide went on to Frankfurt, paid their respects to Goethe's statue and the garret where *Werther* was written, the Judengasse, "grimmiest section of the Middle Ages," and the Römer—election hall of the old Kaisers; then to Homburg, where they saw an old Russian countess playing "gowpanfuls of gold pieces every stake," and left after no long stay, Carlyle, in a letter to Scotsbrig, pronouncing the fashionable Badeort to be the "rallying-place of such a set of empty blackguards as are not to be found elsewhere in the world." We find him next at Marburg, where he visited the castle of Philip of Hesse. Passing through Cassel, he went to Eisenach, and visited the neighbouring Wartburg, where he kissed the old oaken table, on which the Bible was made an open book for the German race, and noted the hole in the plaster where

the inkstand had been thrown at the devil and his noises : an incident to which eloquent reference is made in the lectures on "Heroes." Hence they drove to Gotha, and lodged in Napoleon's room after Leipzig. Then by Erfurt, with more Luther memories, they took rail to Weimar, explored the houses of Goethe and of Schiller, and dined by invitation with the Augustenburgs; the Grand Duchess, with sons and daughters, conversing in a Babylonish dialect, a melange of French, English, and German. The next stage seems to have been Leipzig, then in a bustle with the Fair. "However," says Carlyle, "we got a book or two, drank a glass of wine in Auerbach's keller, and at last got off safe to the comparative quiet of Dresden." He ignores the picture galleries; and makes a bare reference to the palaces from which they steamed up the Elbe to the heart of Saxon Switzerland. There he surveyed Lobositz, first battle-field of the Seven Years' War, and rested at the romantic mountain watering-place of Töplitz. "He seems," wrote Mrs. Carlyle, "to be getting very successfully through his travels, thanks to the patience and helpfulness of Neuberg. He makes in every letter frightful *misereres* over his sleeping accommodations; but he cannot conceal that he is really pretty well." The writer's own *misereres* are as doleful and nearly as frequent; but she was really in much worse health. From Töplitz the companions proceeded in weary stillwagens to Zittau in Lusatia, and so on to

Herrnhut, the primitive city of the Moravian brethren : a place not bigger than Annan, but beautiful, pure, and quiet beyond any town on the earth, I daresay; and, indeed, more like a saintly dream of ideal Calvinism made real than a town of stone and lime.

Onward by "dreary moory Frankfurt" on the Oder, whence they reconnoitred "the field of Kunersdorf, a scraggy village where Fritz received his worst defeat," they

reached the Prussian capital on the last evening of the month. From the British Hotel, Unter den Linden, we have, October 1st:—

I am dead stupid ; my heart nearly choked out of me, and my head churned to pieces. . . . Berlin is loud almost as London, but in no other way great . . . about the size of Liverpool, and more like Glasgow.

They spent a week there (sight-seeing being made easier by an introduction from Lady Ashburton to the Ambassador), discovering at length an excellent portrait of Fritz, meeting Tieck, Cornelius, Rauch, Preuss, etc., and then got quickly back to London by way of Hanover, Cologne, and Ostend. Carlyle's travels are always interesting, and would be more so without the tiresome, because ever the same, complaints. Six years later (1858) he made his second expedition to Germany, in the company of two friends, a Mr. Foxton—who is made a butt—and the faithful Neuberg. Of this journey, undertaken with a more exclusively business purpose, and accomplished with greater dispatch, there are fewer notes, the substance of which may be here anticipated. He sailed (August 21st) from Leith to Hamburg, admiring the lower Elbe, and then went out of his way to accept a pressing invitation from the Baron Usedom and his wife to the Isle of Rügen, sometimes called the German Isle of Wight. He went there by Stralsund, liked his hosts and their pleasant place, where for cocks crowing he had doves cooing ; but in Putbus, the Richmond of the island, he had to encounter brood sows as well as cochin-chinas. From Rügen he went quickly south by Stettin to Berlin, then to Cüstrin to survey the field of Zorndorf, with what memorable result readers of *Friedrich* know. His next halt was at Liegnitz, headquarters for exploring the grounds of "Leuthen, the grandest of all the battles," and Molwitz—first of Fritz's fights—of which we hear so

