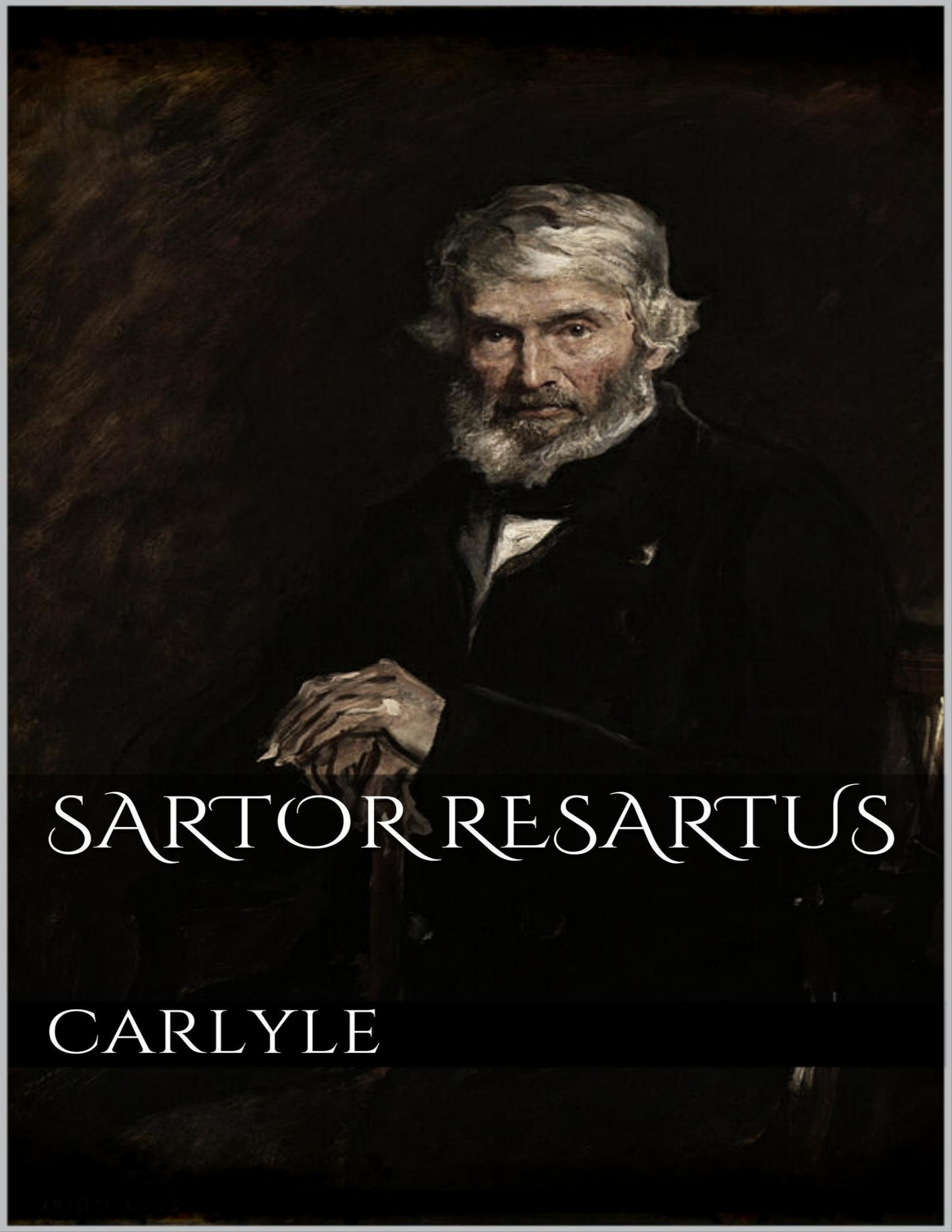

SARTOR RESARTUS

CARLYLE

Sartor Resartus

Sartor Resartus
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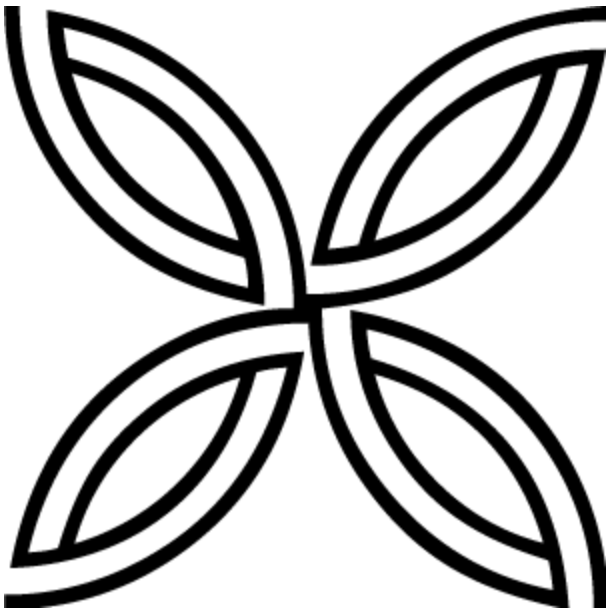
Carlyle



