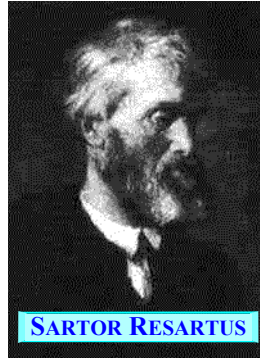


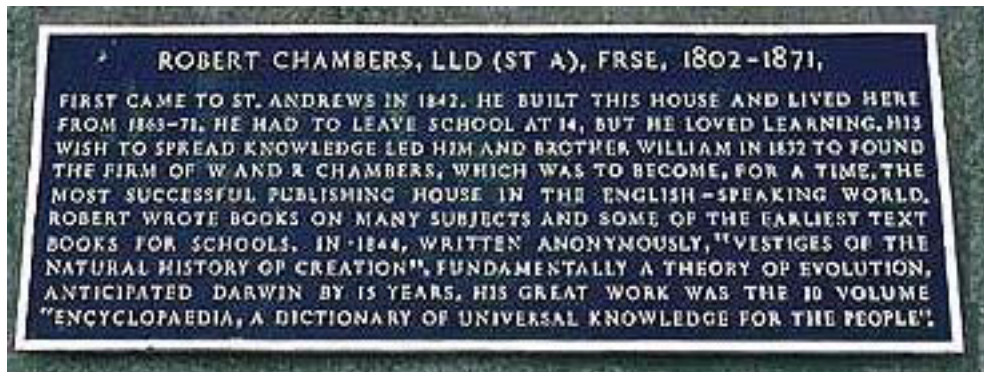
THOMAS CARLYLE'S SARTOR RESARTUS



1821

→ June: While in Leith Walk¹ at Edinburgh, just below Pilrig Street, on his way toward his “daily bathe on the sands between Lieth [*sic*] and Portobello,” [Thomas Carlyle](#) achieved the spiritual transformation appropriate to a close reader of the book of Job which he would characterize, in his [SARTOR RESARTUS](#), as the “Everlasting No.”

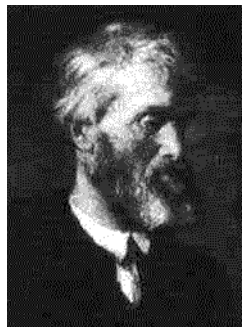
1. Leith Walk was a cheap commercial thoroughfare connecting Edinburgh with its port. Robert Chambers at one early point in his life had had a book stall on this street.



[P]erhaps the miserablest man in the whole French Capital or Suburbs, was I, one sultry Dog-day, after much perambulation, toiling along the dirty little *Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer*, among civic rubbish enough, in a close atmosphere, and over pavements hot as Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace; whereby doubtless my spirits were little cheered; when all at once there rose a Thought in me, and I asked myself: "What **art** thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! What is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet and defy it!" And as so I thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever, I was strong, of unknown strength, a spirit, almost a god. Even from that time, the temper of my misery was changed; not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance.

Thus has the EVERLASTING NO (*das ewige Nein*) pealed authoritatively through all the recesses of my Being, of my ME; and then was it that my whole ME stood up, in native God-created majesty, and with emphasis recorded its Protest. Such a protest, the most important transaction in Life, may that same Indignation and Defiance, in psychological point of view, be fitly called. The Everlasting No had said: "Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's)"; to which my whole Me now made answer: "I am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee!"

It is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-birth, or Baphometric Fire-baptism; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a Man.



THOMAS CARLYLE

Carlyle also recounted in his book that his inspiration for a Philosophy of Clothes occurred "when, turning the corner of a lane, in the Scottish Town of Edinburgh, I came upon a Signpost." The sign was a trade sign consisting of a painted depiction of a pair of leather breeches, with between their knees painted "these memorable words, SIC ITUR AD ASTRA".²

It was in this high moment, when the soul, rent, as it were, and shed asunder, is open to inspiring influence, that I first conceived this Work on Clothes: the greatest which I can ever hope to do; which has already, after long retardations, occupied, and will yet occupy, so large a section of my Life.

2. We may remind ourself here of [Thomas Carlyle's](#) treatment of leathern-suited [George Fox](#) of the [Quakers](#).

Later on, [Thomas Carlyle](#) would match this EVERLASTING NO up with a corresponding EVERLASTING YEA:

So true is it, what I then say, that **the Fraction of Life can be increased in value not so much by increasing your Numerator as by lessening your Denominator**. Nay, unless my Algebra deceive me, **Unity** itself divided by **Zero** will give **Infinity**. Make thy claim of wages a zero, then; thou hast the world under thy feet. Well did the Wisest of our time write: "It is only with Renunciation (*Entsagen*) that Life, properly speaking, can be said to begin"... there is in man a HIGHER than Love of Happiness: he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness!... Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the EVERLASTING YEA, wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him.

1822




June: It was a year after the spiritual breaking point which [Thomas Carlyle](#) would characterize, in his [SARTOR RESARTUS](#), as the "Everlasting No":

... all at once there rose a Thought in me, and I asked myself: "What **art** thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! What is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet and defy it!" And as so I thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever, I was strong, of unknown strength, a spirit, almost a god. Even from that time, the temper of my misery was changed; not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance. Thus has the EVERLASTING NO (*das ewige Nein*) pealed authoritatively through all the recesses of my Being, of my ME; and then was it that my whole ME stood up, in native God-created majesty, and with emphasis recorded its Protest. Such a protest, the most important transaction in Life, may that same Indignation and Defiance, in psychological point of view, be fitly called. The Everlasting No had said: "Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's)"; to which my whole Me now made answer: "I am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee!" It is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-birth, or Baphometric Fire-baptism; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a Man.

At this point [Carlyle](#) wrote home to his mother:

I have also books to write, and things to say and do in this world, which few wot of. This has the air of vanity, but it is not altogether so. I consider that my Almighty Author has given me some glimmerings of superior understanding and mental gifts; and I should reckon it the worst treason against him to neglect improving & using to the very utmost of my power these his bountiful mercies.

1825

 [Thomas Carlyle's](#) article "[Quakers](#)" in this year's volume of the [Edinburgh Encyclopædia](#) contained materials on George Fox which he would later incorporate into his [SARTOR RESARTUS](#).³

"Perhaps the most remarkable incident in Modern History," says [Diogenes] Teufelsdröckh, "is not the Diet of Worms, still less the Battle of Austerlitz, Waterloo, Peterloo, or any other Battle; but an incident passed carelessly over by most Historians, and treated with some degree of ridicule by others: namely, George Fox's making to himself a suit of Leather. This man, the first of the Quakers, and by trade a Shoemaker, was one of those, to whom, under ruder or purer form, the Divine Idea of the Universe is pleased to manifest itself; and, across all the hulls of Ignorance and earthly Degradation, shine through, in unspeakable Awfulness, unspeakable Beauty, on their souls: who therefore are rightly accounted Prophets, God-possessed; or even Gods, as in some periods it has chanced. Sitting in his stall; working on tanned hides, amid pincers, paste-horns, rosin, swine-bristles, and a nameless flood of rubbish, this youth had, nevertheless, a Living Spirit belonging to him; also an antique Inspired Volume, through which, as through a window, it could look upwards, and discern its Celestial Home. The task of a daily pair of shoes, coupled even with some prospect of victuals, and an honourable Mastership in Cordwainery, and perhaps the post of Thirdborough in his hundred, as the crown of long faithful sewing, — was nowise satisfaction enough to such a mind: but ever amid the boring and hammering came tones from that far country, came Splendours and Terrors; for this poor Cordwainer, as we said, was a Man; and the Temple of Immensity, wherein as Man he had been sent to minister, was full of holy mystery to him.

"The Clergy of the neighbourhood, the ordained Watchers and Interpreters of that same holy mystery, listened with unaffected tedium to his consultations, and advised him, as the solution of such doubts, to 'drink beer and dance with the girls.' Blind leaders of the blind! For what end were their tithes levied and eaten; for what were their shovel-hats scooped-out, and their surplices and cassock-aprons girt-on; and such a church-repairing, and chaffering, and organing, and other racketing, held over that spot of God's Earth, — if Man were but a Patent Digester, and the Belly with its adjuncts the grand Reality? Fox turned from them, with tears and a sacred scorn, back to his Leather-parings and his Bible. Mountains of encumbrance, higher than Ætna, had been heaped over that Spirit: but it was a Spirit, and would not lie buried there. Through long days and nights of silent agony, it struggled and wrestled, with a man's force, to be free: how its prison-mountains heaved and swayed tumultuously, as the giant spirit shook them to this hand and that, and emerged into the light of Heaven! That Leicester shoe-shop, had men known it, was a holier place than any Vatican or Loretto-shrine.— 'So bandaged and hampered, and hemmed in,' groaned he, 'with thousand requisitions, obligations, straps, tatters, and tagrags, I can neither see nor move: not my own am I, but the World's; and Time flies fast, and Heaven is high, and

3. The date of publication for this encyclopaedia is commonly given as 1830 but that was merely the date of issue of its last volume.

Hell is deep: Man! bethink thee, if thou hast power of Thought! Why not; what binds me here? Want, want! —Ha, of what? Will all the shoe-wages under the Moon ferry me across into that far Land of Light? Only Meditation can, and devout Prayer to God. I will to the woods: the hollow of a tree will lodge me, wild-berries feed me; and for Clothes, cannot I stitch myself one perennial suit of Leather!'

"Historical Oil-painting," continues [Diogenes] Teufelsdröckh, "is one of the Arts I never practiced; therefore shall I not decide whether this subject were easy of execution on the canvas. Yet often has it seemed to me as if such first outflashing of man's Freewill, to lighten, more and more into Day, the Chaotic Night that threatened to engulf him in its hindrances and its horrors, were properly the only grandeur there is in History. Let some living Angelo or Rosa, with seeing eye and understanding heart, picture George Fox on that morning, when he spreads-out his cutting-board for the last time, and cuts cowhides by unwonted patterns, and stitches them together into one continuous all-including Cast, the farewell service of his awl! Stitch away, thou noble Fox: every prick of that little instrument is pricking into the heart of Slavery, and World-worship, and the Mammon-god. Thy elbows jerk, and in strong swimmer-strokes, and every stroke is bearing thee across the Prison-ditch, within which Vanity holds her Workhouse and Ragfair, into lands of true Liberty; were the work done, there is in broad Europe one Free Man, and thou art he!