much in the *Reminiscences*. His course lay on to Breslau, "a queer old city as ever you heard of, high as Edinburgh or more so," and, by Landshut, through the picturesque villages of the Riesen-Gebirge into Bohemia. There he first put up at Pardubitz in a vile, big inn, for bed a "trough eighteen inches too short, a mattress forced into it which cocked up at both ends"—such as most travellers in remoter Germany at that period have experienced. Carlyle was unfavourably impressed by the Bohemians; and "not one in a hundred of them could understand a word of German. They are liars, thieves, slatterns, a kind of miserable, subter-Irish people,—Irish with the addition of ill-nature." He and his friends visited the fields of Chotusitz and Kolin, where they found the "Golden Sun," from which "the last of the Kings" had surveyed the ground, "sunk to be the dirtiest house probably in Europe." Thence he made for Prague, whose picturesque grandeur he could not help extolling. "Here," he writes, enclosing the flower to his wife, "is an authentic wild pink plucked from the battle-field. Give it to some young lady who practises the Battle of Prague on her piano to your satisfaction." On September 15th he dates from Dresden, whence he spent a laborious day over Torgau. Thereafter they sped on, with the usual tribulations, by Hochkirk, Leipzig, Weissenfels, and Rossbach. Hurrying homeward, they were obliged to decline another invitation from the Duchess at Weimar; and, making for Guntershausen, performed the fatiguing journey from there to Aix-la-Chapelle in one day, *i.e.* travelling often in slow trains from 4 A.M. to 7 P.M., a foolish feat even for the eupeptic. Carlyle visited the cathedral, but has left a very poor account of the impression produced on him by the simple slab sufficiently inscribed, "Carolo Magno." "Next morning stand upon the lid of Charlemagne,

abominable monks roaring out their idolatrous grand music within sight." By Ostend and Dover he reached home on the 22nd. A Yankee scamper trip, one might say, but for the result testifying to the enormous energy of the traveller. "He speaks lightly," says Mr. Froude, "of having seen Kolin, Torgau, etc. etc. No one would guess from reading these short notices that he had mastered the details of every field he visited; not a turn of the ground, not a brook, not a wood . . . had escaped him. . . . There are no mistakes. Military students in Germany are set to learn Frederick's battles in Carlyle's account of them."

During the interval between those tours there are few events of interest in Carlyle's outer, or phases of his inner life which have not been already noted. The year 1854 found the country ablaze with the excitement of the Crimean War, with which he had as little sympathy as Cobden or Bright or the members of Sturge's deputation. He had no share in the popular enthusiasm for what he regarded as a mere newspaper folly. All his political leaning was on the side of Russia, which, from a safe distance, having no direct acquaintance with the country, he always admired as a seat of strong government, the representative of wise control over barbarous races. Among the worst of these he reckoned the Turk, "a lazy, ugly, sensual, dark fanatic, whom we have now had for 400 years. I would not buy the continuance of him in Europe at the rate of sixpence a century." Carlyle had no more faith in the "Balance of power" than had Byron, who scoffed at it from another, the Republican, side as "balancing straws on kings' noses instead of wringing them off," *e.g.*—

As to Russian increase of strength, he writes, I would wait till Russia meddled with me before I drew sword to stop his increase of strength. It is the idle population of editors, etc., that has done all this in England. One perceives clearly that ministers go forward in it against their will.