INTRODUCTION

One of the most vital and pregnant books in our modern literature, “Sartor Resartus” is also, in structure and form, one of the most daringly original. It defies exact classification. It is not a philosophic treatise. It is not an autobiography. It is not a romance. Yet in a sense it is all these combined. Its underlying purpose is to expound in broad outline certain ideas which lay at the root of Carlyle’s whole reading of life. But he does not elect to set these forth in regular methodic fashion, after the manner of one writing a systematic essay. He presents his philosophy in dramatic form and in a picturesque human setting. He invents a certain Herr Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, an erudite German professor of “Allerley-Wissenschaft,” or Things in General, in the University of Weissnichtwo, of whose colossal work, “Die Kleider, Ihr Werden und Wirken” (On Clothes: Their Origin and Influence), he represents himself as being only the student and interpreter. With infinite humour he explains how this prodigious volume came into his hands; how he was struck with amazement by its encyclopædic learning, and the depth and suggestiveness of its thought; and how he determined that it was his special mission to introduce its ideas to the British public. But how was this to be done? As a mere bald abstract of the original would never do, the would-be apostle was for a time in despair. But at length the happy thought occurred to him of combining a condensed statement of the main principles of the new philosophy with some account of the philosopher’s life and character. Thus the work took the form of a “Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh,” and as such it was offered to the world. Here, of course, we reach the explanation of its fantastic title—“Sartor Resartus,” or the Tailor Patched: the tailor being the great German

“Clothes-philosopher,” and the patching being done by Carlyle as his English editor.

As a piece of literary mystification, Teufelsdröckh and his treatise enjoyed a measure of the success which nearly twenty years before had been scored by Dietrich Knickerbocker and his “History of New York.” The question of the professor’s existence was solemnly discussed in at least one important review; Carlyle was gravely taken to task for attempting to mislead the public; a certain interested reader actually wrote to inquire where the original German work was to be obtained. All this seems to us surprising; the more so as we are now able to understand the purposes which Carlyle had in view in devising his dramatic scheme. In the first place, by associating the clothes-philosophy with the personality of its alleged author (himself one of Carlyle’s splendidly living pieces of characterisation), and by presenting it as the product and expression of his spiritual experiences, he made the mystical creed intensely human. Stated in the abstract, it would have been a mere blank *-ism ;* developed in its intimate relations with Teufelsdröckh’s character and career, it is filled with the hot life-blood of natural thought and feeling. Secondly, by fathering his own philosophy upon a German professor Carlyle indicates his own indebtedness to German idealism, the ultimate source of much of his own teaching. Yet, deep as that indebtedness was, and anxious as he might be to acknowledge it, he was as a humourist keenly alive to certain glaring defects of the great German writers; to their frequent tendency to lose themselves among the mere minutiæ of erudition, and thus to confuse the unimportant and the important; to their habit of rising at times into the clouds rather than above the clouds, and of there disporting themselves in regions “close-bordering on the impalpable inane;” to their too conspicuous want of order, system, perspective. The dramatic machinery of “Sartor Resartus” is therefore turned to a third service. It

is made the vehicle of much good-humoured satire upon these and similar characteristics of Teutonic scholarship and speculation; as in the many amusing criticisms which are passed upon Teufelsdröckh's volume as a sort of "mad banquet wherein all courses have been confounded;" in the burlesque parade of the professor's "omniverous reading" (*e.g.* , Book I, Chap. V); and in the whole amazing episode of the "six considerable paper bags," out of the chaotic contents of which the distracted editor in search of "biographic documents" has to make what he can. Nor is this quite all. Teufelsdröckh is further utilised as the mouthpiece of some of Carlyle's more extravagant speculations and of such ideas as he wished to throw out as it were tentatively, and without himself being necessarily held responsible for them. There is thus much point as well as humour in those sudden turns of the argument, when, after some exceptionally wild outburst on his *eidolon's* part, Carlyle sedately reproves him for the fantastic character or dangerous tendency of his opinions.