"Thus from the lowest depth there is a path to the loftiest height; and, for the Poor also a Gospel has been published. Surely if, as D'Alambert asserts, my illustrious namesake, Diogenes, was the greatest man of Antiquity, only that he wanted Decency, then by stronger reason is George Fox the greatest of the Moderns; and greater than Diogenes himself: for he too stands on the adamantine basis of his Manhood, casting aside all props and shoars; yet not, in half-savage Pride, undervaluing the Earth; valuing it rather, as a place to yield him warmth and food, he looks Heavenward from his Earth, and dwells in an element of Mercy and Worship, with a still Strength, such as the Cynic's Tub did nowise witness. Great, truly, was that Tub; a temple from which man's dignity and divinity was scornfully preached abroad: but greater is the Leather Hull, for the same sermon was preached there, and not in Scorn but in Love."

George Fox's "perennial suit," with all that it held, has been worn quite into ashes for nigh two centuries.... For us, aware of his deep Sansculottism, there is more meant in this passage than meets the ear.... Does [Diogenes] Teufelsdröckh anticipate that, in this age of refinement, any considerable class of the community, by way of testifying against the "Mammon-god," and escaping from what he calls "Vanity's Workhouse and Ragfair," where doubtless some of them are toiled and whipped and hoodwinked sufficiently, — will sheathe themselves in close-fitting cases of Leather? The idea is ridiculous in the extreme. Will Majesty lay aside its robes of state, and Beauty its frills and train-gowns, for a second-skin of tanned hide? By which change Huddersfield and Manchester, and Coventry and Paisley, and the Fancy-Bazaar, were reduced to hungry solitudes; and only Day and Martin could profit. For neither would [Diogenes] Teufelsdröckh's mad daydream, here as we presume covertly intended, of levelling Society (**levelling** it indeed with a vengeance, into one huge drowned marsh!), and so attaining the

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

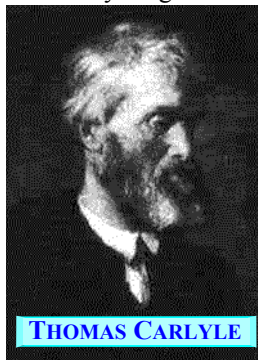
SARTOR RESARTUS

political effects of Nudity without its frigorific or other consequences, – be thereby realised. Would not the rich man purchase a waterproof suit of Russia Leather; and the high-born Belle step-forth in red or azure morocco, lined with shamoy: the black cowhide being left to the Drudges and Gibeonites of the world; and so all the old Distinctions be re-established?

1830



June: [Thomas Carlyle](#) jotted down about [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) that “It will be one of the strangest volumes ever offered to the English world, whether **worth** anything is another question.”



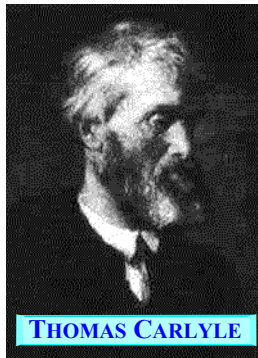
THOMAS CARLYLE

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS



September: [Thomas Carlyle](#) began his [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) writings (although not yet under that name, and although as yet the author did not know whether the writings were going to appear in the form of a book or in the form of a series of magazine article), extrapolating on the idea that the institutions and forms of everyday life are analogous to the clothing with which people mask their nakedness. These appurtenances conceal the “open secret” of reality, that God is immanent in everything.⁴

*I am going to write – Nonsense.
It is on “Clothes.”
Heaven be my comforter!*



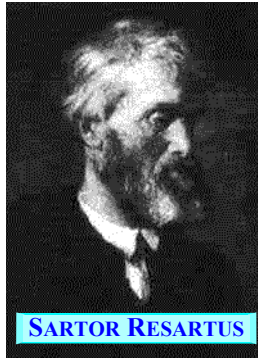
THOMAS CARLYLE

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

4. He would be working over these materials under the title “Teufelsdröckh” until November. He would submit this to, and then withdraw it from, [Fraser’s Magazine](#), and it would not achieve first publication in any form until 1833-1834.

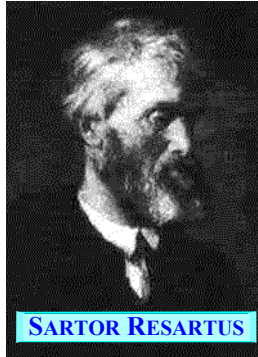
1831

➔ August 4: [Thomas Carlyle](#) left Craigenputtock on his way to Longman's, the publisher, carrying the manuscript of his spiritual autobiography, [SARTOR RESARTUS](#). A unique work, combining novel, essay and autobiography, it will be published only in part in [Fraser's Magazine](#), but Carlyle will be able to place his "Characteristics" in the [Edinburgh Review](#) and to meet John Stuart Mill, the intellectual and essayist who was recognized as the opposition to Jeremy Bentham's utilitarianism.



1833

➡ In this year and the following year, in England, after [Thomas Carlyle's](#) having labored over his [SARTOR RESARTUS](#)⁵ manuscript since the late 1820s, it achieved a distribution of sorts by being serialized in a London journal, [Fraser's Magazine](#). Since this wasn't readily available in Boston, Waldo Emerson would need to take out a subscription in order to read his new friend's work.



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

Lee Sterrenburg points out in *A NARRATIVE OVERVIEW: THE MAKING OF THE CONCEPT OF THE GLOBAL "ENVIRONMENT" IN LITERATURE AND SCIENCE* that the word "environment" was first used in its current sense by Carlyle in this manuscript, at a point at which he was parodying the construct of the "economy of nature" and those who might espouse such a construct. Rather than construing human culture in the usual manner as a small part of a greater natural whole, nature being originary and human nature developing derivatively within it, Carlyle chose to construe human nature as the greater whole of which general nature was but a part. For Carlyle, our spirit is a play of Force which dissolves mere material and bears it along in its irresistible surge. Our human Spirit is primary and originary and controlling: "Earth's mountains are leveled, and her seas filled up, in our passage: can the Earth, which is but dead and a vision, resist Spirits which have reality and are alive?" This spiritual vision of Carlyle's eventually would become a new sort of human global imperialism.

It is one of those constructs which we would like to imagine that the spirit of young David Henry Thoreau found inherently offensive.

1834

➡ March 12: In this month appeared the 4th of the eight installments of [Thomas Carlyle's](#) [SARTOR RESARTUS](#). Though he had not yet received any of the issues of [Fraser's Magazine](#) containing this, Waldo Emerson wrote to the Reverend James Freeman Clarke to inform him of the series.

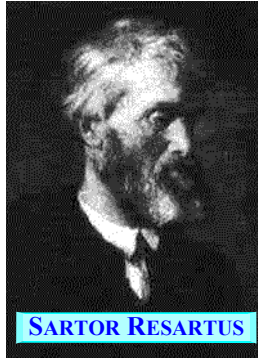
The several chapters were thankfully received, as they came out, and now we find it impossible to say which was best; perhaps each was best in its turn. They do not require to be remembered by chapters—that is a merit—but are rather remembered as a well-known strain, reviving from time to time, when it has nearly

5. Perhaps it will be helpful to indicate what "Sartor Resartus" means. It offers three possible, somewhat overlapping translations: "the tailor retailored," "the patcher patched," and "clothes volume edited." The volume deals with an elaborate analogy between Vesture, Body, and Spirit. As clothing is to the body, in covering it, and as the body is to the soul, constituting for it a habitat, so the world which we perceive is to be understood to stand in relation to a non-evident realm the animating spirit of which is Deity. Religious observances are to be compared, in accordance with such an analogy, with the old rags collected by Jewish rag pickers.

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS

died away, and always inspiring us to worthier and more persistent endeavors.

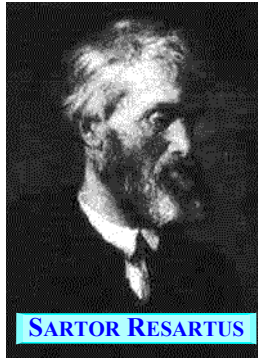


SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS



April 7, Monday: In this month appeared the 5th of the eight installments of [Thomas Carlyle's SARTOR RESARTUS](#). The Reverend James Freeman Clarke copied the letter he had received from Waldo Emerson about this strange text and sent it to his cousin Margaret Fuller in Groton. Fuller would be reading the work in [Fraser's Magazine](#) eventually as that magazine came out in bound multiple-issue volumes.⁶



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

The Boston and Worcester Rail-Road experimented with a run of their locomotive "Meteor" from Boston as far as Davis's tavern in Newton, a distance of 8 1/2 miles, under the observation of a party of Directors and some 50 or 60 other spectators. Caroline J. Barker of West Newton described the engine as looking like "an old boiler." A top speed of 20 miles per hour was found to be feasible, and an average speed of 18 miles per hour.⁷



August 12, Tuesday: In this month appeared the 8th and last of the installments of [Thomas Carlyle's SARTOR RESARTUS](#) in [Fraser's Magazine](#). As part of the publication deal 58 sets of the complete work had been stitched together for the author's personal distribution. The author sent off to Waldo Emerson a packet containing four stitched pamphlet copies of the complete work: "one copy for your own behoof" as he phrased it, plus "three others you can perhaps find fit readers for." Of the total 58, Carlyle would manage to find homes for 38 and would be forced to retain 20. (If for some reason you would like to see this, the copy which would be presented by Carlyle to Harriet Taylor is at the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City.)

"Sartor Resartus" is, perhaps, the sunniest and most

6. Another Transcendentalist who was reading along serially in [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) was Bronson Alcott.

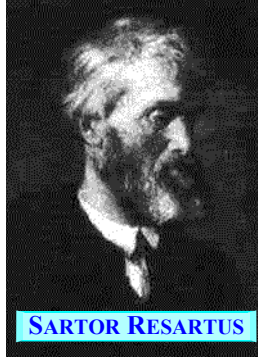
7. I have an attestation that this Boston and Worcester Railroad was later to be using passenger engines named "Nathan Hale" and "David Henshaw" (this one with a straight smokestack), but that freight engines had names such as "Elephant," "Lion," "Tiger," "Bison," "Camel," "Leopard," "Mercury," "Ajax," "Hercules," "Vesuvius," "Aetna," "Hecla," "Fury" (had a bad rep for constantly breaking down), and "Comet" (with an old-style funnel-shaped smokestack).



THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS

philosophical, as it is the most autobiographical of his works, in which he drew most largely on the experience of his youth. But we miss everywhere a calm depth, like a lake, even stagnant, and must submit to rapidity and whirl, as on skates, with all kinds of skillful and antic motions, sculling, sliding, cutting punch-bowls and rings, forward and backward. The talent is very nearly equal to the genius. Sometimes it would be preferable to wade slowly through a Serbonian bog, and feel the juices of the meadow.