Even our heroisms at Alma—"a terrible, almost horrible, operation"—Balaclava, and Inkermann, failed to raise a glow in his mind, though he admitted the force of Tennyson's ringing lines. The alliance with the "scandalous copper captain," elected by the French, as the Jews chose Barabbas,—an alliance at which many patriots winced—was to him only an added disgrace. Carlyle's comment on the subsequent visit to Osborne of Victor Hugo's "brigand," and his reception within the pale of legitimate sovereignty was, "Louis Bonaparte has not been shot hitherto. That is the best that can be said." Sedan brought most men round to his mind about Napoleon III: but his approval of the policy of the Czars remains open to the criticism of M. Lanin. In reference to the next great struggle of the age, Carlyle was in full sympathy with the mass of his countrymen. He was as much enraged by the Sepoy rebellion as were those who blew the ringleaders from the muzzles of guns. "Tongue cannot speak," he exclaims, in the spirit that inspired Millais's picture, before it was amended or spoilt, "the horrors that were done on the English by these mutinous hyænas. Allow hyænas to mutiny and strange things will follow." He never seems to have revolved the question as to the share of his admired Muscovy in instigating the revolt. For the barbarism of the north he had ready apologies, for the savagery of the south mere execration; and he writes of the Hindoos as he did, both before and afterwards, of the negroes in Jamaica.

Three sympathetic obituary notices of the period expressed his softer side. In April 1854, John Wilson and Lord Cockburn died at Edinburgh. His estimate of the former is notable as that generally entertained, now that the race of those who came under the personal spell of Christopher North has passed:—

We lived apart as in different centuries ; though to say the truth I always loved Wilson, he had much nobleness of heart, and many traits of noble genius, but the central tie-beam seemed always wanting ; very long ago I perceived in him the most irreconcilable contradictions—Toryism with Sansculottism, Methodism of a sort with total incredulity, etc. . . . Wilson seemed to me always by far the most gifted of our literary men, either then or still : and yet intrinsically he has written nothing that can endure.

Cockburn is referred to in contrast as “perhaps the last genuinely national type of rustic Scotch sense, sincerity, and humour—a wholesome product of Scotch dialect, with plenty of good logic in it.” Later Douglas Jerrold is described as “last of the London wits, I hope the last.” Carlyle’s letters during this period are of minor interest : many refer to visits paid to distinguished friends and humble relatives, with the usual complaints about health, servants, and noises. At Farlingay, where he spent some time with Edward Fitzgerald, translator of *Omar Khayyam*, the lowing of cows took the place of cocks crowing. Here and there occurs a criticism or a speculation. That on his dreams is, in the days of “insomnia,” perhaps worth noting (F. iv. 154, 155), *inter alia* he says : “I have an impression that one always dreams, but that only in cases where the nerves are disturbed by bad health, which produces light imperfect sleep, do they start into such relief as to force themselves on our waking consciousness.” Among posthumously printed documents of Cheyne Row, to this date belongs the humorous appeal of Mrs. Carlyle for a larger allowance of house money, entitled “Budget of a Femme Incomprise.” The arguments and statement of accounts, worthy of a bank auditor, were so irresistible that Carlyle had no resource but to grant the request, *i.e.* practically to raise the amount to £230, instead of £200 per annum. It has been calculated that his reliable

income even at this time did not exceed £400, but the rent of the house was kept very low, £30: he and his wife lived frugally, so that despite the expenses of the noise-proof room and his German tour he could afford in 1857 to put a stop to her travelling in second-class railway carriages; in 1860, when the success of the first instalment of his great work made an end of financial fears, to keep two servants; and in 1863 to give Mrs. Carlyle a brougham. Few men have left on the whole so unimpeachable a record in money matters.

In November 1854 there occurred an incident hitherto unrecorded in any biography. The Lord Rectorship of the University of Glasgow having fallen vacant, the "Conservative Club" of the year had put forward Mr. Disraeli as successor to the honorary office. A small body of Mr. Carlyle's admirers among the senior students, on the other side, nominated him, partly as a tribute of respect and gratitude, partly in opposition to a statesman whom they then distrusted. The nomination was, after much debate, adopted by the so-called "Liberal Association" of that day; and, with a curious irony, the author of the *Latter-Day Pamphlets* and *Friedrich II.* was pitted, as a Radical, against the future promoter of the Franchise of 1867 as a Tory. It soon appeared that his supporters had underestimated the extent to which Mr. Carlyle had offended Scotch theological prejudice and outraged the current Philanthropy. His name received some sixty adherents, and had ultimately to be withdrawn. The nomination was received by the Press, and other exponents of popular opinion, with denunciations that came loudest and longest from the leaders of orthodox dissent, then arrogating to themselves the profession of Liberalism and the initiation of Reform. Among the current expressions in reference to his social and religious creeds were the following:—