It is in connection with the dramatic scheme of the book that the third element, that of autobiography, enters into its texture, for the story of Teufelsdröckh is very largely a transfigured version of the story of Carlyle himself. In saying this, I am not of course thinking mainly of Carlyle's outer life. This, indeed, is in places freely drawn upon, as the outer lives of Dickens, George Eliot, Tolstoi are drawn upon in "David Copperfield," "The Mill on the Floss," "Anna Karénina." Entepfuhl is only another name for Ecclefechan; the picture of little Diogenes eating his supper out-of-doors on fine summer evenings, and meanwhile watching the sun sink behind the western hills, is clearly a loving transcript from memory; even the idyllic episode of Blumine may be safely traced back to a romance of Carlyle's youth. But to investigate the connection at these and other points between the mere externals of the two careers is a matter of little more than curious interest. It is because it

incorporates and reproduces so much of Carlyle's inner history that the story of Teufelsdröckh is really important. Spiritually considered, the whole narrative is, in fact, a "symbolic myth," in which the writer's personal trials and conflicts are depicted with little change save in setting and accessories. Like Teufelsdröckh, Carlyle while still a young man had broken away from the old religious creed in which he had been bred; like Teufelsdröckh, he had thereupon passed into the "howling desert of infidelity;" like Teufelsdröckh, he had known all the agonies and anguish of a long period of blank scepticism and insurgent despair, during which, turn whither he would, life responded with nothing but negations to every question and appeal. And as to Teufelsdröckh in the Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer in Paris, so to Carlyle in Leith Walk, Edinburgh, there had come a moment of sudden and marvellous illumination, a mystical crisis from which he had emerged a different man. The parallelism is so obvious and so close as to leave no room for doubt that the story of Teufelsdröckh is substantially a piece of spiritual autobiography.

This admitted, the question arises whether Carlyle had any purpose, beyond that of self-expression, in thus utilising his own experiences for the human setting of his philosophy. It seems evident that he had. As he conceived them, these experiences possessed far more than a merely personal interest and meaning. He wrote of himself because he saw in himself a type of his restless and much-troubled epoch; because he knew that in a broad sense his history was the history of thousands of other young men in the generation to which he belonged. The age which followed upon the vast upheaval of the Revolution was one of widespread turmoil and perplexity. Men felt themselves to be wandering aimlessly "between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born." The old order had collapsed in shapeless ruin; but the promised Utopia had not been realised to take its place. In many directions the forces of

reaction were at work. Religion, striving to maintain itself upon the dogmatic creeds of the past, was rapidly petrifying into a mere “dead Letter of Religion,” from which all the living spirit had fled; and those who could not nourish themselves on hearsay and inherited formula knew not where to look for the renewal of faith and hope. The generous ardour and the splendid humanitarian enthusiasms which had been stirred by the opening phases of the revolutionary movement, had now ebbed away; revulsion had followed, and with it the mood of disillusion and despair. The spirit of doubt and denial was felt as a paralysing power in every department of life and thought, and the shadow of unbelief lay heavy on many hearts.

It was for the men of this “sad time” that Carlyle wrote Teufelsdröckh’s story; and he wrote it not merely to depict the far-reaching consequences of their pessimism but also to make plain to them their true path out of it. He desired to exhibit to his age the real nature of the strange malady from which it was suffering in order that he might thereupon proclaim the remedy.

What, then, is the moral significance of Carlyle’s “symbolic myth”? What are the supreme lessons which he uses it to convey?

We must begin by understanding his diagnosis. For him, all the evils of the time could ultimately be traced back to their common source in what may be briefly described as its want of real religion. Of churches and creeds there were plenty; of living faith little or nothing was left. Men had lost all vital sense of God in the world; and because of this, they had taken up a fatally wrong attitude to life. They looked at it wholly from the mechanical point of view, and judged it by merely utilitarian standards. The “body-politic” was no longer inspired by any “soul-politic.” Men, individually and in the mass, cared only for material prosperity, sought only outward success, made the pursuit of happiness the end and aim of their being. The divine meaning of virtue, the

infinite nature of duty, had been forgotten, and morality had been turned into a sort of ledger-philosophy, based upon calculations of profit and loss.

It was thus that Carlyle read the signs of the times. In such circumstances what was needed? Nothing less than a spiritual rebirth. Men must abandon their wrong attitude to life, and take up the right attitude. Everything hinged on that. And that they might take up this right attitude it was necessary first that they should be convinced of life's essential spirituality, and cease in consequence to seek its meaning and test its value on the plane of merely material things.

Carlyle thus throws passionate emphasis upon religion as the only saving power. But it must be noted that he does not suggest a return to any of the dogmatic creeds of the past. Though once the expression of a living faith, these were now for him mere lifeless formulas. Nor has he any new dogmatic creed to offer in their place. That mystical crisis which had broken the spell of the Everlasting No was in a strict sense—he uses the word himself—a conversion. But it was not a conversion in the theological sense, for it did not involve the acceptance of any specific articles of faith. It was simply a complete change of front; the protest of his whole nature, in a suddenly aroused mood of indignation and defiance, against the "spirit which denies;" the assertion of his manhood against the cowardice which had so long kept him trembling and whimpering before the facts of existence. But from that change of front came presently the vivid apprehension of certain great truths which his former mood had thus far concealed from him; and in these truths he found the secret of that right attitude to life in the discovery of which lay men's only hope of salvation from the unrest and melancholy of their time.

