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In his study of the "Cambridge Wits," Richard Ince included John Sterling, a close friend of Thomas Carlyle. "Close friend" is perhaps understating their relationship, for Sterling was one in whom Carlyle had placed great trust and for whom he had held high hopes. Indeed, Froude describes Sterling as Carlyle's "spiritual pupil, his first, and also his noblest and best."[2] The closeness of their relationship has never been fully gauged, but one indication of it is Carlyle's willingness, in spite of his great reluctance to take on new projects, to write a life of his dear friend. The story of his motivation for doing so has been told by various people, but one of the chief reasons was Carlyle's feeling that Hare's *Life* had given the wrong impression of his young friend. Ince puts the case this way: "Hare took Sterling for his text and preached a sermon on the necessity for believing whatsoever the Church tells you; Carlyle took Sterling for his text and preached a sermon on the necessity for getting rid of Cant." (Ince, p. 160) The contrast between these two *Lives*, Hare's appearing in 1848, four years after Sterling's death, Carlyle's in 1851, three years after Hare's, helps provide the context for an unpublished Fragment (or Fragments) belonging to

the period between 1844, the death of Sterling, and 1851, the composition and publication of Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*.

This Fragment, while undated, can be placed in this period for a number of reasons. For one thing, it reflects those interests that Carlyle and Sterling had in common. In describing their first meeting, Carlyle writes: "Sterling and I walked westward in company, choosing whatever lanes or quietest streets there were, arguing copiously, but *except* in opinion not disagreeing."[3] Included in this interest in moralities and theological philosophies no doubt were such subjects as education, the relation between bodily health and other aspects of human life and thought, the concept of duty, Coleridge (moralist and philosopher), and, above all, in Carlyle's own words, "What is the chief end of man?" (Froude, IV, 73) All these are reflected in this Fragment, especially Carlyle's concern with education and religion, particularly the ways that they influenced "a young ardent soul looking with hope and joy into a world which was infinitely beautiful to him" (*Works*, XI, 36).

The variety of topics and the nature of them are not surprising, for Carlyle was always looking for projects to write about. In 1849, for instance, he wrote: "I used to think, having plenty to say was a good thing; but I find it now rather worse than having *nothing*, for that would at least leave one a quiet life. Heigho! There is a mass of mud and street-sweepings . . . and at what corner to *begin* is and has long been a desperate mystery! For most part I stand leaning on my shovel; looking at it with mere desperate dismay, unable to strike it anywhere with decision or fixed purpose."[4] I shall have more to say about "mud" and "street-sweepings," but it is rather the lack of "fixed purpose" that I should like to stress now.

There are two notes struck in the unpublished Fragment and in his journal entries that reflect the "desperate dismay" that Carlyle seemed to be experiencing in the late forties and early fifties. On the one hand, as I have said, he was full of ideas. Froude tells us that in a *Journal* entry for 1848 Carlyle listed schemes for four books: *Exodus from Houndsditch*; *Ireland: Spiritual Sketches*; *Life of John Sterling*; and *The Scavenger Age* (Froude, III, 423). Anne Tuell wittily comments on this entry: "Wilson notes in the Journals under 1848 two titles for proposed books: The Life of John Sterling, and The Exodus from Houndsditch—whereby Carlyle planned to lead a chosen people

from the bondage of orthodoxy and dead theology—and he draws the likely conclusion that Carlyle got the two rather mixed up in his projecting mind."[5] One might comment, in fact, that Carlyle got three of the four projected books "mixed up" in his mind at one point, for the unpublished Fragment has elements dealing with the two already mentioned by Wilson and also "The Scavenger Age."

The other note, in contrast to the plethora of topics which called for comment and discussion, is Carlyle's inability to cope with them. There is one complaint after another, one cry of despair after another in his entries, all of which portray a Carlyle who has lost the ability to communicate, even at times the will to live. Typical entries contain comments as "Idle I throughout as a dry bone . . . . Nor is there any *work* yet. Ah! no! none! What will become of me? I am growing old; I am grown old" (Froude, III, 448); "unable to stir myself, writhing with hand and foot glued together, under a load of contemptible miseries" (Froude, III, 450); "I am weak too—forlorn, bewildered, and nigh *lost*—too weak for my place, I too." (Froude, III, 452).

The passages most revealing of Carlyle's thoughts and feelings during this period, those that demonstrate most clearly his depressed state, deserve fuller quotation. Here is the entry for August 10, 1848:

> May I mark this as the *nadir* of my spiritual course at present? Never till now was I so low—utterly dumb this long while, barren, undecided, wretched in mind. My right hand has altogether lost its cunning. Alas! and I have nothing other wherewith to defend myself against the world without, and keep it from overwhelming me, as it often threatens to do . . . . If my own energy desert me, I am indeed deserted (Froude, III, 443-444).

Another passage is very close in mood and tone to the unpublished Fragment:

> How lonely I am now grown in the world; how hard, many times as if I were made of stone! All the old tremulous affection lies in me, but it is as if frozen. So mocked, and scourged, and driven mad by contradictions, it has, as it were, lain down in a kind of iron sleep . . . .