Carlyle's philanthropy is not that of Howard, his cure for national distress is to bury our paupers in peat bogs, driving wooden boards on the top of them. His entire works may be described as reiterating the doctrine that "whatever is wrong." He has thrown off every form of religious belief and settled down into the conviction that the Christian profession of Englishmen is a sham. . . . Elect him and you bid God-speed to Pantheism and spiritualism.¹ Mr. Carlyle neither possesses the talent nor the distinction, nor does he occupy the position which entitle a man to such an honour as the Rectorial Chair. The *Scotch Guardian* writes: But for the folly exhibited in bringing forward Mr. Disraeli, scarcely any party within the College or out of it would have ventured to nominate a still more obnoxious personage. This is the first instance we have been able to discover in which the suffrages of the youth of the University have been sought for a candidate who denied in his writings that the revealed Word of God is "the way, the truth, the life." It is impossible to separate Mr. Carlyle from that obtrusive feature of his works in which the solemn verities of our holy religion are sneered at as worn-out "biblicalities," "unbelievabilities," and religious profession is denounced as "dead putrescent cant." The reader of the *Life of Sterling* is not left to doubt for a moment the author's malignant hostility to the religion of the Bible. In that work, saving faith is described as "stealing into heaven by the modern method of sticking ostrich-like your head into fallacies on earth," that is to say, by believing in the doctrines of the Gospels. How, after this, could the Principal and Professors of the University, the guardians of the faiths and morals of its inexperienced youth, accompany to the Common Hall, and allow to address the students a man who has degraded his powers to the life-labour of sapping and mining the foundations of the truth, and opened the fire of his fiendish raillery against the citadel of our best aspirations and dearest hopes?

In the result, two men of genius²—however diverse—

¹ Mr. Wylie states that "twice before his election by his own University he (Carlyle) had been invited to allow himself to be nominated for the office of Lord Rector, once by students in the University of Glasgow and once by those of Aberdeen: but both of these invitations he had declined." This as regards Glasgow is incorrect.

² For the elucidation of some points of contact between Carlyle and Lord Beaconsfield, *vide* Mr. Froude's *Life* of the latter.

were discarded, and a Scotch nobleman of conspicuous talent, always an active, if not intrusive, champion of orthodoxy, was returned by an "overwhelming majority." In answer to intelligence transmitted to Mr. Carlyle of these events, the president of the Association of his supporters—who had nothing on which to congratulate themselves save that only the benches of the rooms in which they held their meetings had been riotously broken, received the following previously unpublished letter :—

CHELSEA, 16th December 1854.

DEAR SIR—I have received your Pamphlet; and return many thanks for all your kindness to me. I am sorry to learn, as I do for the first time from this narrative, what angry nonsense some of my countrymen see good to write of me. Not being much a reader of Newspapers, I had hardly heard of the Election till after it was finished; and I did not know that anything of this melancholy element of Heterodoxy, "Pantheism," etc. etc., had been introduced into the matter. It is an evil, after its sort, this of being hated and denounced by fools and ignorant persons; but it cannot be mended for the present, and so must be left standing there.

That another wiser class think differently, nay, that they alone have any real knowledge of the question, or any real right to vote upon it, is surely an abundant compensation. If that be so, then all is still right; and probably there is no harm done at all!—To you, and the other young gentlemen who have gone with you on this occasion, I can only say that I feel you have loyally meant to do me a great honour and kindness; that I am deeply sensible of your genial recognition, of your noble enthusiasm (which reminds me of my own young years); and that in fine there is no loss or gain of an Election which can in the least alter these valuable facts, or which is not wholly insignificant to me in comparison with them. "Elections" are not a thing transacted by the gods, in general; and I have known very unbeautiful creatures "elected" to be kings, chief-priests, railway kings, etc., by the "most sweet voices," and the spiritual virtue that inspires these, in our time!