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

BOSTON EVENING TRANSCRIPT TUESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 12

Burning of the Charlestown Convent

The subject of universal interest in the city today has been the work of destruction accomplished by a mob, last night and this morning, at and about the Ursuline Convent, on Mount Benedict, in Charlestown – resulting in the complete sacking of the principal building itself – a four-story handsome brick edifice, with wings, and front about eighty feet – together with the farm house, cottage, and every other building upon the premises, and also with the demolition or consumption by fire of all the furniture and chattels of every description, appurtenant to the whole.

The circumstances which have led to the commission of this horrible outrage need not be discussed at length. We shall confine ourselves principally to a statement of facts, ascertained from witnesses of the scene, and from personal observation, and application to all the authorities in whom most confidence may be placed. It is sufficient, perhaps, to introduce the statement of the Selectmen of Charlestown, in regard to this subject, as it appeared in this morning's Gazette:

“To the Public. Whereas erroneous statements have appeared in the public papers, intimating that the liberty of a young lady was improperly and unlawfully restrained at the Convent in this town, and believing that said publications were intended to excite the public mind against that Institution, and might result in unpleasant or serious consequences, the Selectmen, considering it their duty to endeavor to allay any such excitement, have, at the request of the Government of the Institution, fully examined into the circumstances

of the case, and were conducted by the lady in question throughout the premises, and into every apartment of the place – the whole of which is in good order, and nothing appearing to them to be in the least objectionable; and they have the satisfaction to assure the public, that there exists no cause of complaint on the part of said female, as she expresses herself to be entirely satisfied with her present situation, it being that of her own choice, and that she has no desire or wish to alter it.

"THOS HOOPER, ABIJAH MONROE, SAMUEL POOR, STEPHEN WILEY, JOHN RONEY, SELECTMEN
"Charlestown, Aug. 11, 1834"

The Post of this morning, also published a card from Mr. Edward Cutter, a respectable and well known citizen of Charlestown –not a Catholic– equally calculated, as that paper remarks, (had it come in season) "to allay the unjust excitement about the Nun." Mr. Cutter says:

"On the afternoon of Monday, the 28th inst, the lady in question came to my house, appeared to be considerably agitated, and expressed her wish to be conveyed to the residence of an acquaintance in West Cambridge. I lent her my assistance; and on the succeeding day, I called, with the purpose of inquiring for the causes which had induced her to leave the Institution. I was informed that she had returned to the Nunnery, in company with the Bishop, with a promise that she should be permitted to leave in two or three weeks, if it was her wish. Since that time, various rumors have been in circulation, calculated to excite the public in mind, and to such an extent as induced me to attempt to ascertain their foundation; accordingly on Saturday the 9th inst, I called at the Nunnery, and requested of the Superior an interview with the lady referred to. I obtained it; and was informed by her that she was at liberty to leave the Institution at any time she chose. The same statement was also made by the Superior, who farther remarked, that, in the present state of public feeling, she should prefer to have her leave."

The attention of our citizens was first called to the proceedings at Mount Benedict, by an alarm fire given from the vicinity of the Convent a little after eleven o'clock, and caused by tar-barrels and other combustible materials having been set on fire, as is supposed, to draw together those who had undertaken to aid in the work of destruction, or whose aid was expected to be obtained by the display of this signal. We have been informed that some time previous to this is a small party, of the same description with those who subsequently constituted the mass of the assailants, had ascended the hill, reconnoitered the premises pretty carefully, and apparently satisfied themselves that no suspicion was entertained, or, at all events, no defence prepared within the walls, from which serious difficulty or delay might be apprehended in the prosecution of the plan. This was no doubt suggested by the circumstance of certain, or rather uncertain,

designs against the Convent having been for some days the subject of general report. Immediate action or attempts, however, on the part of the disaffected, were not anticipated either by the municipal authorities, or the citizens generally; and this impression of at least present security had been artfully confirmed by a hand-bill yesterday posted up and extensively circulated in Charlestown, which intimated, substantially, that what was proposed to be done would be done on Thursday evening next.

A few moments after the signal was given, as above described, a gang of about fifty persons—as nearly as we can ascertain—but certainly at no time exceeding sixty—having gathered about the front door of the Convent, and made considerable noise by way of warning the inmates to flee, proceeded to affect a forcible entrance.

The whole party, we should observe here, were disguised. All of them, so far as we can learn, had their faces painted—some after an Indian fashion, and others in other ways; and a part of the number employed devices and disguises of various other descriptions, adapted to conceal the individuals concerned in the outrage, from recognition, at the time of its execution, and of course from punishment hereafter.

Meanwhile, the inmates of the Convent had all, we believe, effected their escape from the house, as admonished to do by the assailants in their first demonstrations about the entrance. These were the Lady Superior, five or six Nuns, three servant maids, and fifty-five or fifty-six children, the latter being pupils under the instruction of the Nuns, and placed there by their parents and other friends—the majority of whom we understand to be Protestants—belonging in this city and other places in Massachusetts generally, but some of them resident at greater distance. All of the inmates had retired when the alarm was given, and most were probably asleep; but the Nuns exerted themselves in rousing the children as fast as possible, and were successful in getting them all out of the Convent, whence they fled in great haste, through the rear of the building, and the garden attached to it, over the garden wall, scattering themselves in various directions, but most of them finding shelter in some of the houses not far distant from the premises.

Those only who delayed most for the assistance of the younger part of the number were personally molested, among whom it is said was the Lady Superior, upon whom some persons laid rude hands to hasten her movements. The efforts of this lady and the nuns who aided here were doubtless increased by the absence of three or four of their number, who at the earliest alarm devoted themselves to the removal of a sister sometime confined to her bed by a disease from which there is no hope of her recovery. Others perhaps were occupied in the care of one of their companions who is deranged, and who, in the phrenzy occasioned by the consternation and confusion of the horrid scene which surrounded her, and the frightful sounds of disorder which assailed her

ears, attempted to throw herself headlong from one of the upper windows of the house, and was not without difficulty restrained, and in some degree pacified, by her sisters.

It is stated by some that the invalid was actually conveyed from the house by some of the assailants, (to a neighboring dwelling) and that she was treated by them with comparative tenderness. It is exceedingly difficult today to ascertain precisely the facts in regard to this point, and indeed in regard to the whole subject. This city and Charlestown are both full of contradictory rumors. We profess only to get as near the truth as we can.

Of the destruction of all the buildings by fire, however, there is no doubt. The fire was set, in different parts of the Convent, probably about 12 o'clock, after considerable time had been spent in breaking up the furniture, including three pianos, an elegant costly harp, and other musical instruments. The whole establishment was in a blaze before one, and was reduced to ashes in the course of an hour or two.

There was an insurance at the American office, on the building, to the amount of \$12,000, and \$2,000 also on the furniture; but no part of this will be available to the proprietors under the circumstances of this occasion. The policy does not apply to occasions of this kind.

Great numbers of people were attracted to the scene of destruction in the course of the night, most of whom probably arrived too late to prevent much of the harm which was done, had they been disposed and able to interfere to advantage. As many as ten or eleven engines from this city, besides five from Charlestown, and some from Cambridge, repaired to the spot, but only to swell the crowd of spectators. Our firemen were of course under the control of the Charlestown Engineers, and by these were requested, as we are told, not to play upon the buildings, no water was thrown by any of the engines. The nearest which could be used to much extent was that of the Middlesex Canal. In reference to all this part of the transaction which relates to the firemen, we presume that correct information will be furnished hereafter; meanwhile, we insert, by request, the following card, to counteract an impression circulated in some quarters today, to the prejudice of Company No. 13:

"Boston, Aug. 12th, 1834

"This is to certify that I was with No. 13 Engine Company on their way to the fire, and during their stay there, and hearing the command of the officer for the members not to leave the Engine, took particular notice that not a member left, and that the utmost order was preserved whilst there.

"CHARLES S. CLARK, Assistant Engineer"

The Nuns, and those of the pupils whose relatives do not reside in the neighborhood, are now quartered with the Sisters of Charity in Hamilton street. Mr. Cutter, we understand, gave an asylum to a large number of them

during the night. We are told this afternoon by one of the pupils, that the only one of their number who saved any clothing, was a little girl about 12 years of age, who had packed up some dresses in a larger handkerchief some time before the alarm was given, supposing there might be trouble sooner or later, and carried them away in safety. We cannot learn, indeed, that any of the children were personally injured or insulted in any manner.

The city is full of excitement upon this affair, and our readers must, as we intimated above, be patient till the "truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," shall be sifted out of the multitude of rumors which now besets us on every side. We agree only in the utter condemnation of the outrage.

++++
"Great Meeting at Faneuil Hall," Boston Evening Transcript.

An immense multitude assembled at Faneuil Hall, in pursuance of an invitation from the Mayor, this day, at one o'clock, (although the notice was give but two hours previous,) to take measures relative to the riot at Charlestown. Hon. Theodore Lyman, Mayor of the city, presided, and Z Cook, Jr, Esq, was appointed Secretary. The resolutions were offered by Josaiah Quincy, Jr, Esq, who prefaced them with a few most eloquent remarks. After the resolutions were read, Hon. Harrison Gray Otis was called for, who rose, and with much feeling addressed the assembly with his usual brilliancy and elegance. On making an allusion to the good Bishop Cheverus, he was interrupted by loud and continued applause. There was an excellent feeling pervaded the vast multitude, and the resolutions were unanimously adopted, amid applause never before exceeded within the walls of Faneuil.



Resolved, That in the opinion of the citizens of Boston, the late attack on the Ursuline Convent in Charlestown, occupied only by defenceless females, was a base and cowardly act, for which, the perpetrators deserve the contempt and detestation of the community.

Resolved, That the destruction of property and danger of life caused thereby, calls loudly on all good citizens to express individually and collectively the abhorrence they feel for this high-handed violation of the laws.

Resolved, That we, the protestant citizens of Boston, do pledge ourselves, collectively and individually, to unite with our Catholic brethren in protecting their persons, their property, and their civil and religious rights.

Resolved. That the Mayor and Alderman be requested to take all measures consistent with law, to carry the foregoing resolution into effect, and as citizens, we tender our personal services to support the laws under the direction of the city authorities.

Resolved. That the mayor be requested to nominate a committee from the citizens at large, to investigate the proceedings of the last night, and to adopt every suitable mode of bringing the authors and abettors of this outrage to justice.