> Words cannot express the love and sorrow of my old memories, chiefly out of boyhood, as they occasionly rise upon me, and I have now no voice for them at all. . . . No lonelier soul, I do believe, lies under the sky at this moment than myself. Masses of written stuff, which I grudge a little to burn, and trying to sort something out of them for magazine articles, series of pamphlets, or whatever they will promise to turn to—does not yet succeed with me at all . . . . All these paper bundles were written last summer, and are wrongish, every word of them. Might serve as newspaper or pamphletary introduction, overture, or accompaniment to the unnameable book I have to write. In dissent from all the world; in black contradiction, deep as the bases of my life, to all the philanthropic, emancipatory, constitutional, and other anarchic revolutionary jargon, with which the world . . . is now full (November 11, 1849; Froude, IV, 21-22).

Wilson, whose volume dealing with Carlyle during this time is ironically called "Carlyle at His Zenith," remarks of this period: "As he afterwards said of the four years following 1845,—'Much was fermenting in me, in very painful ways . . . . Much MS. was accumulating on me, with which I did not know what in the world to do.'"[6] A great deal of this "accumulation," we may be sure, had to do with subjects found in *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, but there remain the other "masses of written stuff," which he grudged to burn, and which he was trying to sort out. Among these "paper bundles," written when he was in "dissent from all the world; in black contradiction, deep as the bases of my life, to all the . . . anarchic revolutionary jargon, with which the world . . . is now full," one is tempted to place his remarks on education and religion, those subjects he and Sterling often talked about so freely and copiously.

The appearance in 1848 of Hare's "biographical memoir," as Traill calls it, must have brought back many memories to Carlyle, some of them, as his *Journal* entry for 1849 indicates, "old memories, chiefly out of boyhood." Sterling's death, Froude (writing in the year 1845) tells us, was "the severest shock which Carlyle had experienced. Indeed, years later when a visitor brought a letter of introduction to Carlyle written some time

before by Sterling, Carlyle was visibly shaken." (Froude, III, 351). Hare's harsh judgments of Sterling's views on education and religion we know disturbed Carlyle, especially his thesis that "religious heterodoxy had been the grand fact of Sterling's life" (*Works*, XI, vii). In drawing up the "scheme" for his life of Sterling in 1848 Carlyle had written: "I really must draw up some statement on that subject—some picture of a gifted soul whom I knew, and who was my friend. Might not many things withal be *taught* in the course of such a delineation?" (Froude, III, 423). To Carlyle Sterling was not a "clergyman merely"; he was the "noble Sterling, a radiant child of the empyrean, clad in bright auroral hues in the memory of all that knew him" (*Works*, XI, 2). Carlyle was not to write the *Life* until 1851, for, as Traill writes in his introduction to that volume, "The process had been a very gradual one." The Fragment must have been part of that process.

Among the observations about Carlyle during this period, especially 1848-1849, Wilson includes Emerson's impressions of Carlyle after he visited him in 1848. Of these there are reports of Carlyle's views on education and on Chadwick that are particularly valuable in providing the context for the unpublished Fragment. "He prefers," writes Emerson, "Cambridge to Oxford, but he thinks Oxford and Cambridge education indurates the young men, as the Styx hardened Achilles, so that when they come forth of them, they say, 'Now we are proof: we have gone through all the degrees, and are case-hardened against the veracities of the Universe; nor man nor God can penetrate us.'" Equally revealing are Emerson's observations on Chadwick: "Edwin Chadwick is one of his heroes, who proposes to provide every house in London with pure water. In the downfall of religions, Carlyle thinks that the only religious act which a man nowadays can securely perform is to wash himself well" (*Works*, XI, 43). One can take this last remark in the spirit of Carlyle's Scottish exaggeration, but the fact remains that Chadwick was at this time something of a symbol for Carlyle, as well as having been a member of the "Radical sort" with whom Sterling had been associated (*Works*, XI, 50-51). In his projected book on "The Scavenger Age," listed just under the one on the "Life of John Sterling," Carlyle had written: "Chadwick's men are working in sight of me daily at present at Chelsea Old Church. Our age is really up to nothing better than the sweeping *out the*

gutter. Might it but do that well! It is the indispensable beginning of all" (Froude, III, 43).

That Carlyle saw the connection of all these topics is evident in the Fragment; that he was thinking specifically of Sterling is less certain, but there is some evidence for believing so. Some of it is merely suggested. Charles Buller, a close friend of Sterling's as well as of Carlyle's, in 1848 was Chief Commissioner of the Poor Law, the passage for which Chadwick had borne some responsibility; and Buller's sudden death in 1848 was a blow to Carlyle. Indeed, Carlyle had been tutor for Buller in the "old" days, and his loss must have contributed to Carlyle's mixed feelings about various subjects, not the least of which would be education. The emphasis on the need for health would, given Carlyle's own state, not need any external motivation, but certainly Sterling's life-long battle with consumption and his constant travels to alleviate the pain must have been often present in Carlyle's thoughts. Considering his opinion of the "noble Sterling," whose letters reveal a "childlike goodness," a "purity of heart," and a "noble affection and fidelity," one is not at all surprised to find Carlyle's seeing "holy" equivalent to "healthy" in the way he defined Sterling's *health*: "Sickly in body the testimony said: but here always was a mind that gave you the impression of peremptory alertness, cheery swift decision,—of a *health* which you might call exuberant" (*Works*, XI, 117,118). There is, too, the reference to "Pothouse Meeting," a term that immediately strikes one familiar with their friendship of the two. Sterling is reported to have responded to something that Carlyle had said with, "Why, that's Pantheism," to which Carlyle is reported to have replied: "Let it be Pot-theism, so long as its true." If accurate, this is simply another example of their arguing copiously, but except in opinion not disagreeing.