Leaving all that, I will beg you all to retain your honourable

good feelings towards me ; and to think that if anything I have done or written can help any one of you in the noble problem of living like a wise man in these evil and foolish times, it will be more valuable to me than never so many Elections or Non-elections.

With many good wishes and regards I heartily thank you all, and remain—Yours very sincerely,

T. CARLYLE.

Carlyle's letters to strangers are always valuable, for they are terse and reticent. In writing to weavers, like Bamford ; to men in trouble, as Cooper ; to students, statesmen, or earnest inquirers of whatever degree, a genuine sympathy for them takes the place of the sympathy for himself, often too prominent in the copious effusions to his intimates. The letter above quoted is of special interest, as belonging to a time from which comparatively few survive ; when he was fairly under weigh with a task which seemed to grow in magnitude under his gaze. The *Life of Friedrich* could not be a succession of dramatic scenes, like the *French Revolution*, nor a biography like *Cromwell*, illustrated by the surrounding events of thirty years. Carlyle found, to his dismay, that he had involved himself in writing the History of Germany, and in a measure of Europe, during the eighteenth century, a period perhaps the most tangled and difficult to deal with of any in the world's annals. He was like a man who, with intent to dig up a pine, found himself tugging at the roots of an Igdrasil that twined themselves under a whole Hercynian forest. His constant cries of positive pain in the progress of the work are distressing, as his indomitable determination to wrestle with and prevail over it is inspiring. There is no imaginable image that he does not press into his service in rattling the chains of his voluntary servitude. Above all, he groans over the unwieldy mass of his authorities—"anti-solar systems of chaff."

I read old German books dull as stupidity itself—nay superannuated stupidity—gain with labour the dreariest glimpses of unimportant extinct human beings . . . but when I begin operating: *how* to reduce that widespread black desert of Brandenburg sand to a small human garden! . . . I have no capacity of grasping the big chaos that lies around me, and reducing it to order. Order! Reducing! It is like compelling the grave to give up its dead!”

Elsewhere he compares his travail with the monster of his own creation to “Balder’s ride to the death kingdoms, through frozen rain, sound of subterranean torrents, leaden-coloured air”; and in the retrospect of the *Reminiscences* touchingly refers to his thirteen years of rarely relieved isolation. “A desperate dead-lift pull all that time; my whole strength devoted to it . . . withdrawn from all the world.” He received few visitors and had few correspondents, but kept his life vigorous by riding on his horse Fritz (the gift of the Marshalls), “during that book, some 30,000 miles, much of it, all the winter part of it, under cloud of night, sun just setting when I mounted. All the rest of the day I sat, silent, aloft, insisting upon work, and such work, *invitissimâ Minervâ*, for that matter.” Mrs. Carlyle¹ had her usual share of the sufferings involved in “the awful *Friedrich*.” “That tremendous book,” she writes, “made prolonged and entire devastation of any satisfactory semblance of home life or home happiness.” But when at last, by help of

¹ Carlyle himself writes: “I felt well enough how it was crushing down her existence, as it was crushing down my own; and the thought that she had not been at the choosing of it, and yet must suffer so for it, was occasionally bitter to me. But the practical conclusion always was, Get done with it, get done with it! For the saving of us both that is the one outlook. And sure enough, I did stand by that dismal task with all my time and all my means; day and night wrestling with it, as with the ugliest dragon, which blotted out the daylight and the rest of the world to me till I should get it slain.”

Neuberg and of Mr. Larkin, who made the maps of the whole book, the first two volumes were in type (they appeared in autumn 1858), his wife hailed them in a letter sent from Edinburgh to Chelsea: "Oh, my dear, what a magnificent book this is going to be, the best of all your books, forcible, clear, and sparkling as the *French Revolution*; compact and finished as *Cromwell*. Yes, you shall see that it will be the best of all your books, and small thanks to it, it has taken a doing." On which the author naïvely purrs: "It would be worth while to write books, if mankind would read them as you." Later he speaks of his wife's recognition and that of Emerson—who wrote enthusiastically of the art of the work, though much of it was across his grain—as "the only bit of human criticism in which he could discern lineaments of the thing." But the book was a swift success, two editions of 2000 and another of 1000 copies being sold in a comparatively brief space. Carlyle's references to this—after his return from another visit to the north and the second trip to Germany—seem somewhat ungracious:—

Book . . . much babbled over in newspapers . . . no better to me than the barking of dogs . . . officious people put reviews into my hands, and in an idle hour I glanced partly into these; but it would have been better not, so sordidly ignorant and impertinent were they, though generally laudatory.