The following Committee was nominated by the Mayor:

H.G. Otis, John D. Williams, James T. Austin, Henry Lee,

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS

James Clark, Cyrus Atger, John Henshaw, Francis J. Oliver, Mark Healy, Charles G. Loring, C.G. Greene, Isaac Harris, Thomas H. Perkins, John Rayner, Henry Gussett, Daniel D. Brodhead, Noah Brooks, H.F. Baker, Z. Cook Jr., George Darracott, Samuel Hubbard, Henry Farnam, Benjamin F. Hallet, John K. Simpson, John cotton, Benjamin Rich, William Sturgis, Charles P. Curtis.

On motion of Mr. George Bond, the committee of twenty eight were requested to consider the expediency of providing funds to repair the damage done to the Convent. &c.

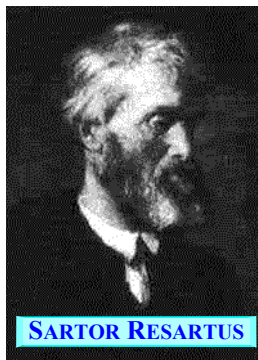
On motion of John C. Park Esq, it was

Resolved, That the Mayor be authorized and request to offer a very liberal reward to any individual who, in case of further excesses, will arrest and bring to punishment a leader in such outrages.

THEODORE LYMAN Jr, Chairman.
ZEBEDEE COOKE Jr, Secretary



Not earlier than November 13: Waldo Emerson received [Thomas Carlyle](#)'s packet containing the four stitched pamphlet copies of the complete [SARTOR RESARTUS](#): "one copy for your own behoof" as the author had phrased it, plus "three others you can perhaps find fit readers for." Emerson would pass on these extras to the Reverend [Frederic Henry Hedge](#) in West Cambridge, to Mrs. Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley in Waltham, and to Lydia Jackson in Plymouth. Mrs. Ripley's home in Waltham was functioning not only as a school for young women and a parsonage for her husband the Reverend Samuel Ripley, but also as a general clearinghouse for Transcendental thought. Carlyle's opus would be read aloud there on winter evenings, and the Reverend Ripley definitely read it. Young Lydia's circle in Plymouth included not less than seven other youths (Elizabeth Davis, Abby Hedge, Eunice Hedge, Hannah Hedge, Andrew Russell, LeBaron Russell, and Nathaniel Russell) all of whom would presumably read or be hearing much about Carlyle's opus. Lydia's friend George Partridge Bradford, Mrs. Ripley's younger brother and thus Emerson's half-uncle, would definitely be reading it. It is a wonder these enthusiasts didn't wear the print right off the page!



SARTOR RESARTUS

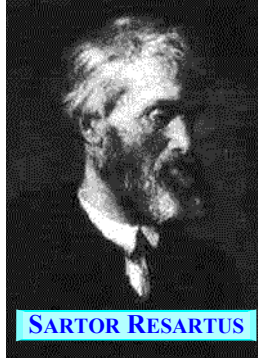
STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS



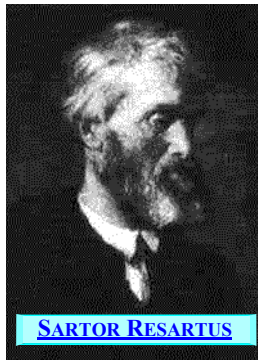
November 17: The Reverend [Frederic Henry Hedge](#) wrote to Margaret Fuller indicating that he had just finished reading [SARTOR RESARTUS](#)



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

November 30: Margaret Fuller wrote to the Reverend [Frederic Henry Hedge](#) about [SARTOR RESARTUS](#):



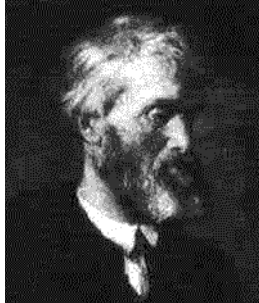
SARTOR RESARTUS

“I got a volume of [Frazer's](#) Mag and read all the Sartors I could find.”

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

1835

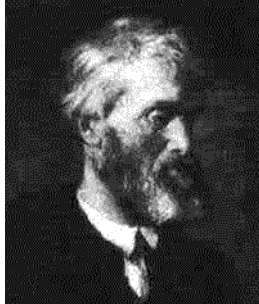
➡ January 23, Sunday: Waldo Emerson wrote his former student Benjamin Hunt to advise him “If you have not seen it [[SARTOR RESARTUS](#) by [Thomas Carlyle](#)] pray make inquiry after it.”



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

➡ February or March: In this month or the next, the Reverend [William Ellery Channing](#) asked the Reverend Waldo Emerson to lend him one of the copies of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) to read.



THOMAS CARLYLE

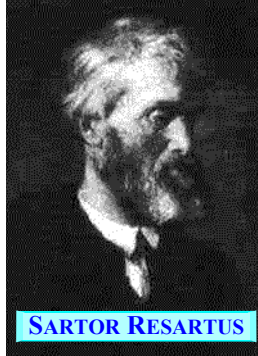
STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS



March 12: Waldo Emerson wrote to inform [Thomas Carlyle](#) that by that point “some thirty or more intelligent persons understand and highly appreciate” the four stitched copies of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) which had been posted to America.

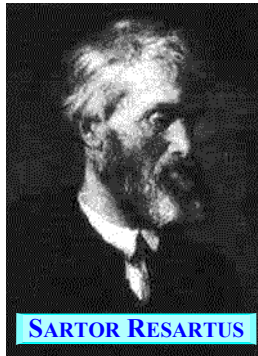


SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS



April: In West Cambridge, Miss Mary Moody Emerson, who, since she had been living in Concord, obviously had perused Waldo Emerson's copy of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#), was discussing [Thomas Carlyle](#) with the Reverend [Frederic Henry Hedge](#) just as he was departing to take up his new ministry in Maine. Meanwhile, in Philadelphia, Harriet Martineau was being “[fed] with the SARTOR” by the Reverend William Henry Furness out of the copy he had just received from Emerson.



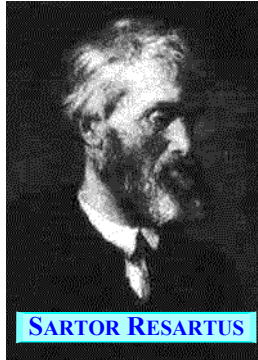
SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

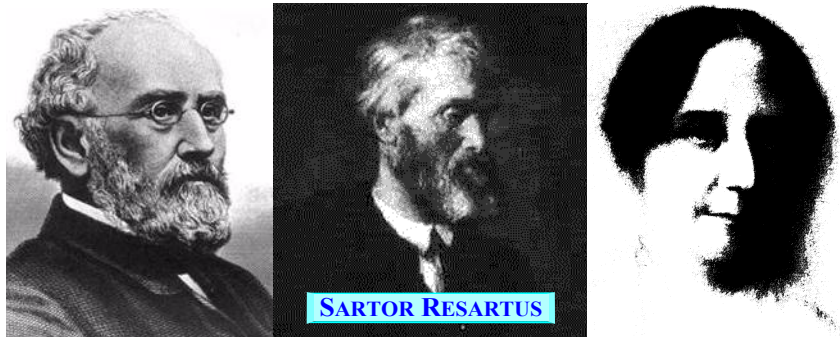
THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS

➡ April 30: Waldo Emerson's letter to [Thomas Carlyle](#) identified some of the readers of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#): among them were the Reverend Nathaniel Langdon Frothingham of the highly prestigious 1st Church in Boston MA; Emerson's cousin and childhood friend the Reverend William Henry Furness of the 1st Congregational Unitarian Church in Philadelphia; Gamaliel Bradford, who was the father of George Partridge Bradford and Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley and a superintendent of the Massachusetts General Hospital; and Ellis Gray Loring, an abolitionist and trial lawyer based in Boston, who had been Emerson's classmate at both the Boston Latin School and Harvard, and in 1838 would help edit Carlyle's MISCELLANIES.



➡ May: While vacationing with Mrs. Sophia Ripley and the Reverend George Ripley, Harriet Martineau "made the [Sartor](#) her constant companion."



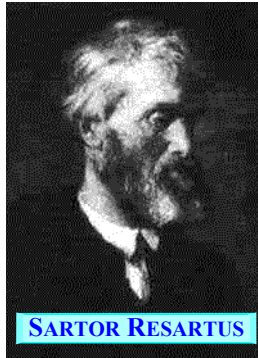
STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS



June: While visiting the Reverend James Freeman Clarke in Lexington, Kentucky Harriet Martineau told him that what she was up to was

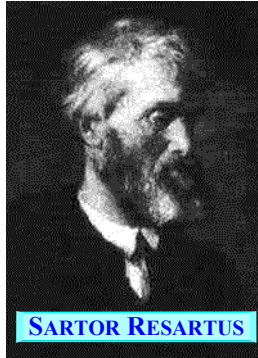


SARTOR RESARTUS

“preparing the people for [Carlyleism](#).”

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

Summer: Waldo Emerson sent one of the four copies of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) to the Reverend James Freeman Clarke in Louisville, Kentucky and probably also lent another of the copies to Alexander H. Everett, editor of Boston's [North American Review](#). At this point a second set of four copies from [Thomas Carlyle](#) in England were languishing at the Boston Custom Shed, mired in bureaucracy and quite unretrievable.



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

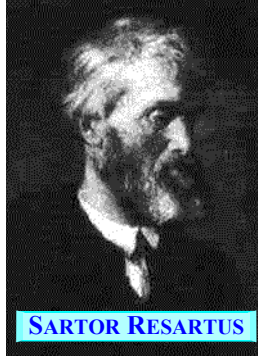
At the end of his Sophomore year David Henry Thoreau walked home to Concord with Charles Stearns Wheeler, and evidently there was a problem with his shoes for he had to walk the last two miles in his stockings, the last miles taking him literally hours. (One wonders whether, without shoes with, perhaps, something wadded into the toe of the right shoe, a young man without a right big toe would have trouble in balancing.)⁸

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS



Late Summer: The Reverend George Ripley wrote [Thomas Carlyle](#) about the wondrous reception which his work [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) was receiving in New England, proclaiming it to be “a huge, mysterious, magnificent Symbol of the Time upon which we have fallen. It is the cry of the Heart & the Flesh for the living God.”⁹

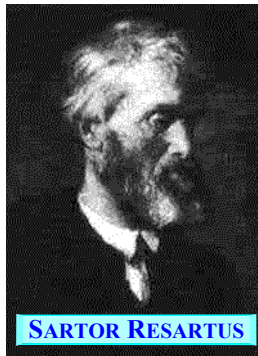


SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS



August: While Harriet Martineau was visiting the Reverend James Freeman Clarke's cousin Margaret Fuller they had “some talk about [Carlyleism](#).”