One area of real agreement was that of education. Hare made it very clear in his biographical sketch that he did not approve of Sterling's University experience:

> In the regular course of the studies at the University, Sterling did not take much part. Of the genial young men who go to Cambridge, many do not. This is greatly to be regretted. For even where the alternative is not blank idleness, or intellectual self-indulgence and dissipation, it is a misfortune for a young man to lose the

> disciplinary influence of a prescribed system, and the direction and encouragement of intelligent guides . . . . If they [the students] follow any peculiar studies by themselves, they are thereby set in a kind of opposition to authority and established institutions, are led to look upon them with dislike, if not with disdain, and to feel an overweening confidence in their own wisdom. It is often made a matter of complaint, that men of the world, men who act a prominent part in public life, feel little affection for their University.[7]

Those who know of Carlyle's own University experience will instantly recognize Carlyle's portrait, as well as Sterling's. It is not unreasonable in this context to read Carlyle's Fragment both as a response to Hare and as reaction triggered by his being reminded of his own University days.

One familiar with Carlyle's residence at Edinburgh will also see in Hare's brief summary a fairly accurate description of Carlyle's own reaction to professors and authority. As Campbell so well describes it, Carlyle found very few professors able and interesting; instead, he turned to what Hare would call "intellectual self-indulgence." Campbell writes of Carlyle's first year: "It was not a year of academic challenge; the challenges lay in readjustment, and the natural reflex of loneliness and long hours in an unlovely part of town—solitary reading. From the moment of his arrival at the University, Carlyle began to exploit the library facilities of the University to commence a course of voracious reading and self-education" (p. 19). In his "Inaugural Address" Carlyle told the students that the true University was, in truth, "a Collection of Books." He then proceeded to give advice that Hare probably would have seen as "opposition to authority." "Men," Carlyle said, "have not now to go in person to where a professor is actually speaking; because in most cases you can get his doctrine out of him through a book . . . . It remains . . . a most important truth . . . that the main use of Universities in the present age is that, after you have done with all your classes, the next thing is a collection of books, a great library of good books, which you can proceed to study and to read." He then concluded: "What the Universities can mainly do for you,—what I have found the University did for me, is, that it taught me to read, in various languages, in various sciences; so

that I could go into books which treated of these things, and gradually penetrate into any department I wanted to make myself master of, as I found it suit me" (*Works*, XXIX, 454-455).

Obviously Carlyle would be seen by Hare as one who did not take part in the regular course of the studies at the University. Carlyle, too, for his part, took exception to Hare's view of Sterling's Cambridge life, and in his own *Life of Sterling* attempted to show the reasons for Sterling's behavior. In speaking of his grammar and other schools, Carlyle dwells on the character of the student rather than the nature of the schooling; typically, too. he depends on a "little portrait" of Sterling when he is twelve, "In manhood too, the chief expression of his eyes and physiognomy was what I might call alacrity, cheerful rapidity. You could see, here looked forth a soul which was winged; which dwelt in hope and action, not in hesitation and fear" (*Works*, XI, 28). The implication here, as in the Fragment, is that schools, especially Universities, work on the students' "hesitation and fear" rather than encourage their "hope and action," and Carlyle spells this out. "Competent skill in construing Latin, . . . an elementary knowledge of Greek; . . . Euclid perhaps in a rather imaginary condition; a swift but not very legible or handsome penmanship, and the copious prompt habit of employing it in all manner of unconscious English prose composition, or even occasionally in verse itself: this, or something like this, he had gained from his grammar-schools: this is the most of what they offer to the poor young soul in general, in these indigent times . . . . Other departments of schooling had been infinitely more productive, for our young friend, than the gerundgrinding one." Carlyle then alludes to Sterling's love of reading, similar to his: "A voracious reader . . . ,—he had 'read the whole Edinburgh Review' in these boyish years, and out of the circulating libraries one knows not what cartloads; wading like Ulysses towards his palace 'through infinite dung.'" Carlyle then makes explicit, as he does in the Fragment, his opinion of all this schooling, particularly that at Cambridge:

> But here, as in his former schools, his studies and inquiries . . . . were of the most discursive wide-flowing character; not steadily advancing along beaten roads towards College honours, but pulsing out with impetuous

> irregularity now on this tract, now on that towards whatever spiritual Delphi might promise to unfold the mystery of this world, and announce to him what was, in our new day, the authentic message of the gods. His speculations, readings, inferences, glances and conclusions were doubtless sufficiently encyclopedic; his grand tutors the multifarious set of Books he devoured.

After Carlyle has sufficiently established the "irregularity" of Sterling's path and his "real" Tutors, he feels free to confront Hare directly, and his "message" as to the goals of education is again the same as that found in the Fragment and in his inaugural address:

> And perhaps,—as is the singular case in most schools and educational establishments of this unexampled epoch,—it was not the express set of arrangements in this or any extant University that could essentially forward him, but only the implied and silent ones; less in the prescribed "course of study," which seems to tend nowhither, than,—if you will consider it,—in the generous (not unvoluntary) spirit of endeavour and adventure excited thereby, does help lie for a brave youth in such places. The fagging, the illicit boating, and the things *forbidden* by the schoolmaster,—these, . . . are the things that have done them good . . . . Nor can the unwisest "prescribed course of study" be considered quite useless, if it have incited you to try nobly on all sides or a course of your own. A singular condition of Schools and High-schools, which have come down, in their strange old clothes and "courses of study," from the monkish ages into this highly unmonkish one;—tragical condition, at which the intelligent observer makes deep pause! (*Works*, XI, 34-35).