From this point of view the burden of Carlyle's message to his generation will be readily understood. Men were going

wrong because they started with the thought of self, and made satisfaction of self the law of their lives; because, in consequence, they regarded happiness as the chief object of pursuit and the one thing worth striving for; because, under the influence of the current rationalism, they tried to escape from their spiritual perplexities through logic and speculation. They had, therefore, to set themselves right upon all these matters. They had to learn that not self-satisfaction but self-renunciation is the key to life and its true law; that we have no prescriptive claim to happiness and no business to quarrel with the universe if it withholds it from us; that the way out of pessimism lies, not through reason, but through honest work, steady adherence to the simple duty which each day brings, fidelity to the right as we know it. Such, in broad statement, is the substance of Carlyle's religious convictions and moral teaching. Like Kant he takes his stand on the principles of ethical idealism. God is to be sought, not through speculation, or syllogism, or the learning of the schools, but through the moral nature. It is the soul in action that alone finds God. And the finding of God means, not happiness as the world conceives it, but blessedness, or the inward peace which passes understanding.

The connection between the transfigured autobiography which serves to introduce the directly didactic element of the book and that element itself, will now be clear. Stripped of its whimsicalities of phraseology and its humorous extravagances, Carlyle's philosophy stands revealed as essentially idealistic in character. Spirit is the only reality. Visible things are but the manifestations, emblems, or clothings of spirit. The material universe itself is only the vesture or symbol of God; man is a spirit, though he wears the wrappings of the flesh; and in everything that man creates for himself he merely attempts to give body or expression to thought. The science of Carlyle's time was busy proclaiming that, since the universe is governed by

natural laws, miracles are impossible and the supernatural is a myth. Carlyle replies that the natural laws are themselves only the manifestation of Spiritual Force, and that thus miracle is everywhere and all nature supernatural. We, who are the creatures of time and space, can indeed apprehend the Absolute only when He weaves about Him the visible garments of time and space. Thus God reveals Himself to sense through symbols. But it is as we regard these symbols in one or other of two possible ways that we class ourselves with the foolish man or with the wise. The foolish man sees only the symbol, thinks it exists for itself, takes it for the ultimate fact, and therefore rests in it. The wise man sees the symbol, knows that it is only a symbol, and penetrates into it for the ultimate fact or spiritual reality which it symbolises.

Remote as such a doctrine may at first sight seem to be from the questions with which men are commonly concerned, it has none the less many important practical bearings. Since “all Forms whereby Spirit manifests itself to sense, whether outwardly or in the imagination, are Clothes,” civilisation and everything belonging to it—our languages, literatures and arts, our governments, social machinery and institutions, our philosophies, creeds and rituals—are but so many vestments woven for itself by the shaping spirit of man. Indispensable these vestments are; for without them society would collapse in anarchy, and humanity sink to the level of the brute. Yet here again we must emphasise the difference, already noted, between the foolish man and the wise. The foolish man once more assumes that the vestments exist for themselves, as ultimate facts, and that they have a value of their own. He, therefore, confuses the life with its clothing; is even willing to sacrifice the life for the sake of the clothing. The wise man, while he, too, recognises the necessity of the vestments, and indeed insists upon it, knows that they have no independent importance, that they derive all their

potency and value from the inner reality which they were fashioned to represent and embody, but which they often misrepresent and obscure. He therefore never confuses the life with the clothing, and well understands how often the clothing has to be sacrificed for the sake of the life. Thus, while the utility of clothes has to be recognised to the full, it is still of the essence of wisdom to press hard upon the vital distinction between the outer wrappings of man's life and that inner reality which they more or less adequately enfold.