But these notices recall the fact familiar to every writer, that while the assailants of a book sometimes read it, favourable reviewers hardly ever do; these latter save their time by payment of generally superficial praise, and a few random quotations.

Carlyle scarcely enjoyed his brief respite on being discharged of the first instalment of his book: the remainder lay upon him like a menacing nightmare; he never ceased to feel that the work must be completed ere he could be

free, and that to accomplish this he must be alone. Never absent from his wife without regrets, lamentations, contrite messages, and childlike entreaties for her to "come and protect him," when she came it was to find that they were better apart; for his temper was never softened by success. "Living beside him," she writes in 1858, is "the life of a weathercock in high wind." During a brief residence together in a hired house near Aberdour in Fifeshire, she compares herself to a keeper in a madhouse; and writes later from Sunnybank to her husband, "If you could fancy me in some part of the house out of sight, my absence would make little difference to you, considering how little I do see of you, and how preoccupied you are when I do see you." Carlyle answers in his touching strain, "We have had a sore life pilgrimage together, much bad road. Oh, forgive me!" and sends her beautiful descriptions; but her disposition, not wholly forgiving, received them somewhat sceptically. "Byron," said Lady Byron, "can write anything, but he does not feel it"; and Mrs. Carlyle on one occasion told her "harsh spouse" that his fine passages were very well written for the sake of future biographers: a charge he almost indignantly repudiates. He was then, August 1860, staying at Thurso Castle, the guest of Sir George Sinclair; a visit that terminated in an unfortunate careless mistake about a sudden change of plans, resulting in his wife, then with the Stanleys at Alderley, being driven back to Chelsea and deprived of her promised pleasure and requisite rest with her friends in the north.

The frequency of such incidents,—each apart capable of being palliated by the same fallacy of division that has attempted in vain to justify the domestic career of Henry VIII.,—points to the conclusion of Miss Gully that Carlyle, though often nervous on the subject, acted to his wife as if he were "totally inconsiderate of her health," so much so

that she received medical advice not to be much at home when he was in the stress of writing. In January 1858 he writes to his brother John an anxious letter in reference to a pain about a hand-breadth below the heart, of which she had begun to complain, the premonitory symptom of the disease which ultimately proved fatal ; but he was not sufficiently impressed to give due heed to the warning ; nor was it possible, with his long-engrained habits, to remove the Marah spring that lay under all the wearisome bickerings, repentances, and renewals of offence. The "very little herring" who declined to be made a part of Lady Ashburton's luggage now suffered more than ever from her inanimate rival. The highly-endowed wife of one of the most eminent philanthropists of America, whose life was devoted to the awakening of defective intellects, thirty-five years ago murmured, "If I were only an idiot!" Similarly Mrs. Carlyle might have remonstrated, "Why was I not born a book!" Her letters and journal teem to tiresomeness with the refrain, "I feel myself extremely neglected for unborn generations." Her once considerable ambitions had been submerged, and her own vivid personality overshadowed by a man she was afraid to meet at breakfast, and glad to avoid at dinner. A woman of immense talent and a spark of genius linked to a man of vast genius and imperious will, she had no choice but to adopt his judgments, intensify his dislikes, and give a sharper edge to his sneers.