The narrowness of the education of those "ingenuous living souls" is overshadowed only by the pernicious religious influence put on them. There is a striking similarity between Carlyle's description of Sterling and that of the "young soul . . . . fresh from the hands of its Maker" in the Fragment. The Fragment, printed below, has Carlyle's full description there; here is his

view of Sterling in his University years:

> In short, . . . he was already . . . at all points a Radical, as the name or nickname went. In other words, a young ardent soul looking with hope and joy into a world which was infinitely beautiful to him, though overhung with falsities and foul cobwebs as world never was before; overloaded, overclouded, to the zenith and the nadir of it, by incredible uncredited traditions, solemnly sordid hypocrisies, and beggarly deliriums old and new; which latter class of objects it was clearly the part of every noble heart to expend all its lightnings and energies in burning-up without delay, and sweeping into their native Chaos out of such a Chaos as this (*Works*, XI, 36-37).

The vocabulary in the passage provides a clue to Carlyle's real concern: "falsities," "cobwebs," "overclouded," "incredible uncredited traditions," "solemnly sordid hypocrisies," and "beggarly deliriums." Carlyle, as did Sterling and other young souls, wanted to know about "authentic Godhood," not dead idols, not God in the pluperfect tense. This concern helps explain the inclusion of the chapter on Coleridge, who kept speaking of the Church of England as though it still had some validity and hope for the future. "Coleridge's championing of the Church of England," Sanders has written, "was a very real issue between the two men."[8] Coleridge's "cobwebby" thinking, his fuzziness about object and subject, was of no real help to Sterling and others like him; they needed another message, one that was closer to the Carlylian one. The depth of Carlyle's feeling, reflected in the Fragment, may be seen in the section of the *Life* in which he tells of Sterling's ordination in 1834:

> To such length can transcendental moonshine, cast by some morbidly radiating Coleridge into the chaos of a fermenting life, act magically there, and produce divulsions and convulsions and diseased developments. So dark and abstruse, without lamp or authentic finger-post, is the course of pious genius towards the Eternal Kingdoms grown. No fixed highway more; the old spiritual highways and recognized paths to the Eternal, now all . . . submerged in unutterable boiling mud-oceans

> of Hypocrisy and Unbelievability, of brutal living Atheism and damnable dead putrescent Cant; surely a tragic pilgrimage for all mortals; Darkness, and the mere shadow of Death, enveloping all things from pole to pole; and in the raging gulf-currents, offering us will-o'-wisps for load-stars,—intimating that there are no stars, nor ever were, except certain Old-Jew ones which have now gone out. Once more, a tragic pilgrimage for all mortals; and for the young pious soul, winged with genius, and passionately seeking land, and passionately abhorrent of floating carrion withal, more tragical than for any! . . . . Fools! "Do you think the Living God is a buzzard idol," sternly asks Milton, that you dare address Him in this manner?—such darkness, thick sluggish clouds of cowardice and oblivious baseness, have accumulated on us; thickening as if towards the eternal sleep! (*Works*, XI, 96-7)

One could also find, of course, in the Fragment a summation of Carlyle's own reaction to Edinburgh University, especially the "instructors of youth" there, the pedants and "college-doctors" toohooing to the poor young souls. The heartfelt cry of the Fragment is reflected in his own writings and correspondence; as early as 1817 he is telling Robert Mitchell, after visiting the Divinity-Hall:

> If we are to judge of the kind of Professors we should get from the Edin*r* Kirk, by the sample we already possess, it is devoutly to be wished that their visits may be short & far between. It may safely be asserted that tho' the Doctors Ritchie junior & senior, with Dr Meiklejohn, Dr Brunton & Dr Brown were to continue in their chairs, dosing in their present fashion, for a century, all the knowledge which they could discover, would be an imperceptible quantity—if indeed its sign were not negative.

Carlyle then goes on to talk of those who do get through the Divinity-Hall and go into the world, and again the close connection with the Fragment is obvious:

> With the exception of the few whom superior talents or better stars exempted from the common fortune, every Scotch Licenciate must adopt one of two alternatives. If he is made of pliant stuff, he selects someone having authority before whom he bows with unabating alacrity for (say) half-a-score of years, and thereby obtains a Kirk: whereupon he betakes him to collect his stipend, and . . . generally in a few months, falls into a state of torpor, from which he rises no more. If on the other hand, the soul of the Licenciate is stubborn & delights not to honour the Esquires of the district,—heartless & hopeless he must drag out his life—without aim or object—vexed at every step to see surplices alighting on the backs of many who surpass him in nothing.[9]

In 1818 he writes to Robert Mitchell, and the same note is struck:

> The men with whom I meet are mostly preachers and students in divinity. These persons desire, not to understand Newton's philosophy but to obtain a well 'plenished manse. Their ideas, which are uttered with much vain jangling and generally couched in a recurring series of quips and most slender puns, are nearly confined to the church—or rather kirk-session politics of the place, the secret habits, freaks and adventures of the clergy or professors, the vacant parishes and their presentees, with patrons, tutors and all other appurtenances of the tythe-pig-tail. Such talk is very edifying certainly, but I take little delight in it. My Theological propensities may be included within small compass—and with regard to witlings, jibers or such small gear—the less one knows of them, it is not the worse (CL, I, 119).