The use which Carlyle makes of this doctrine in his interpretation of the religious history of the world and of the crisis in thought of his own day, will be anticipated. All dogmas, forms and ceremonials, he teaches, are but religious vestments—symbols expressing man's deepest sense of the divine mystery of the universe and the hunger and thirst of his soul for God. It is in response to the imperative necessities of his nature that he moulds for himself these outward emblems of his ideas and aspirations. Yet they are only emblems; and since, like all other human things, they partake of the ignorance and weakness of the times in which they were framed, it is inevitable that with the growth of knowledge and the expansion of thought they must presently be outgrown. When this happens, there follows what Carlyle calls the "superannuation of symbols." Men wake to the fact that the creeds and formulas which have come down to them from the past are no longer living for them, no longer what they need for the embodiment of their spiritual life. Two mistakes are now possible, and these are, indeed, commonly made together. On the one hand, men may try to ignore the growth of knowledge and the expansion of thought, and to cling to the outgrown symbols as things having in themselves some mysterious sanctity and power. On the other hand, they may recklessly endeavour to cast aside the reality symbolised along with the discredited

symbol itself. Given such a condition of things, and we shall find religion degenerating into formalism and the worship of the dead letter, and, side by side with this, the impatient rejection of all religion, and the spread of a crude and debasing materialism. Religious symbols, then, must be renewed. But their renewal can come only from within. Form, to have any real value, must grow out of life and be fed by it.

The revolutionary quality in the philosophy of “Sartor Resartus” cannot, of course, be overlooked. Everything that man has woven for himself must in time become merely “old clothes”; the work of his thought, like that of his hands, is perishable; his very highest symbols have no permanence or finality. Carlyle cuts down to the essential reality beneath all shows and forms and emblems: witness his amazing vision of a naked House of Lords. Under his penetrating gaze the “earthly hulls and garnitures” of existence melt away. Men’s habit is to rest in symbols. But to rest in symbols is fatal, since they are at best but the “adventitious wrappages” of life. Clothes “have made men of us”—true; but now, so great has their influence become that “they are threatening to make clothes-screens of us.” Hence “the beginning of all wisdom is to look fixedly on clothes … till they become transparent.” The logical tendency of such teaching may seem to be towards utter nihilism. But that tendency is checked and qualified by the strong conservative element which is everywhere prominent in Carlyle’s thought. Upon the absolute need of “clothes” the stress is again and again thrown. They “have made men of us.” By symbols alone man lives and works. By symbols alone can he make life and work effective. Thus even the world’s “old clothes”—its discarded forms and creeds—should be treated with the reverence due to whatever has once played a part in human development. Thus, moreover, we must be on our guard against the impetuosity of the revolutionary spirit and all rash rupture

with the past. To cast old clothes aside before new clothes are ready—this does not mean progress, but sansculottism, or a lapse into nakedness and anarchy.

BOOK FIRST

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

Considering our present advanced state of culture, and how the Torch of Science has now been brandished and borne about, with more or less effect, for five-thousand years and upwards; how, in these times especially, not only the Torch still burns, and perhaps more fiercely than ever, but innumerable Rush-lights, and Sulphur-matches, kindled thereat, are also glancing in every direction, so that not the smallest cranny or doghole in Nature or Art can remain unilluminated,—it might strike the reflective mind with some surprise that hitherto little or nothing of a fundamental character, whether in the way of Philosophy or History, has been written on the subject of Clothes.

Our Theory of Gravitation is as good as perfect: Lagrange, it is well known, has proved that the Planetary System, on this scheme, will endure forever; Laplace, still more cunningly, even guesses that it could not have been made on any other scheme. Whereby, at least, our nautical Logbooks can be better kept; and water-transport of all kinds has grown more commodious. Of Geology and Geognosy we know enough: what with the labours of our Werners and Huttons, what with the ardent genius of their disciples, it has come about that now, to many a Royal Society, the Creation of a World is little more mysterious than the cooking of a dumpling; concerning which last, indeed, there have been minds to whom the question,*How the apples were got in*, presented difficulties. Why mention our disquisitions on the Social Contract, on the Standard of Taste, on the Migrations of the Herring? Then, have we not a Doctrine of Rent, a Theory of Value; Philosophies of Language, of History, of Pottery, of Apparitions, of Intoxicating Liquors? Man’s whole life and environment

have been laid open and elucidated; scarcely a fragment or fibre of his Soul, Body, and Possessions, but has been probed, dissected, distilled, desiccated, and scientifically decomposed: our spiritual Faculties, of which it appears there are not a few, have their Stewarts, Cousins, Royer Collards: every cellular, vascular, muscular Tissue glories in its Lawrences, Majendies, Bichâts.

How, then, comes it, may the reflective mind repeat, that the grand Tissue of all Tissues, the only real Tissue, should have been quite overlooked by Science,—the vestural Tissue, namely, of woollen or other cloth; which Man's Soul wears as its outmost wrappage and overall; wherein his whole other Tissues are included and screened, his whole Faculties work, his whole Self lives, moves, and has its being? For if, now and then, some straggling, broken-winged thinker has cast an owl's-glance into this obscure region, the most have soared over it altogether heedless; regarding Clothes as a property, not an accident, as quite natural and spontaneous, like the leaves of trees, like the plumage of birds. In all speculations they have tacitly figured man as a*Clothed Animal*; whereas he is by nature a*Naked Animal*; and only in certain circumstances, by purpose and device, masks himself in Clothes. Shakespeare says, we are creatures that look before and after: the more surprising that we do not look round a little, and see what is passing under our very eyes.