Mr. Froude, who for many years lived too near the sun to see the sun, and inconsistently defends many of the inconsistencies he has himself inherited from his master, yet admits that Carlyle treated the Broad Church party in the English Church with some injustice. His recorded estimates of the leading theologians of the age, and personal relation to them, are hopelessly bewildering. His long life friendship for Erskine of Linlathen is intelligible, though he did

not extend the same charity to what he regarded as the muddle-headedness of Maurice (Erskine's spiritual inspirer), and keenly ridiculed the reconciliation pamphlet entitled "Subscription no Bondage." The Essayists and Reviewers, "Septem contra Christum," "should," he said, "be shot for deserting their posts"; even Dean Stanley, their *amicus curiæ*, whom he liked, came in for a share of his sarcasm; "there he goes," he said to Froude, "boring holes in the bottom of the Church of England." Of Colenso, who was doing as much as any one for the "Exodus from Houndsditch," he spoke with open contempt, saying, "he mistakes for fame an extended pillory that he is standing on"; and was echoed by his wife, "Colenso isn't worth talking about for five minutes, except for the absurdity of a man making arithmetical onslaughts on the Pentateuch with a bishop's little black silk apron on." This is not the place to discuss the controversy involved; but we are bound to note the fact that Carlyle was, by an inverted Scotch intolerance, led to revile men rowing in the same boat as himself, but with a different stroke. To another broad Churchman, Charles Kingsley, partly from sympathy with this writer's imaginative power, he was more considerate; and one of the still deeply religious freethinkers of the time was among his closest friends. The death of Arthur Clough in 1861 left another blank in Carlyle's life: we have had in this century to lament the comparatively early loss of few men of finer genius. Clough had not, perhaps, the practical force of Sterling, but his work is of a higher order than any of the fragments of the earlier favourite. Among High Churchmen Carlyle commended Dr. Pusey as "solid and judicious," and fraternised with the Bishop of Oxford; but he called Keble "an ape," and said of Cardinal Newman that he had "no more brains than an ordinary-sized rabbit."

These years are otherwise marked by his most glaring political blunder. The Civil War, then raging in America, brought, with its close, the abolition of Slavery throughout the States, a consummation for which he cared little, for he had never professed to regard the negroes as fit for freedom; but this result, though inevitable, was incidental. As is known to every one who has the remotest knowledge of Transatlantic history, the war was in great measure a struggle for the preservation of National Unity: but it was essentially more; it was the vindication of Law and Order against the lawless and disorderly violence of those who, when defeated at the polling-booth, flew to the bowie knife; an assertion of Right as Might for which Carlyle cared everything: yet all he had to say of it was his "Ilias Americana in nuce," published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, August 1863.

Peter of the North (to Paul of the South): "Paul, you unaccountable scoundrel, I find you hire your servants for life, not by the month or year as I do. You are going straight to Hell, you——"

Paul: "Good words, Peter. The risk is my own. I am willing to take the risk. Hire you your servants by the month or the day, and get straight to Heaven; leave me to my own method."

Peter: "No, I won't. I will beat your brains out first!"
[And is trying dreadfully ever since, but cannot yet manage it.]

This, except the *Prinzenraub*, a dramatic presentation of a dramatic incident in old German history, was his only side publication during the writing of *Friedrich*.

After the war ended and Emerson's letters of remonstrance had proved prophetic, Carlyle is said to have confessed to Mr. Moncure Conway as well as to Mr. Froude that he "had not seen to the bottom of the matter." But his republication of this nadir of his nonsense was an offence,

emphasising the fact that, however inspiring, he is not always a safe guide, even to those content to abide by his own criterion of success.

There remains of this period the record of a triumph and of a tragedy. After seven years more of rarely intermitted toil, broken only by a few visits, trips to the seashore, etc., and the distress of the terrible accident to his wife,—her fall on a curbstone and dislocation of a limb,—which has been often sufficiently detailed, he had finished his last great work. The third volume of *Friedrich* was published in May 1862, the fourth appeared in February 1864, the fifth and sixth in March 1865. Carlyle had at last slain his Minotaur, and stood before the world as a victorious Theseus, everywhere courted and acclaimed, his hard-earned rest only disturbed by a shower of honours. His position as the foremost prose writer of his day was as firmly established in Germany, where his book was at once translated and read by all readers of history, as in England. Scotland, now fully awake to her reflected fame, made haste to make amends. Even the leaders of the sects, bond and “free,” who had denounced him, were now eager to proclaim that he had been intrinsically all along, though sometimes in disguise, a champion of their faith. No men knew better how to patronise, or even seem to lead, what they had failed to quell. The Universities made haste with their burnt-offerings. In 1856 a body of Edinburgh students had prematurely repeated the attempt of their forerunners in Glasgow to confer on him their Lord Rectorship, and failed. In 1865 he was elected, in opposition again to Mr. Disraeli, to succeed Mr. Gladstone, the genius of elections being in a jesting mood. He was prevailed on to accept the honour, and, later, consented to deliver in the spring of 1866 the customary Inaugural Address. Mrs. Carlyle’s anxiety on this occasion as to his success and his health is a tribute