So much for gerundgrinding College Doctors and "Sublime-Horned Owls of various titles" who ply their "sorrowful toohooing" into poor young souls.

The close connection between the Fragment and the writings of this period, especially *Sterling* and the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, rests also on tone, imagery, and vocabulary. The Chadwickian element, with its imagery of the scavenger age, is the most

obvious: dung, gutters, drains, foul poisons, asphyxiation, filth-accumulations, cesspools, poison-gases, rottenness—all these are overwhelming and most Carlylian. One need only read as did Carlyle the report of Poor Law Commissioners on *The Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of England* (London, 1842) to realize that Carlyle is not exaggerating; he is simply making use of what is available. A sentence that contains "miasmatous accumulations" or "foul poison of cities" is more accurate reporting than imaginative writing. The Carlylian use of it for imagery relating to the spiritual and educational condition of his own time is, of course, what labels it uniquely Carlylian.

Other aspects are also clearly Carlylian. The reliance on Biblical and literary allusions (Valley of Jehosaphat, watchman's rattle, Pisgah heights, College of Domdaniel) and the consistent use of imagery drawn from the universe itself (azure immensities, green earth, Bootes and the Bear, Orion's Belt and all the stars) reflect his usual practices. The ideas concerning subjects other than religion and education are very close to those discussed at length in *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (drill sargents, eloquence, especially in Parliament and Society, playactors and playacting, Yankee speakers); indeed, at times the development of various ideas is done in language and imagery almost identical to those in the Fragment.[10] "The New Downing Street," for instance, talks of the long-expected *Scavenger Age*: "Many doctors have you had, my poor friend; but I perceive it is the Water-Cure alone that will help you: a complete course of *scavengerism* is the thing you need! A . . . clearing-out of Church and State from the unblessed host of Phantasms which have too long nestled thick there, under those astonishing 'Defenders of the Faith,'—Defenders of the Hypocrisies, the spiritual Vampires and obscene Nightmares, under which England lies in syncope;—this is what you need; and if you cannot get it, you must die, my poor friend!" (*Works*, XX, 163)

"The New Downing Street" is perhaps closest of all the pamphlets in Carlyle's employment of diction and imagery to the Fragment, although others exhibit them too. In "The New Downing Street" Carlyle also talks of the need to avoid swearing "fealty to the Incredible, and traitorously cramp thyself into a cowardly canting play-actor in God's Universe"; and he makes eloquent use of Chadwickian imagery when he talks of "pauperism": "Pauperism is the poisonous dripping from all the

sins, and putrid unveracities and god-forgetting greedinesses and devil-serving cants and jesuitisms, that exist among us . . . . The Idle Workhouse, now about to burst of overfilling, what is it but the scandalous poison-tank of drainage from the universal Stygian quagmire of our affairs? . . . . My friends, I perceive the quagmire must be drained, or we cannot live" (*Works*, XX, 158, 159, 165). Perhaps Carlyle's brief references to the Church and to Education in Feudal societies demonstrate most vividly the particular view he took towards these subjects and the way that he treated them at this time, the same period to which the fragment seems to belong. "The pious soul,—which, if you reflect," he writes, in "the New Downing Street," "will mean the ingenuous and ingenious, the gifted, intelligent and nobly-aspiring soul,—such a soul, in whatever rank of life it were born, had one path inviting it; a generous career, whereon, by human worth and valour, all earthly heights and Heaven itself were attainable." The career of John Sterling, that noble soul, as Carlyle often referred to him, and even the career of Thomas Carlyle are obviously in Carlyle's mind, or seem to be. He continues:

> In the lowest stratum of social thraldom, nowhere was the noble soul doomed quite to choke, and die ignobly. The Church, poor old benighted creature, had at least taken care of that: the noble aspiring soul . . . could at least run into the neighbouring Convent, and there take refuge. Education awaited it there . . . A thrice-glorious arrangement, when I reflect on it; most salutary to all high and low interests; a truly human arrangement. You made the born noble yours, . . . : you did not force him either to die or become your enemy; idly neglecting or suppressing him as what he was not, a thing of no worth (*Works*, XX, 131-2).

The other *Latter-Day* pamphlets, as I have indicated, also reflect in verying degrees Carlylian ideas and images; ultimately, however, one always is attached to and struck by the tone and sincerity of feeling found in both the Fragment and in Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling*. They seem bound together because of these. It is the noble soul of his "disciple" that is somehow present; the "noble Sterling, a radiant child of the empyrean, clad

in bright auroral hues in the memory of all that knew him" (*Works*, XI, 2). "Sterling's death," we remember, "was the severest shock which Carlyle had yet experienced" (Froude, III, 351). "Of all the friends whom Carlyle had won to himself since he came to London, there was none that he valued as he valued this one. Sterling had been his spiritual pupil, his first, and also his noblest and best" (Froude, III, 349). Carlyle's feeling of loss was great.