But here, as in so many other cases, Germany, learned, indefatigable, deep-thinking Germany comes to our aid. It is, after all, a blessing that, in these revolutionary times, there should be one country where abstract Thought can still take shelter; that while the din and frenzy of Catholic Emancipations, and Rotten Boroughs, and Revolts of Paris, deafen every French and every English ear, the German can stand peaceful on his scientific watch-tower; and, to the raging, struggling multitude here and elsewhere, solemnly, from hour to hour, with preparatory blast of

cowhorn, emit his*Höret ihr Herren und lasset’s Euch sagen*; in other words, tell the Universe, which so often forgets that fact, what o’clock it really is. Not unfrequently the Germans have been blamed for an unprofitable diligence; as if they struck into devious courses, where nothing was to be had but the toil of a rough journey; as if, forsaking the gold-mines of finance and that political slaughter of fat oxen whereby a man himself grows fat, they were apt to run goose-hunting into regions of bilberries and crowberries, and be swallowed up at last in remote peat-bogs. Of that unwise science, which, as our Humorist expresses it,—

‘By geometric scale
Doth take the size of pots of ale;’

still more, of that altogether misdirected industry, which is seen vigorously thrashing mere straw, there can nothing defensive be said. In so far as the Germans are chargeable with such, let them take the consequence. Nevertheless, be it remarked, that even a Russian steppe has tumuli and gold ornaments; also many a scene that looks desert and rock-bound from the distance, will unfold itself, when visited, into rare valleys. Nay, in any case, would Criticism erect not only finger-posts and turnpikes, but spiked gates and impassable barriers, for the mind of man? It is written, ‘Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.’ Surely the plain rule is, Let each considerate person have his way, and see what it will lead to. For not this man and that man, but all men make up mankind, and their united tasks the task of mankind. How often have we seen some such adventurous, and perhaps much-censured wanderer light on some out-lying, neglected, yet vitally-momentous province; the hidden treasures of which he first discovered, and kept proclaiming till the general eye and effort were directed thither, and the conquest was completed;—thereby, in these his seemingly so aimless rambles, planting new standards, founding new habitable

colonies, in the immeasurable circumambient realm of Nothingness and Night! Wise man was he who counselled that Speculation should have free course, and look fearlessly towards all the thirty-two points of the compass, whithersoever and howsoever it listed.

Perhaps it is proof of the stunted condition in which pure Science, especially pure moral Science, languishes among us English; and how our mercantile greatness, and invaluable Constitution, impressing a political or other immediately practical tendency on all English culture and endeavour, cramps the free flight of Thought,—that this, not Philosophy of Clothes, but recognition even that we have no such Philosophy, stands here for the first time published in our language. What English intellect could have chosen such a topic, or by chance stumbled on it? But for that same unshackled, and even sequestered condition of the German Learned, which permits and induces them to fish in all manner of waters, with all manner of nets, it seems probable enough, this abstruse Inquiry might, in spite of the results it leads to, have continued dormant for indefinite periods. The Editor of these sheets, though otherwise boasting himself a man of confirmed speculative habits, and perhaps discursive enough, is free to confess, that never, till these last months, did the above very plain considerations, on our total want of a Philosophy of Clothes, occur to him; and then, by quite foreign suggestion. By the arrival, namely, of a new Book from Professor Teufelsdröckh of Weissnichtwo; treating expressly of this subject, and in a style which, whether understood or not, could not even by the blindest be overlooked. In the present Editor's way of thought, this remarkable Treatise, with its Doctrines, whether as judicially acceded to, or judicially denied, has not remained without effect.

'*Die Kleider, ihr Werden und Wirken*(Clothes, their Origin and Influence):*von Diog. Teufelsdröckh, J.U.D. etc.*

Stillschweigen und Co^{gnie}.*Weissnichtwo*, 1831.

‘Here,’ says the*Weissnichtwo’sche Anzeiger*, ‘comes a Volume of that extensive, close-printed, close-meditated sort, which, be it spoken with pride, is seen only in Germany, perhaps only in Weissnichtwo. Issuing from the hitherto irreproachable Firm of Stillschweigen and Company, with every external furtherance, it is of such internal quality as to set Neglect at defiance.’ * * * * ‘A work,’ concludes the wellnigh enthusiastic Reviewer, ‘interesting alike to the antiquary, the historian, and the philosophic thinker; a masterpiece of boldness, lynx-eyed acuteness, and rugged independent Germanism and Philanthropy (*derber Kerndeutschheit und Menschenliebe*); which will not, assuredly, pass current without opposition in high places; but must and will exalt the almost new name of Teufelsdröckh to the first ranks of Philosophy, in our German Temple of Honour.’