to her constant and intense fidelity. He went north to his Installation, under the kind care of encouraging friends, imprimis of Professor Tyndall,¹ one of his truest; they stopped on the road at Fryston, with Lord Houghton, and there met Professor Huxley, who accompanied them to Edinburgh. Carlyle, having resolved to speak and not merely to read what he had to say, was oppressed with nervousness; and of the event itself he writes: "My speech was delivered in a mood of defiant despair, and under the pressure of nightmare. Some feeling that I was not speaking lies alone sustained me. The applause, etc., I took for empty noise, which it really was not altogether." The address, nominally on the "Reading of Books," really a rapid autobiography of his own intellectual career, with references to history, literature, religion, and the conduct of life, was, as Tyndall telegraphed to Mrs. Carlyle,—save for some difficulty the speaker had in making himself audible—"a perfect triumph." His reception by one of the most enthusiastic audiences ever similarly assembled marked the climax of a steadily-increasing fame. It may be compared to the late welcome given to Wordsworth in the Oxford Theatre. After four days spent with Erskine and his own brother James in Edinburgh, he went for a week's quiet to Scotsbrig, and was kept there, lingering longer than he had intended, by a sprained ankle, "blessed in the country stillness, the purity of sky and earth, and the absence of all babble." On April 20th he wrote his last letter to his wife, a letter which she never read. On the evening of Saturday the 21st, when staying on the way south at his sister's house at Dumfries, he received a telegram inform-

¹ For the most interesting, loyally sympathetic, and characteristic account of Carlyle's journey north on this occasion, and of the incidents which followed, we may refer to *New Fragments*, by John Tyndall, just published.

ing him that the companionship of more than forty years—companionship of struggle and victory, of sad and sweet—so strangely blent—was for ever at an end. Mrs. Carlyle had been found dead in her carriage when driving round Hyde Park on the afternoon of that day, her death (from heart-disease) being accelerated by an accident to a favourite little dog. Carlyle felt as “one who hath been stunned,” hardly able to realise his loss. “They took me out next day . . . to wander in the green sunny Sabbath fields, and ever and anon there rose from my sick heart the ejaculation, ‘My poor little woman,’ but no full gust of tears came to my relief, nor has yet come.” On the following Monday he set off with his brother for London. “Never for a thousand years shall I forget that arrival here of ours, my first unwelcomed by her. She lay in her coffin, lovely in death. Pale death and things not mine or ours had possession of our poor darling.” On Wednesday they returned, and on Thursday the 26th she was buried in the nave of the old Abbey Kirk at Haddington, in the grave of her father. The now desolate old man, who had walked with her over many a stony road, paid the first of his many regretful tributes in the epitaph inscribed over her tomb: in which follows, after the name and date of birth:—

IN HER BRIGHT EXISTENCE SHE HAD MORE SORROWS THAN ARE COMMON, BUT ALSO A SOFT INVINCIBILITY, A CAPACITY OF DISCERNMENT, AND A NOBLE LOYALTY OF HEART WHICH ARE RARE. FOR 40 YEARS SHE WAS THE TRUE AND LOVING HELPMATE OF HER HUSBAND, AND BY ACT AND WORD UNWEARIEDLY FORWARDED HIM AS NONE ELSE COULD IN ALL OF WORTHY THAT HE DID OR ATTEMPTED. SHE DIED AT LONDON, 21ST APRIL 1866, SUDDENLY SNATCHED FROM HIM, AND THE LIGHT OF HIS LIFE AS IF GONE OUT.