Again and again Froude tried to convey the depth of Carlyle's feeling: "It seemed impossible that a soul so gifted, so brilliant, so generous, should have been sent upon the earth merely to show how richly it had been endowed, and to pass away while its promise was but half fulfilled" (Froude, III, 349). Sterling's letters demonstrated a "childlike goodness," a "purity of heart," "noble affection and fidelity"; one remembers, too, that Sterling's review of Carlyle's work in 1839 had been the "first generous human recognition, expressed with heroic emphasis, and clear conviction visible amid its fiery exaggeration, that one's poor battle in this world is not quite a mad and futile, that it is perhaps a worthy and manful one, which will come to something yet." Carlyle's words are as "sincere" as any he uttered: "The thought burnt in me like a lamp, for several days; lighting-up into a kind of heroic splendour the sad volcanic wrecks, abysses, and convulsions of said poor battle, and secretly I was very grateful to my darling friend, and am still, and ought to be" (*Works*, XI, 191-2). This was the soul who had experienced the "clerical aberration" and, one might say, the "educational aberration" Carlyle so deplored. "It is in the history of such vehement, trenchant, far-shining and yet intrinsically light and volatile souls, missioned into this epoch to seek their way there, that we best see what a confused epoch it is" (*Works*, XI, 104).

All of this complements perfectly the tone of the Fragment, deploring the pressure on any young soul seeking truth and light; however, instead of narrative, this "essay" combines Carlylian "rhetoric" and personal "lamentation." "To look at our religions, educations, pretended-beliefs and contemporary futile Sham-practices,—our poor intellectual world," the world Sterling had to battle, "lies ghostly noisome as a Valley of Jehosaphat." Or: "Oh I could weep to look back on a young innocent heart," [Carlyle's, Sterling's] "pure as the morning, beaming with affection, trustful veracity, loyal obedience faith and hope and fresh young life."

Then the cry from the heart: "I am poor and small and helpless, and trust wholly to you." The true Carlylian note struck so often in different contexts is found here: "lead me, lead me! Where are the heroisms—the eternal varities, the human noblenesses . . .?" Carlyle's final words on Sterling capture this note:

> In Sterling's Writings and Actions . . . we consider that there is for all true hearts, and especially for young noble seekers, and strivers towards what is highest, a mirror in which some shadow of themselves and of their immeasurably complex arena will profitably present itself. Here also is one encompassed and struggling even as now. This man also had said to himself . . . with all his instincts, and the question thrilled in every nerve of him, and pulsed in every drop of his blood: "What is the chief end of man? Behold, I too would live and work as beseems a denizen of this Universe, a child of the Highest God. By what means is a noble life still possible for me here? Ye Heavens and thou Earth, oh how?"

"Can there be nothing said," asks Carlyle in the Fragment, "to make this perception of mine clear?" Certainly in the biography of his friend, so lovingly and beautifully told, Carlyle succeeded in making clear not only his perception, but his heartfelt love for and devotion to one of the noblest souls he had known.[11]

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NLS MS. 1798, folios 64-66. [Note: All marks follow the MS. except for guillmets < > which indicate that the words enclosed were written above the line by Carlyle.]

[Folio 64]
Why did you bring me up (train me) according to methods that were pedantic merely and not true. Methods pedantic, I say, merely bullied into you by the bowowing big pedants, College doctors, and which even you yourselves, for all the bullying of and bowowing, never could be brought to do more than pretend to believe? Oh Shame! Here you had a young soul landed with you back fresh from the hands of its Maker to love, and try to imitate, eager to learn whatsoever of great and wonderful and

beautiful the Almighty Builder of the Universe, Author too of that young soul, had made and done. Tell me, O my honoured Seniors, what it is that the Eternal Father of me had commanded I should do? Beautiful exceedingly, beautiful and terrible is this His universe; I too am fearfully and wonderfully made. What is it that I must learn to know, that I should learn to do? I am poor and small and helpless, and trust wholly to you. Where are the [heroisms, human noblenesses, the shining vestiges of him that made me] Pisgah heights, the delectable mountains, only to be scaled by valiant labour,—lead me, lead me! Where are the heroisms, the eternal verities, the human noblenesses; are they attainable by spending one's best blood? Whatsoever you teach me, I will learn; you may make me all things [, a toilsome silent worker, communing with the inaudible eternal harmonies a member of the Synod of the Immortals]: a silent or speaking Poet, testifying by hand and word the will of the gods, a Print of the College of Domdaniel, doing dextrously with large temporary salary the will of the devils—[Oh shame, it was towards the latter object chiefly my instructions tended].

The azure immensities hung over me with all their galaxies and stars; the green earth spread her fruitful bosom, splendant with summer beauties, rich with unutterable meanings, with the memories of heroic man; all this was mine for a temple and school and habitation; [Nature the mighty mother and valiant Human Art, cleaving its victorious way thro the cloudy whirlpool of the centuries inviting me also to add myself and faculty as a drop to the immortal stream] and from all this you turned away with me; clapped miserable hornbooks, grammars, Heathen Hebrew and Histories fallen fairly incridible and insane and I know not what mythologies into my hands; set mere gerundgriding College Doctors and Sublime-Horned Owls of various title to preside over and ply their sorrowful toowhooing, Too-whit, Too-hoo! into my poor young soul—till the eternal azure, and natural sunshine of this God's creation, and all memory of my valiant foregoers, and footprints of an authentic Godhood walking this universe this day, was abolished in me. In short your revelation of this word to me was one of the shabbiest conceivable. A God had been you told me, and toohoo'd to me, but it was once upon a time, and in a place called Palestine; of any God that was now had been in England I could hear no tidings. What was your Palestine God to me? A living God here