Mindful of old friendship, the distinguished Professor, in this the first blaze of his fame, which however does not dazzle him, sends hither a Presentation-copy of his Book; with compliments and encomiums which modesty forbids the present Editor to rehearse; yet without indicated wish or hope of any kind, except what may be implied in the concluding phrase:*Möchte es*(this remarkable Treatise)*auch im Brittischen Boden gedeihen!*

CHAPTER II

EDITORIAL DIFFICULTIES

If for a speculative man, ‘whose seedfield,’ in the sublime words of the Poet, ‘is Time,’ no conquest is important but that of new ideas, then might the arrival of Professor Teufelsdröckh’s Book be marked with chalk in the Editor’s calendar. It is indeed an ‘extensive Volume,’ of boundless, almost formless contents, a very Sea of Thought; neither calm nor clear, if you will; yet wherein the toughest pearl-diver may dive to his utmost depth, and return not only with sea-wreck but with true orients.

Directly on the first perusal, almost on the first deliberate inspection, it became apparent that here a quite new Branch of Philosophy, leading to as yet undescried ulterior results, was disclosed; farther, what seemed scarcely less interesting, a quite new human Individuality, an almost unexampled personal character, that, namely, of Professor Teufelsdröckh the Discloser. Of both which novelties, as far as might be possible, we resolved to master the significance. But as man is emphatically a proselytising creature, no sooner was such mastery even fairly attempted, than the new question arose: How might this acquired good be imparted to others, perhaps in equal need thereof: how could the Philosophy of Clothes, and the Author of such Philosophy, be brought home, in any measure, to the business and bosoms of our own English Nation? For if new-got gold is said to burn the pockets till it be cast forth into circulation, much more may new truth.

Here, however, difficulties occurred. The first thought naturally was to publish Article after Article on this remarkable Volume, in such widely-circulating Critical Journals as the Editor might stand connected with, or by money or love procure access to. But, on the other hand,

was it not clear that such matter as must here be revealed, and treated of, might endanger the circulation of any Journal extant? If, indeed, all party-divisions in the State could have been abolished, Whig, Tory, and Radical, embracing in discrepant union; and all the Journals of the Nation could have been jumbled into one Journal, and the Philosophy of Clothes poured forth in incessant torrents therefrom, the attempt had seemed possible. But, alas, what vehicle of that sort have we, except*Fraser's Magazine*? A vehicle all strewed (figuratively speaking) with the maddest Waterloo-Crackers, exploding distractively and destructively, wheresoever the mystified passenger stands or sits; nay, in any case, understood to be, of late years, a vehicle full to overflowing, and inexorably shut! Besides, to state the Philosophy of Clothes without the Philosopher, the ideas of Teufelsdröckh without something of his personality, was it not to insure both of entire misapprehension? Now for Biography, had it been otherwise admissible, there were no adequate documents, no hope of obtaining such, but rather, owing to circumstances, a special despair. Thus did the Editor see himself, for the while, shut out from all public utterance of these extraordinary Doctrines, and constrained to revolve them, not without disquietude, in the dark depths of his own mind.

So had it lasted for some months; and now the Volume on Clothes, read and again read, was in several points becoming lucid and lucent; the personality of its Author more and more surprising, but, in spite of all that memory and conjecture could do, more and more enigmatic; whereby the old disquietude seemed fast settling into fixed discontent,—when altogether unexpectedly arrives a Letter from Herr Hofrath Heuschrecke, our Professor's chief friend and associate in Weissnichtwo, with whom we had not previously corresponded. The Hofrath, after much quite extraneous matter, began dilating largely on the 'agitation

and attention' which the Philosophy of Clothes was exciting in its own German Republic of Letters; on the deep significance and tendency of his Friend's Volume; and then, at length, with great circumlocution, hinted at the practicability of conveying 'some knowledge of it, and of him, to England, and through England to the distant West': a work on Professor Teufelsdröckh 'were undoubtedly welcome to the *Family*, the *National*, or any other of those patriotic *Libraries*, at present the glory of British Literature'; might work revolutions in Thought; and so forth;—in conclusion, intimating not obscurely, that should the present Editor feel disposed to undertake a Biography of Teufelsdröckh, he, Hofrath Heuschrecke, had it in his power to furnish the requisite Documents.