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

8. In regard to the difficulty of balancing, when one attempts to walk without a big toe, I can offer the following personal experience, obtained from an anonymous individual on the internet:

“I wear a size 7 on my right foot and size 6 on my left due to a partially amputated big toe. My dilemma is this: The smallest shoe size I can find is a size 7, so obviously the shoe is too big on my left foot. Do you sell a product or have an idea as to how I can fill the space (toe cap) as to where I can wear a size 7 shoe comfortably. I am possibly looking for a hard toe cap that would fit over my half toe but extend to measure up to a size 7 shoe. **I am starting to have great difficulties in my walking.**

I see that you sell the Toe Silopad Digital Cap. Would this work? It appears to be a soft fabric, so if I was to wear a sock over the toe cap, would it flatten the toe cap and not give me the support I need?”

9. During this early period of his career, [Carlyle](#) was popular in New England but not in the American South. It would only be the later Carlyle, author of *CROMWELL* and of *FREDERICK THE GREAT*, who would become immensely popular in our South — the white man crowd-pleaser-crowd-appeaser who was proclaiming “the natural propensity of men to grovel or to rule” (to have recourse to a sublimely descriptive phrase which would eventually be coined, by Van Wyck Brooks).



I don't know where would be the right point in the timeline in which to introduce this material, but at some point in time, Martineau and Fuller had some discussions about slavery. Paula Blanchard, in *MARGARET FULLER – FROM TRANSCENDENTALISM TO REVOLUTION* (Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1987), has commented on this:

Miss Martineau was a necessitarian and a social reformer, with little esthetic feeling and no tolerance of the more speculative flights of philosophy and literature. Her chief interest in the United States was the abolition of slavery, and she made a

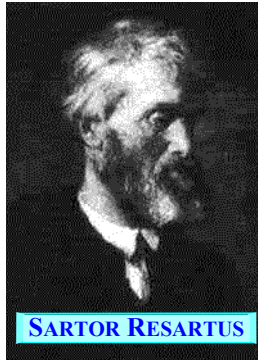
THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS

determined effort to bring Margaret into the abolitionist party. But Margaret, like her father, belonged to the group which called itself "antislavery" rather than "abolitionist," and which advocated the gradual phasing out of slavery. Nevertheless, their discussions sharpened Margaret's awareness of social issues, and in Miss Martineau and the women abolitionists of Boston she saw members of her sex assuming leadership, defying social convention, and facing down real physical danger in a totally new kind of role.



Fall: Harriet Martineau met with Waldo Emerson several times as he exercised himself in behalf of [Thomas Carlyle](#).

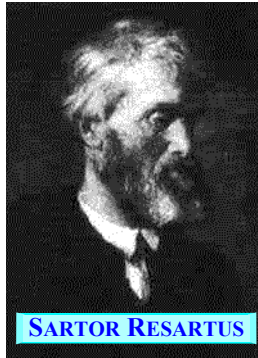


THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS



October 6: Waldo Emerson received the second set of four offprints of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) from the Boston Custom Shed, which [Thomas Carlyle](#) had dispatched to him in June, and set out quite as enthusiastically to disseminate these as he had the previous set of four.



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

One he would dispatch to the Reverend Convers Francis in Watertown. We can be pretty sure that Francis's sister Lydia Maria Child perused that copy, for she was departing for a tour of England and asked Emerson for a letter of introduction to its author. Francis would pass this copy on to [Theodore Parker](#), then a student at the Theological School in Cambridge, and Parker would then loan it to his "most intimate friend," another student, William Silsbee.

Another copy Emerson would dispatch to the Reverend [William Ellery Channing](#) in [Newport, Rhode Island](#). With the Reverend when that copy arrived was Harriet Martineau.

Meanwhile a long anonymous review (written by Alexander H. Everett and made possible by the copy that Emerson had made available to the editor during the late summer) was appearing in the [North American Review](#).¹⁰

10. "Thomas Carlyle," [North American Review](#) 41: 454-482

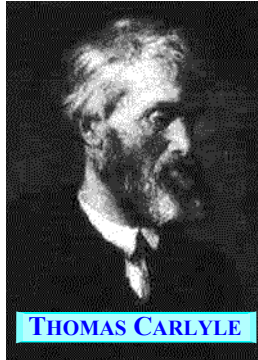
THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS



Young Lydia Jackson's friend LeBaron Russell in Plymouth "determined to publish an American edition" of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) and approached the firm of James Munroe and Company, which of course stipulated that he come up somehow with the usual list of 150 paying subscribers — to ensure recovery of the cost of setting the type for such a printing.

Much of this successful subscription gathering would be undertaken by William Silsbee and [Theodore Parker](#) in Cambridge, as well of course as by Russell himself.



THOMAS CARLYLE

This by way of contrast with the customary story which appears in our storybooks, which tend to simplify accounts to the greatest convenience by assigning meretricious actions to famous names:



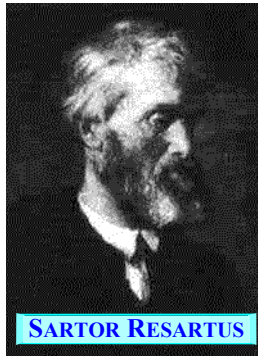
"Regular book publication of SARTOR did not take place until 1836, when Emerson arranged for publication in Boston and wrote an enthusiastic preface."

1836

January: [Thomas Carlyle](#)'s struggle of a decade with his [SARTOR RESARTUS: THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF HERR TEUFELSDRÖCKH](#) (a treatise on the need for new forms to replace the worn-out and patched ones of conventional religious expression, loosely disguised as a study of the "philosophy of clothing") would soon come to its completion with his manuscript's adequate publication in the form of a book,

She took to writing sensation stories, for in those dark ages, even all-perfect America read rubbish. She told no one, but concocted a 'thrilling tale,' and boldly carried it herself to Mr. Dashwood, editor of the WEEKLY VOLCANO. She had never read [SARTOR RESARTUS](#), but she had a womanly instinct that clothes possess an influence more powerful over many than the worth of character or the magic of manners. So she dressed herself in her best, and trying to persuade herself that she was neither excited nor nervous, bravely climbed two pairs of dark and dirty stairs to find herself in a disorderly room, a cloud of cigar smoke, and the presence of three gentlemen, sitting with their heels rather higher than their hats, which articles of dress none of them took the trouble to remove on her appearance. Somewhat daunted by this reception, Jo hesitated on the threshold, murmuring in much embarrassment,—

"Excuse me, I was looking for the WEEKLY VOLCANO office. I wished to see Mr. Dashwood."



SARTOR RESARTUS

for the American edition, which had been initiated by LeBaron Russell, was in press in Boston. At this point Russell asked Waldo Emerson to write up a short preface, which he would complete in March. While Emerson was preparing the preface, the compositors at Metcalf, Torrey, and Ballou Company in Cambridge would be typesetting on the basis of the offprint which had been supplied to Emerson by Carlyle. The press operations were being overseen by Charles Stearns Wheeler, who was working part time for the printers.

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

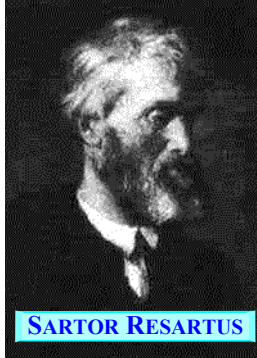
SARTOR RESARTUS



April: The 1st full edition of [Thomas Carlyle's](#) *SARTOR RESARTUS: THE LIFE AND OPINIONS OF HERR TEUFELSDRÖCKH* was finally for sale, for \$1.⁰⁰ the copy, in Boston.



"Regular book publication of SARTOR did not take place until 1836, when Emerson arranged for publication in Boston and wrote an enthusiastic preface."



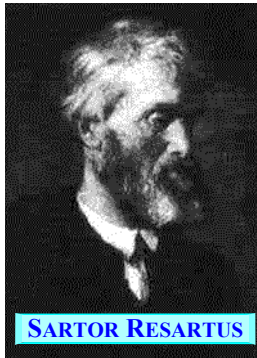
SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS



September 17, Saturday: Waldo Emerson wrote to [Thomas Carlyle](#) that "the five hundred copies of the *SARTOR* are all sold, and read with great delight by many persons."

"Regular book publication of SARTOR did not take place until 1836, when Emerson arranged for publication in Boston and wrote an enthusiastic preface."



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

1837

➔ From this year into 1840 [Thomas Carlyle](#) would be offering four courses of lectures in London, on German Literature and on Heroes.

The argument for the almost magical growth of the Scottish author's reputation was first made by the peripatetic English reformer, Harriet Martineau, in her controversial travelogue *SOCIETY IN AMERICA*:

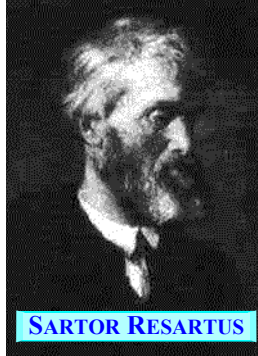
No living writer exercises so enviable a sway, so far as it goes, as Mr. Carlyle ... [whose] remarkable work [SARTOR RESARTUS](#), issued piecemeal through *Fraser's Magazine*, has been republished in America and is exerting an influence proportioned to the genuineness of the admiration it has excited. Perhaps this is the first instance of the Americans having taken to their hearts an English work that came to them anonymous, unsanctioned by any recommendation and even absolutely neglected at home. It has regenerated the preaching of more than one of the clergy.



THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS

This English author's published account of the situation, above, is of course entirely disingenuous, is a deliberate act of mystification of her audience. She had herself already become part of the American movement for this book by Carlyle before she had returned to England.



In April 1835 she had been had been “[fed] with the SARTOR” by the Reverend William Henry Furness in Philadelphia out of the copy he had just received from Waldo Emerson in Boston. In May 1835 while vacationing with Mrs. Sophia Dana Ripley and the Reverend George Ripley she had “made the SARTOR her constant companion.” In June 1835 while visiting the Reverend James Freeman Clarke in Lexington, Kentucky she had told him that what she was up to was “preparing the people for Carlyleism.” In August 1835 while visiting the Reverend Clarke’s cousin Margaret Fuller they had had “some talk about Carlyleism.” During Fall 1835 she had met with Emerson himself several times as he exercised himself in behalf of [Thomas Carlyle](#). She had visited several times with Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley in Waltham MA, and in October 1835 she had been staying with the Reverend [William Ellery Channing](#) in [Newport, Rhode Island](#) when Emerson had sent the Reverend Channing a copy of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#).