and now; that, and no dead Idol, of wood or logic or symbolism and extinct hearsay, was the object of my longing. God in the plu'perfect tense,—what was this to me? A ghostly shadow, to whom no visions or inspiration but only hypocrisies Gregorian Chants and with these I could do nothing, haven't you toohood to me. In short your revelation of this word to me was one of the shabbiest conceivable. Had you left me altogether alone of your teaching and toohooing, had you only taught me nothing, rather than all this incredible mass of monkish [64/65] lumber! My own poor eyes would have taught me something; and that would have been at least a direct insight, a truth that I wholly believed. —Condemnable forever are all beliefs which a human heart only strives to believe, and fondly persuades itself that it believes. The beliefs may be true or untrue; but there is no doubt of the condition of the human soul ascertaining them in that fashion. Oh, the gulphs of eternal death lie under that soul; it is hastening to get into the category of ape-souls and has ceasing [sic] to be a human one. Populations consisting of such [Truth for such a one becomes emphatically the thing which is generally "trowed"; not a God's fact at all, which will grind you to pieces if you neglect to do it, but a thing disconnected quite from "doing"; a thing you areto spout of on platforms and parliamentary benches, to write books about and gain lessons from, a thing "trowed". Such a soul is serving under the flag of Chaos; doing for the Ancient Anarch what battle it can. And if without consciousness, or conscious of quite the contrary (which is a common case), so much the worse. For he is in this case not an openly avowed soldier of the Anarch, but a spy and traitor living disguised in the other camp;—and all his "virtues", purities, respectabilities, and attempts at human worth do but the better enable him to act his destructive part there. Better two open soldiers than one secret spy and poisoner of the wells.—The numbers of such I meet with, in these epochs, are alarming to think of! And what avails it to spring your watchman's rattle in this midnight of the world in sight of one such? You bring up more torrents of the like, and it is *you* who are set in the stocks and shot as a false soldier. You must learn to pass on in silence; looking to the eastern mountains whether there is yet any streak of day. Day will break, and the light of Heaven come, wherein man can see; doubt it not. Bootes and the Bear, Kyon, Prokyon, Dogstar and Lesser Dog and Orion's Belt and all the stars, with more serenity

and sternly beautiful radiance glitter down as in silent prophecy and divine admonition. "Are we not advancing? ["] Steadily at all moments, and beyond the clouds and clamours. Not hasting, not resting. Be of courage; walk thou also O earthly sentinel, like them, thy rounds. Behold even in this black hour, is there not a wavering twilight streaming up, winding round the North, mild continual prophet of a dawn, which will be day,—and chase the owlets and foul night birds. Steady, courage, be of cheer!—

To teach a man to do and be, that was the object of pedagogues and teachers and soul's coursers and temporal or spiritual drill-sargents among men. Drill sargents that merely teach men as the one great ultimatum, to *speak*,—they will succeed in it, I believe, and with results! There will be constitutional and other eloquence wide as the empire of the winds. Books to immense extent will be printed, bruted of, read, and converted into band boxes. Huge Psalmody will rise to the era of enlightenment, era of the press, of cheap instructors (dear at any price), and taxes on knowledge will be got rid of after an effort. [Articulate speech successful under the given conditions will develope itself, like the blaze of dry heath,—assuredly there is a tongue in every man, and of all functions man can set him upon, the most achievable is this of learning to wag his tongue. Eloquence in Parliament, in Society, in Pothouse Meeting will abound. Yearly will then be printed acres of Hansard typography,—which will grow no grass <yield entertainment> for men or horse.—In time you will more and more discover that you are getting to be a beautiful Nation of Playactors; looking extremely well in your yellow stageboots; but not suitable to God's creation at all, not turning to any good then; and that the carnal stage of Existence (current as the very gods) is becoming a thing full of sound and fury, without any meaning in it,—except that of drawing the quarterly salary, and getting the handclaps of a judicious Pit!—I often remember the anecdote of the rugged Sea-Captain (a true story) who had come into Kentucky while an election to Congress was going on. "Whom should we choose, think you?" asked the Kentucky citizens of this sea captain, a rugged earnest and evidently understanding man. "Can't say at all", answered he: "one thing I can say and advise. If any of your candidates rise and make what you call a glorious speech, choose any other

than him, don't choose that one. In him you may conclude there is no real sense in him!" [65/66]

The "Scavenger age", very necessary at present, may perhaps by Heaven's blessing be the preparation for blessings not yet anticipated. Carry on, ye stout Chadwickians; sweep the dung away in the name of Heaven; clear all the gutters, drains, let every drain have clear water once daily (in so wet a climate); and oh [2][lay down your tubes [1][construct your reservoirs of mud, get in your deodorizers) along the railway-lines, pour out with the most gigantic syringes and hoses the foul poison of cities, and change it into beautiful manure of fields!

The idea really has something epic; it it the apotheosis of scavengering;—and clearly too, what is an immense point, it can be done. It can be set about here even and now; and ought to be, and must be,—as the true work of this age. A poor age, nearly choked in the miasmatous accumulations of its dead predecessors. [All drains, instead of running, largely formenting filled with blue residue of horror; if you venture into them, you feel asphyxiated, the spiritual life departs out of you.] Good heavens, men talk of physical filth-accumulations, of bodily "churchyards" and their poison-gases, but what are these to the spiritual! Our spiritual world—it must be called such,—alas, too truly it is not, almost wholly, the gas of a horrid putrifying universal graveyard of things lying dead! Things, 2) if we will be candid, 1)which, are not alive, but lie dead. To look at our religions, educations, pretended-beliefs and contemporary futile Sham-practices,—our poor intellectual world lies ghostly noisome as a Valley of Jehosaphat. Ingenuous reader, oh when thou wast an innocent little boy, did they carefully exclude the scandalous sulphurated hydrogens the carbonic gases, the scandalous hypocrisy grimacings, and poisonous cants from young pure lungs and noses;—I mean was it not rather one black cesspool far and wide when our poor souls lived, and combination of poison-gases we were set to breathe, untruths old and untruth new; things that were no longer true, thing that had never been true. Ghosts of ages and the countries: Greek, Hebrew, English, Latin. Oh I could weep to look back on a young innocent heart, pure as the morning, beaming with affection, trustful veracity, loyal obedience faith and hope and fresh young life,—so crammed with food of mouldy rottenness; nourished from a spiritual charnel-house and forced to breathe the gases of