As in some chemical mixture, that has stood long evaporating, but would not crystallise, instantly when the wire or other fixed substance is introduced, crystallisation commences, and rapidly proceeds till the whole is finished, so was it with the Editor's mind and this offer of Heuschrecke's. Form rose out of void solution and discontinuity; like united itself with like in definite arrangement: and soon either in actual vision and possession, or in fixed reasonable hope, the image of the whole Enterprise had shaped itself, so to speak, into a solid mass. Cautiously yet courageously, through the twopenny post, application to the famed redoubtable Oliver Yorke was now made: an interview, interviews with that singular man have taken place; with more of assurance on our side, with less of satire (at least of open satire) on his, than we anticipated;—for the rest, with such issue as is now visible. As to those same 'patriotic *Libraries*,' the Hofrath's counsel could only be viewed with silent amazement; but with his offer of Documents we joyfully and almost instantaneously closed. Thus, too, in the sure expectation of these, we already see our task begun; and this our *Sartor Resartus*,

which is properly a ‘Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröckh,’ hourly advancing.

Of our fitness for the Enterprise, to which we have such title and vocation, it were perhaps uninteresting to say more. Let the British reader study and enjoy, in simplicity of heart, what is here presented him, and with whatever metaphysical acumen and talent for meditation he is possessed of. Let him strive to keep a free, open sense; cleared from the mists of prejudice, above all from the paralysis of cant; and directed rather to the Book itself than to the Editor of the Book. Who or what such Editor may be, must remain conjectural, and even insignificant:** With us even he still communicates in some sort of mask, or muffler: and, we have reason to think, under a feigned name!—O. Y. it is a voice publishing tidings of the Philosophy of Clothes; undoubtedly a Spirit addressing Spirits: whoso hath ears, let him hear.

On one other point the Editor thinks it needful to give warning: namely, that he is animated with a true though perhaps a feeble attachment to the Institutions of our Ancestors; and minded to defend these, according to ability, at all hazards; nay, it was partly with a view to such defence that he engaged in this undertaking. To stem, or if that be impossible, profitably to divert the current of Innovation, such a Volume as Teufelsdröckh’s, if cunningly planted down, were no despicable pile, or floodgate, in the logical wear.

For the rest, be it nowise apprehended, that any personal connexion of ours with Teufelsdröckh, Heuschrecke, or this Philosophy of Clothes can pervert our judgment, or sway us to extenuate or exaggerate. Powerless, we venture to promise, are those private Compliments themselves. Grateful they may well be; as generous illusions of friendship; as fair mementos of bygone unions, of those nights and suppers of the gods, when, lapped in the symphonies and harmonies of Philosophic Eloquence,

though with baser accompaniments, the present Editor revelled in that feast of reason, never since vouchsafed him in so full measure! But what then?*Amicus Plato, magis amica veritas;*Teufelsdröckh is our friend, Truth is our divinity. In our historical and critical capacity, we hope we are strangers to all the world; have feud or favour with no one,—save indeed the Devil, with whom, as with the Prince of Lies and Darkness, we do at all times wage internecine war. This assurance, at an epoch when puffery and quackery have reached a height unexampled in the annals of mankind, and even English Editors, like Chinese Shopkeepers, must write on their door-lintels*No cheating here*,—we thought it good to premise.

CHAPTER III

REMINISCENCES

To the Author’s private circle the appearance of this singular Work on Clothes must have occasioned little less surprise than it has to the rest of the world. For ourselves, at least, few things have been more unexpected. Professor Teufelsdröckh, at the period of our acquaintance with him, seemed to lead a quite still and self-contained life: a man devoted to the higher Philosophies, indeed; yet more likely, if he published at all, to publish a refutation of Hegel and Bardili, both of whom, strangely enough, he included under a common ban; than to descend, as he has here done, into the angry noisy Forum, with an Argument that cannot but exasperate and divide. Not, that we can remember, the Philosophy of Clothes once touched upon between us. If through the high, silent, meditative Transcendentalism of our Friend we detected any practical tendency whatever, it was at most Political, and towards a certain prospective, and for the present quite speculative, Radicalism; as indeed some correspondence, on his part, with Herr Oken of Jena was now and then suspected; though his special contribution to the*Isis* could never be more than surmised at. But, at all events, nothing Moral, still less anything Didactico-Religious, was looked for from him.

Well do we recollect the last words he spoke in our hearing; which indeed, with the Night they were uttered in, are to be forever remembered. Lifting his huge tumbler of*Gukguk*,** Gukguk is unhappily only an academical-beer. and for a moment lowering his tobacco-pipe, he stood up in full Coffee-house (it was*Zur Grünen Gans*, the largest in Weissnichtwo, where all the Virtuosity, and nearly all the Intellect of the place assembled of an evening); and there, with low, soul-stirring tone, and the look truly of an angel,