May 9, Tuesday: [Thomas Carlyle's](#) THE FRENCH REVOLUTION began to come off the presses:



The work's message must not be over-simplified: but it does seem a clear statement of Carlyle's belief in the effects of the destruction of God's natural order. When the leaders of French society neglected their duties, they found the political order challenged, and feudalism, then monarchy, abandoned. As faithlessness broke out and society broke down, the duty of ruling was passed to those unfitted for it, and finally to a mob. Anarchy, which Carlyle regarded as the manifestation of divine punishment, continued more and more violently until (as personified by Danton and Robespierre) exhausted with its own excesses; in the absence of a natural order came, too, rampant injustice. Humanity and civilization were wrecked, and the effects spread far beyond France. Carlyle explained this with unrestrained passion. He saw history as a continuum, and what had driven him on was the belief that the lessons of half a century earlier with which he lectured his readers were, like all experience, still vital today. This, like so much else of Carlyle's thought, had German roots. Talking to his friend [William Allingham](#) in 1871, Carlyle said: "I often think of Immanuel Kant's notion —no real Time or Space, these are only appearances— and think it is true." This is the "natural supernaturalism" of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#). To make the proper didactic point, he communicates facts with, as in Oliver Cromwell eight years later, "elucidations" that reflect his own prejudices. Like most of Carlyle's works, it is self-centered because it is more about Carlyle than about its notional subject.... A central passage outlines not just the effects of the betrayal of feudal principles, but also sets out Carlyle's own agenda for the next fifteen years. It is strong meat, too, for those who believe that Carlyle was some sort of proto-fascist who made a rule of siding with the oppressor:

Fancy, then, some Five full-grown Millions of such gaunt figures, with their haggard faces (*figures hâves*); in wollen jupes, with copper-studded leather girths, and high sabots, — starting up to ask, as in forest-roarings, their washed Upper Classes, after long unreviewed centuries, virtually this question: How have ye treated us; how have ye taught us, fed us, and led us, while we toiled for you? The answer can be read in flames, over the nightly summer-sky. *This* is the feeding and leading we have had of you; EMPTYNESS, — of pocket, of stomach, of head and of heart. Behold there is *nothing in us*; nothing but what Nature gives her wild children in the desert: Ferocity and Appetite: Strength grounded on Hunger. Did ye mark among your Rights of Man, that man was not to die of starvation, while there was bread reaped by him? It is among the Might of Man.

... But the ultimate message points ahead, from England in 1837 when Carlyle finished writing: "Out of a world of Unwise nothing but an Unwisdom can be made. Arrange it, constitution-build it, sift it through ballot-boxes as thou wilt, it is and remains an Unwisdom." This belief was to dominate his thinking, producing within him a pessimism that alternated between comedy and ferocity.

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

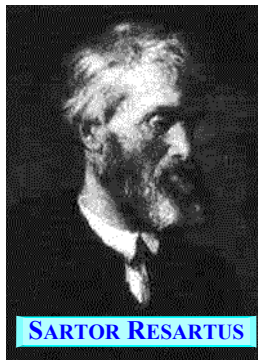
SARTOR RESARTUS



October: The North American Review published a blistering anonymous 40-page attack on the work of [Thomas Carlyle](#) and on Harriet Martineau's book sponsoring it, obviously by the Dean of the Harvard Divinity School, that Harvard University Dexter Professor of Sacred Literature scourge of the Transcendentalists, the Reverend John G. Palfrey:



"No living writer . . .," continues Miss Martineau, "exercises so enviable a sway, as far as it goes, as Mr. Carlyle." There is much virtue in that clause, as far as it goes, inasmuch as, to supply this nation of fifteen millions, over which the author of the "[SARTOR RESARTUS](#)" "exercises so enviable a sway," that work, – a work, too, which they have "taken to their hearts," and which "is acting upon them with wonderful force," – has, according to information on which we have the best reason to rely, been printed in but two editions, the first consisting of five hundred copies, and the second, after an interval of more than a year, being only twice as large.



SARTOR RESARTUS

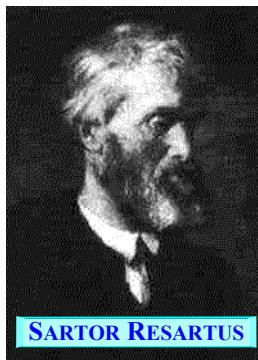
Not only had the Transcendentalists sustained the American dissemination and publication of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#), for they had proceeded directly to sponsor the publication here of his following book, his THE FRENCH REVOLUTION of 1837, and they would compound their error by proceeding directly to sponsor the publication here of his next work as well, his CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS of 1838. Carlyle's American reputation would persist until, by denouncing the Union cause during the Civil War as mere niggerocracy, he would entirely alienate this Northern support group. (Those who had so eagerly bought and championed his writings in the 1830s and 1840s would conclude to their sorrow during the 1860s that they should all along have been distancing themselves from such a spirit.)

1838

SARTOR RESARTUS was printed in England with its anonymous preface by Waldo Emerson touting it as “a Criticism on the Spirit of our Age” and characterizing it as philanthropic, as pure in its moral sentiment, and as commending itself to the heart of “every lover of virtue.” Per BARTLETT'S FAMILIAR QUOTES here is the sum total of what this volume contains that is of continuing import for the quotemongers and toastmasters among us:

As the Swiss inscription says: *Sprechen ist silbern, Schweigen ist golden*, – “Speech is silvern, Silence is golden;” or, as I might rather express it, Speech is of Time, Silence is of Eternity.

– Book III. Chapter III.



SARTOR RESARTUS

STUDY THIS STRANGENESS

1846

Lecture¹¹

| DATE | PLACE | TOPIC |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| March 25, Tuesday, 1845, at 7PM | Concord MA; Unitarian Church, Vestry | "Concord River" |
| February 4, Wednesday, 1846, at 7PM | Concord MA; Unitarian Church, Vestry | "The Writings and Style of Thomas Carlyle " |
| January 19, Tuesday, 1847, at 7PM | Lincoln MA; Brick or Centre School House | "A History of Myself" (?) |

11. From Bradley P. Dean and Ronald Wesley Hoag's THOREAU'S LECTURES BEFORE WALDEN: AN ANNOTATED CALENDAR.

Narrative of Event:

In a January 1846 letter to Charles Lane, Bronson Alcott wrote, "Emerson will read these Lectures [Representative Men] to the Concord Lyceum, and Thoreau has a Lecture on Carlyle."¹² The lecture referred to was the tenth in a course of twenty-two and is noted as follows in the records of the Concord Lyceum: "Concord Feb 4, 1846. A lecture was read before the Society by Mr Henry D. Thoreau of Concord. Subject: THE WRITINGS & STYLE OF THOMAS CARLYLE. Adjourned. Cyrus Stow Secretary."¹³

Henry Thoreau had begun making notes on Carlyle's works in 1842 but probably did not shape them into an essay until after he began living at Walden Pond. In the midst of journal passages on Carlyle written that summer of 1845, Thoreau inserted his well-known comment about his organic process of composition: "From all points of the compass from the earth beneath and the heavens above have come these inspirations and been entered duly in such order as they came in the Journal. Thereafter when the time arrived they were winnowed into Lectures — and again in due time from Lectures into Essays" (JOURNAL 1, 1837-1844, ed. Elizabeth Hall Witherell et al. [1981], page 205). This was, indeed, the path that he took with the Carlyle piece, finally publishing it, after some difficulty, in Graham's American Monthly Magazine in the spring of 1847.¹⁴

Advertisements, Reviews, and Responses:

A journal entry by Thoreau, written in preparation for his next Concord Lyceum lecture, suggests that his February 1846 auditors, whatever they had learned about [Thomas Carlyle](#), were left with an unfulfilled curiosity about their neighbor Henry Thoreau and his unusual life at Walden Pond:¹⁵

I expect of any lecturer that he will read me a more or less simple & sincere account of his life — of what he has done & thought. Not so much what he has read or heard of other mens lives — and actions Yet incredible mistakes are made — I have heard an Owl lecture with a perverse show of learning upon the solar microscope — and chanticlere upon nebulous stars When both ought to have been sound asleep in a hollow tree — or upon a hen roost. When I lectured here before this winter I heard that some of my towns men had expected of me some account of my life at the pond — this I will endeavor to give tonight

Thoreau had anticipated giving this account of his life at the pond later, in the same season he delivered his Carlyle lecture. As events transpired, however, he did not lecture again in Concord until 10 February 1847, when he delivered "A History of Myself" to his still curious neighbors (see lecture 10 below).

Description of Topic:

Like many of Thoreau's other lectures, he delivered this one and almost immediately began moving it toward publication. Nevertheless, he probably revised the lecture text between the time he delivered the lecture and the date he submitted the essay for publication. In this instance, judging from its size, the essay appears to be simply a slightly revised and expanded version of the lecture.

12. THE LETTERS OF A. BRONSON ALCOTT, ed. Richard L. Herrnstadt (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1969), pages 125-26.

13. Cameron, Kenneth Walter. THE MASSACHUSETTS LYCEUM DURING THE AMERICAN RENAISSANCE. Hartford CT: Transcendental Books, 1969, page 161.

14. Graham's American Monthly Magazine 30 (March 1847): 145-52, and 30 (April 1847): 238-45. See EARLY ESSAYS AND MISCELLANIES, pages 406-409, for an account of the difficulties Thoreau experienced in getting the essay published and in getting paid for the publication.

15. JOURNAL 2, 1842-1848, ed. Robert Sattelmeyer [1984], pages 141-142.



HERE'S AN INTERESTING REVIEW OF THOREAU'S REVIEW OF CARLYLE:



Thoreau's approach to history finds expression in a critical essay on Thomas Carlyle written in 1846 when Thoreau was living at Walden. Thoreau complains that Carlyle's French Revolution is too exclusively concerned with political events. Daily life does go on during a revolution, and the reader of Carlyle should be reminded that "the French peasantry did something besides go without breeches, burn chateaus, get ready knotted cords, and embrace and throttle one another by turns." He wishes Carlyle had thought to include in his book chapters on "'Work for the Month,'" "'State of the Crops and Markets.'" "'Meteorological Observations.'" and "'Day Labor'." Carlyle's account of the French Revolution seems to Thoreau to reveal an impairment of vision caused by the unwholesomeness of London, where Carlyle lives: "the sorest place on the face of the earth, the very citadel of conservatism." The condition of England narrows the scope of Carlyle's work. A writer cannot see humanity and nature whole living in such a place. "Until a thousand nameless grievances are righted, there will be no repose for him in the lap of Nature, or the seclusion of science and literature." A writer living in an unjust society must act to right grievances before hoping to enjoy the repose needed for contemplation or the detachment for study. It is a duty, as Thoreau suggests in "Resistance to Civil Government," falling on anyone benefiting from or otherwise implicated in the infliction of wrongs. "If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations than the struggle for justice, I must see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders. I must get off him first, that he may pursue his contemplations." So Carlyle's living in "the sorest place on the face of the earth" limits his observer's range; even if he wanted to, he couldn't see life whole from that situation.