Churchyards. For a thing that is past cannot be believed, however grand and noble, is it not dead? Unfortunate pedagogues I had a right to look to you for something that I could believe; and when Treason of my own arose within me, it was to admonish me, in a truly terrific manner, that most of this stuff was foul delusion, that I must come out of it or die. The ingenuous young men of this age so many as have had the like experience, let them hold up their hands!—*All* hands go all start into the air? [What a forest of hands] all in whom there has risen a spiritual life of their own, what is alone worth calling a spiritual life at all,—any candour, originality, courageous insight;—the Prindt is obliged to report it so, with inexpressible sorrow.

ὑγίαινε , Be in health King Pyrrhus prayed only for "health"; given health, he thought all other things would be attainable to him. Lucian Apology for & C ii.404: Poet Philemon wishes first ὑγίειαν (health), 2nd success in affairs (εὐπραξίαν) 3rd gladness (χαίρειν) 4th nobody's debtor— Pythagoras (ib.) made it the first thing: his pentagram of pentalpha (pentagon with all its sides produced till they meet) Nothing in etymology has struck me more than that of the word *holy*. Holy it appears is equivalent to *healthy*. Gott der heilige, God the holy, is also God the healthy. So too when we say All hail, we wish the man all health.—A chink thro' which (if given to such reflexions) we may look into whole provinces, nay the whole continent of the Life and Morality of those old Nations.—I believe yet, it is the real basis of duty interest, moral precept or whatever we call it for man. Ought to *begin* there; dismissing all shadows from his head,—good Heavens, what troops of them he would have to dismiss! Can there be nothing said to make this perception of mine clear? Oh, how I am out; how tools and hand and mind itself have become disobedient to me,—*aim*, in the waste chaos, not being yet here! Turn the leaf and try.]—

NOTES

[1]I would like to thank the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland for permission to publish this Fragment. I take this occasion to express my appreciation for various kindnesses to the Librarians at the Huntington Library, the National Library, and

Librarians at the Huntington Library, the National Library, and to the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh. I also want particularly to acknowledge the aid of Aileen Christianson, Professor Kenneth Fielding, Professor David Daiches, and Dr. Ian Campbell, whose advice and help were far more generous than I deserved.

[2]Richard B. Ince, *Calverley and Some Cambridge Wits of the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1929); J.A. Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of His Life, 1795-1835*; *A History of His Life in London*, 1834-1881, 4 vols (London, 1882; 1884), III, 349.

[3]*The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. H.O. Traill, Centenary Edition, 30 vols. (London, 1896-1899), XI, 106.

[4]Ian Campbell, *Thomas Carlyle* (London, 1974), p. 188.

[5]Anne K. Tuell, *John Sterling: A Representative Victorian* (New York, 1941), p. 20.

[6]David Alec Wilson, *Carlyle*, 6 vols. (London, New York, 1923-1934), IV, 54.

[7]*John Sterling, Essays & Tales*, ed. with a Memoir of His Life by Julius C. Hare, 2 vols. (London, 1848), I, xiii.

[8]Charles Richard Sanders, *Carlyle's Friendships and Other Studies* (Durham, N.C., 1977), p. 48.

[9]*The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. C.R. Sanders and K.J. Fielding, 9 vols. (Durham, N.C., 1970-1981), I, 97-8; hereafter cited as CL.

[10]For a detailed development of this connection see Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, ed. M.K. Goldberg and J.P. Siegel (Canadian Federation for the Humanities, 1983).

[11]In my treatment of the manuscript I have attempted to present and to reproduce the manuscript as closely to the original as possible. However, I have made a number of silent deletions,

particulary Carlyle's crossings-out of phrases or words. I have not thought it necessary to comment on specific images or references since my introductory comments to the manuscript are sufficient, I believe, to provide a context for Carlyle's practice and thoughts during this period. What is evident especially, and here Jules Siegel and I are in complete agreement, the fragment indicates the "frustration and difficulty" Carlyle had in trying to "fuse his perceptions into a coherent statement." What this fragment serves to emphasize, I think, is the depth of that frustration. That Carlyle, as Siegel stresses, continued to "struggle with the dynamic unmanageability of industrialism, capitalism, and democracy" is clear; however, one must never forget the "sincerity" (a favorite Carlylian word) of that struggle, one that was always as much personal as ideological. See Jules Siegel, "Carlyle and Peel: The Prophet's Search for a Heroic Politician and an Unpublished Fragment," *Victorian Studies*, 26 (Winter, 1983), 181-195, especially ft. 1. For an excellent discussion of Carlyle as a writer seeking "tone and voice" through which to "communicate his perceptions," see Murray Baumgarten, "Carlyle and 'Spiritual Optics,'" *Victorian Studies*, (June, 1968), 503-522.