Here's what Henry Thoreau thought worthy of quoting in full out of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#):

Truly, if History is Philosophy teaching by Experience, the writer fitted to compose history is hitherto an unknown man. The Experience itself would require All-knowledge to record it, were the All-wisdom, needful for such Philosophy as would interpret it, to be had for asking. Better were it that mere earthly Historians should lower such pretensions, more suitable for Omniscience than for human science; and aiming only at some picture of the things acted, which picture itself will at best be a poor approximation, leave the inscrutable purport of them an acknowledged secret; or, at most, in reverent faith, far different from that teaching of Philosophy, pause over the mysterious vestiges of Him whose path is in the great deep of Time, whom History indeed reveals, but only all History, and in Eternity, will clearly reveal.

Was he thinking of his favorite Concord farmer, George Minott, as he quoted this?

–For Minott was the man whom he would characterize in [WALDEN](#) as an old hunter of his acquaintance, who has a dry tongue...

(next screen)

WALDEN: One old hunter who has a dry tongue, who used to come to bathe in Walden once every year when the water was warmest, and at such times looked in upon me, told me, that many years ago he took his gun one afternoon and went out for a cruise in Walden Wood; and as he walked the Wayland road he heard the cry of hounds approaching, and ere long a fox leaped the wall into the road, and as quick as thought leaped the other wall out of the road, and his swift bullet had not touched him. Some way behind came an old hound and her three pups in full pursuit, hunting on their own account, and disappeared again in the woods. Late in the afternoon, as he was resting in the thick woods south of Walden, he heard the voice of the hounds far over toward Fair Haven still pursuing the fox; and on they came; their hounding cry which made all the woods ring sounding nearer and nearer, now from Well-Meadow, now from the Baker Farm. For a long time he stood still and listened to their music, so sweet to a hunter's ear, when suddenly the fox appeared, threading the solemn aisles with an easy coursing pace, whose sound was concealed by a sympathetic rustle of the leaves, swift and still, keeping the ground, leaving his pursuers far behind; and, leaping upon a rock amid the woods, he sat erect and listening, with his back to the hunter. For a moment compassion restrained the latter's arm; but that was a short-lived mood, and as quick as thought can follow though his piece was levelled, and *whang!* -the fox rolling over the rock lay dead on the ground. The hunter still kept his place and listened to the hounds. Still on they came, and now the near woods resounded through all their aisles with their demoniac cry. At length the old hound burst into view with muzzle to the ground, and snapping the air as if possessed, and ran directly to the rock; but spying the dead fox she suddenly ceased her hounding, as if struck dumb with amazement, and walked round and round him in silence; and one by one her pups arrived, and, like their mother, were sobered into silence by the mystery. Then the hunter came forward and stood in their midst, and the mystery was solved. They waited in silence while he skinned the fox, then followed the brush a while, and at length turned off into the woods again. That evening a Weston Squire came to the Concord hunter's cottage to inquire for his hounds, and told how for a week they had been hunting on their own account from Weston woods. The Concord hunter told him what he knew and offered him the skin; but the other declined it and departed. He did not find his hounds that night, but the next day learned that they had crossed the river and put up at a farm-house for the night, whence, having been well fed, they took their departure early in the morning.

The hunter who told me this could remember one Sam Nutting, who used to hunt bears on Fair Haven Ledges, and exchange their skins for rum in Concord village; who told him, even, that he had seen a moose there. Nutting had a famous fox-hound named Burgoyne, -he pronounced it Bugine,- which my informant used to borrow. In the "Wast Book" of an old trader of this town, who was also a captain, town-clerk, and representative, I find the following entry. Jan. 18th, 1742-3, "John Melven Cr. by 1 Grey Fox 0-2-3;" they are not now found here; and in his ledger, Feb. 7th, 1743, Hezekiah Stratton has credit "by $\frac{1}{2}$ a Catt skin 0-1-4 $\frac{1}{2}$;" of course, a wild-cat, for Stratton was a sergeant in the old French war, and would not have got credit for hunting less noble game. Credit is given for deer skins also, and they were daily sold. One man still preserves the horns of the last deer that was killed in this vicinity, and another has told me the particulars of the hunt in which his uncle was engaged. The hunters were formerly a numerous and merry crew here. I remember well one gaunt Nimrod who would catch up a leaf by the road-side and play a strain on it wilder and more melodious, if my memory serves me, than any hunting horn.

1847

February 27: Waldo Emerson wrote [Thomas Carlyle](#) and mentioned that Henry Thoreau had put an essay about him in [Graham's American Monthly Magazine](#).

He indicated that Thoreau was intending to post a copy to England as soon as the second part of the essay had appeared in the next issue of that magazine.¹⁶ He mentioned also that Thoreau had written "a good American book"¹⁷ and that he was saying that it was shortly to be printed.

March-April: After much exchange of correspondence and much intercession by Horace Greeley, "Thomas Carlyle and his Works," which had been submitted for paid publication before August 16, 1846,¹⁸ appeared as the leading article in [Graham's American Monthly Magazine](#) 30, Issue #3, pages 145-52 and was completed in Issue #4, pages 238-245.¹⁹

In the course of this essay Thoreau makes a critical remark about [Sir Archibald Alison's](#) MODERN HISTORY OF EUROPE FROM THE FRENCH REVOLUTION TO THE FALL OF NAPOLEON:

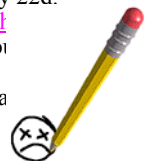
One improvement we could suggest in this last, as indeed in most epics – that he should let in the sun oftener upon his picture. It does not often enough appear, but it is all revolution, the old way of human life turned simply bottom upward, so that when at length we are inadvertently reminded of the "Brest Shipping," a St. Domingo colony, and that anybody thinks of owning plantations, and simply turning up the soil there, and that now at length, after some years of this revolution, there is a falling off in the importation of sugar, we feel a queer surprise. Had they not sweetened their water with revolution then? It would be well if there were several chapters headed "Work for the Month," – Revolution-work inclusive, of course – "Altitude of the Sun," "State of the Crops and Markets," "Meteorological Observations," "Attractive Industry," "Day Labor," etc., just to remind the reader that the French peasantry did something beside go without breeches, burn châteaux, get ready knotted cords, and embrace and throttle one another by turns. These things are sometimes hinted at,

16. Issues #3, pages 145-52 and #4, pages 238-245.

17. Titled at that point AN EXCURSION ON THE CONCORD & MERRIMACK RIVERS.

18. See early draft of this reference by Henry Thoreau to [hanging](#), written during Winter 1845-1846 before February 22d. Thoreau would undertake much more correspondence before finally receiving payment from that magazine. In fact [Tl](#) would obtain a copy, in England, and would peruse it "with due entertainment and recognition," before Thoreau would receive \$50.⁰⁰ on May 17, 1848.

19. For the manner in which this gallows humor which had originated in the journal during the winter before February would be inserted into the essay "Thomas Carlyle and His Works," see:



but they deserve a notice more in proportion to their importance. We want not only a background to the picture, but a ground under the feet also. We remark, too, occasionally, an unphilosophical habit, common enough elsewhere, in Alison's History of Modern Europe, for instance, of saying, undoubtedly with effect, that if a straw had not fallen this way or that, why then – but, of course, it is as easy in philosophy to make kingdoms rise and fall as straws.

READ THE FULL TEXT

“a ground under the feet also”: This, like the previous knotted cords (garotte) and the previous throttling of one another by turns, is an obvious reference to [hanging](#), since the important life support of which a hanging person has been deprived would be the ground underfoot.

1912

Here is one of the chapters from a book published in this year by Hodder and Stoughton of London, New York, and Toronto, entitled *AMONG FAMOUS BOOKS*, by John Kelman, D.D.:

SARTOR RESARTUS

We now begin the study of the last of the three stages in the battle between paganism and idealism. Having seen something of its primitive and classical forms, we took a cross section of it in the seventeenth century, and now we shall review one or two of its phases in our own time. The leap from the seventeenth century to the twentieth necessarily omits much that is vital and interesting. The eighteenth century, in its stately and complacent fashion, produced some of the most deliberate and finished types of paganism which the world has seen, and these were opposed by memorable antagonists. We cannot linger there, however, but must pass on to that great book which sounded the loudest bugle-note which the nineteenth century heard calling men to arms in this warfare.

Nothing could be more violent than the sudden transition from Samuel Pepys, that inveterate tumbler in the masque of life, whose absurdities and antics we have been looking at but now, to this solemn and tremendous book. Great in its own right, it is still greater when we remember that it stands at the beginning of the modern conflict between the material and spiritual development of England. Every student of the fourteenth century is familiar with two great figures, typical of the two contrasted features of its life. On the one hand stands Chaucer, with his infinite human interest, his good-humour, and his inexhaustible delight in man's life upon the earth. On the other hand, dark in shadows as Chaucer is bright with sunshine, stands Langland, colossal in his sadness, perplexed as he faces the facts of public life which are still our problems, earnest as death. There is no one figure which corresponds to Chaucer in the modern age, but [Thomas Carlyle](#) is certainly the counterpart of Langland. Standing in the shadow, he sends forth his great voice to his times, now breaking into sobs of pity, and anon into shrieks of hoarse laughter, terrible to hear. He, too, is bewildered, and he comes among his fellows “determined to pluck

out the heart of the mystery"—the mystery alike of his own times and of general human life and destiny.

The book is in a great measure autobiographical, and is drawn from deep wells of experience, thought, and feeling. Inasmuch as its writer was a very typical Scotsman, it also was in a sense a manifesto of the national convictions which had made much of the noblest part of Scottish history, and which have served to stiffen the new races with which Scottish emigrants have blended, and to put iron into their blood. It is a book of incalculable importance, and if it be the case that it finds fewer readers in the rising generation than it did among their fathers, it is time that we returned to it. It is for want of such strong meat as this that the spirit of an age tends to grow feeble.

The object of the present lecture is neither to explain [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) nor to summarise it. It certainly requires explanation, and it is no wonder that it puzzled the publishers. Before it was finally accepted by Fraser, its author had "carried it about for some two years from one terrified owl to another." When it appeared, the criticisms passed on it were amusing enough. Among those mentioned by Professor Nichol are, "A heap of clotted nonsense," and "When is that stupid series of articles by the crazy tailor going to end?" A book which could call forth such abuse, even from the dullest of minds, is certainly in need of elucidation. Yet here, more perhaps than in any other volume one could name, the interpretation must come from within. The truth which it has to declare will appeal to each reader in the light of his own experience of life. And the endeavour of the present lecture will simply be to give a clue to its main purpose. Every reader, following up that clue for himself, may find the growing interest and the irresistible fascination which the Victorians found in it. And when we add that without some knowledge of *Sartor* it is impossible to understand any serious book that has been written since it appeared, we do not exaggerate so much as might be supposed on the first hearing of so extraordinary a statement.

The first and chief difficulty with most readers is a very obvious and elementary one. What is it all about? As you read, you can entertain no doubt about the eloquence, the violent and unrestrained earnestness of purpose, the unmistakable reserves of power behind the detonating words and unforgettable phrases. But, after all, what is it that the man is trying to say? This is certainly an unpromising beginning. Other great prophets have prophesied in the vernacular; but "he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men but unto God; for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries." Yet there are some things which cannot convey their full meaning in the vernacular, thoughts which must coin a language for themselves; and although at first there may be much bewilderment and even irritation, yet in the end we shall confess that the prophecy has found its proper language.

Let us go back to the time in which the book was written. In the late twenties and early thirties of the nineteenth century a quite exceptional group of men and women were writing books. It was one of those galaxies that now and then over-crowd the literary heavens with stars. To mention only a few of the famous names, there were Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, Dickens, Tennyson, and the Brownings. It fills one with envy to think of days when any morning might bring a new volume from any one of these.

Emerson was very much alive then, and was already corresponding with Carlyle. Goethe died in 1832, but not before he had found in Carlyle one who "is almost more, at home in our literature than ourselves," and who had penetrated to the innermost core of the German writings of his day.

At that time, too, momentous changes were coming upon the industrial and political life of England. In 1830 the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened, and in 1832 the Reform Bill was passed. Men were standing in the backwash of the French Revolution. The shouts of acclamation with which the promise of that dawn was hailed, had been silenced long ago by the bloody spectacle of Paris and the career of Napoleon Buonaparte. The day of Byronism was over, and polite England was already settling down to the conventionalities of the Early Victorian period. The romantic school was passing away, and the new generation was turning from it to seek reality in physical science. But deep below the conventionality and the utilitarianism alike there remained from the Revolution its legacy of lawlessness, and many were more intent on adventure than on obedience.

It was in the midst of this confused *mêlée* of opinions and impulses that [Thomas Carlyle](#) strode into the lists with his strange book. On the one hand it is a Titanic defence of the universe against the stage Titanism of Byron's *Cain*. On the other hand it is a revolt of reality against the empire of proprieties and appearances and shams. In a generation divided between the red cap of France and the coal-scuttle bonnet of England Carlyle stands bareheaded under the stars. Along with him stand Benjamin Disraeli, combining a genuine sympathy for the poor with a most grotesque delight in the aristocracy; and John Henry Newman, fierce against the Liberals, and yet the author of "Lead, kindly Light."

The book was handicapped more heavily by its own style than perhaps any book that ever fought its way from neglect and vituperation to idolatrous popularity. There is in it an immense amount of gag and patter, much of which is brilliant, but so wayward and fantastic as to give a sense of restlessness and perpetual noise. The very title is provoking, and not less so is the explanation of it—the pretended discovery of a German volume upon "Clothes, their origin and influence," published by Stillschweigen and Co., of Weissnichtwo, and written by Diogenes Teufelsdröckh. The puffs from the local newspaper, and the correspondence with Hofrath "Grasshopper," in no wise lessen the odds against such a work being taken seriously.

Again, as might be expected of a Professor of "Things in General," the book is discursive to the point of bewilderment. The whole progeny of "aerial, aquatic, and terrestrial devils" breaks loose upon us just as we are about to begin such a list of human apparel as never yet was published save in the catalogue of a museum collected by a madman. A dog with a tin kettle at his tail rushes mad and jingling across the street, leaving behind him a new view of the wild tyranny of Ambition. A great personage loses much sawdust through a rent in his unfortunate nether garments. Sirius and the Pleiades look down from above. The book is everywhere, and everywhere at once. The *asides* seem to occupy more space than the main thesis, whatever that may be. Just when you think you have found the meaning of the author at last, another display of these fireworks distracts your attention. It is not dark enough to see their full splendour,

yet they confuse such daylight as you have. Yet the main thesis cannot long remain in doubt. Through whatever amazement and distraction, it becomes clear enough at last. Clothes, which at once reveal and hide the man who wears them, are an allegory of the infinitely varied aspects and appearances of the world, beneath which lurk ultimate realities. But essential man is a naked animal, not a clothed one, and truth can only be arrived at by the most drastic stripping off of unreal appearances that cover it. The Professor will not linger upon the consideration of the lord's star or the clown's button, which are all that most men care to see: he will get down to the essential lord and the essential clown. And this will be more than an interesting literary occupation to him, or it will not long be that. Truth and God are one, and the devil is the prince of lies. This philosophy of clothes, then, is religion and not *belles lettres*. The reason for our sojourn on earth, and the only ground of any hope for a further sojourn elsewhere, is that in God's name we do battle with the devil.

The quest of reality must obviously be wide as the universe, but if we are to engage in it to any purpose we must definitely begin it *somewhere*. A treatise on reality may easily be the most unreal of things—a mere battle in the air. So long as it is a discussion of theories it has this danger, and the first necessity is to bring the search down to the region of experience and rigorously insist on its remaining there. For this end the device of biography is adopted, and we see the meaning of all that apparent byplay of the six paper bags, and of the Weissnichtwo allusions which drop as puzzling fragments into Book I. The second book is wholly biographical. It is in human life and experience that we must fight our way through delusive appearances to reality; and Carlyle constructs a typical and immortal biography.

To the childless old people, Andreas and Gretchen Futtural, leading their sweet orchard life, there comes, in the dusk of evening, a stranger of reverend aspect—comes, and leaves with them the "invaluable Loan" of the baby Teufelsdröckh. Thenceforward, beside the little Kuhbach stream, we watch the opening out of a human life, from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to manhood. The story has been told a million times, but never quite in this fashion before. For rough delicacy, for exquisitely tender sternness, the biography is unique.

From the sleep of mere infancy the child is awakened to the consciousness of creatorship by the gift of tools with which to make things. Tales open up for him the long vistas of history; and the stage-coach with its slow rolling blaze of lights teaches him geography, and the far-flung imaginative suggestiveness of the road; while the annual cattle-fair actually gathers the ends of the earth about his wondering eyes, and gives him his first impression of the variety of human life. Childhood brings with it much that is sweet and gentle, flowing on like the little Kuhbach; and yet suggests far thoughts of Time and Eternity, concerning which we are evidently to hear more before the end. The formal education he receives—that "wood and leather education"—calls forth only protest. But the development of his spirit proceeds in spite of it. So far as the passive side of character goes, he does excellently. On the active side things go not so well. Already he begins to chafe at the restraints of obedience, and the youthful spirit is beating against its bars. The stupidities of an education which only appeals to the one faculty of memory, and to that mainly

by means of birch-rods, increase the rebellion, and the sense of restraint is brought to a climax when at last old Andreas dies. Then "the dark bottomless Abyss, that lies under our feet, had yawned open; the pale kingdoms of Death, with all their innumerable silent nations and generations, stood before him; the inexorable word never! now first showed its meaning."

The youth is now ready to enter, as such a one inevitably must, upon the long and losing battle of faith and doubt. He is at the theorising stage as yet, not having learned to make anything, but only to discuss things. And yet the time is not wasted if the mind have been taught to think. For "truly a Thinking Man is the worst enemy the Prince of Darkness can have."

The immediate consequence and employment of this unripe time of half-awakened manhood is, however, unsatisfactory enough. There is much reminiscence of early Edinburgh days, with their law studies, and tutoring, and translating, in Teufelsdröckh's desultory period. The climax of it is in those scornful sentences about Aesthetic Teas, to which the hungry lion was invited, that he might feed on chickweed—well for all concerned if it did not end in his feeding on the chickens instead! It is an unwholesome time with the lad—a time of sullen contempt alternating with loud rebellion, of mingled vanity and self-indulgence, and of much sheer devilishness of temper.

Upon this exaggerated and most disagreeable period, lit by "red streaks of unspeakable grandeur, yet also in the blackness of darkness," there comes suddenly the master passion of romantic love. Had this adventure proved successful, we should have simply had the old story, which ends in "so they lived happily ever after." What the net result of all the former strivings after truth and freedom would have been, we need not inquire. For this is another story, equally old and to the end of time ever newly repeated. There is much of Werther in it, and still more of Jean Paul Richter. Its finest English counterpart is Longfellow's *Hyperion*—the most beautiful piece of our literature, surely, that has ever been forgotten—in which Richter's story lives again. But never has the tale been more exquisitely told than in [SARTOR RESARTUS](#). For one sweet hour of life the youth has been taken out of himself and pale doubt flees far away. Life, that has been but a blasted heath, blooms suddenly with unheard-of blossoms of hope and of delight. Then comes the end. "Their lips were joined, their two souls, like two dewdrops, rushed into one,—for the first time, and for the last! Thus was Teufelsdröckh made immortal by a Kiss. And then? Why, then—thick curtains of Night rushed over his soul, as rose the immeasurable Crash of Doom; and through the ruins as of a shivered Universe was he falling, falling, towards the Abyss." The sorrows of Teufelsdröckh are but too well known. Flung back upon his former dishevelment of mind from so great and calm a height, the crash must necessarily be terrible. Yet he will not take up his life where he left it to follow Blumine. Such an hour inevitably changes a man, for better or for worse. There is at least a dignity about him now, even while the "nameless Unrest" urges him forward through his darkened world. The scenes of his childhood in the little Entepfuhl bring no consolation. Nature, even in his wanderings among her mountains, is equally futile, for the wanderer can never escape from his own shadow among her solitudes. Yet is his nature not dissolved, but only "compressed closer," as it were, and we watch the next stage of this development with a sense that some mysteriously great and

splendid experience is on the eve of being born.

Thus we come to those three central chapters—chapters so fundamental and so true to human life, that it is safe to prophesy that they will be familiar so long as books are read upon the earth—"The Everlasting No," "Centre of Indifference" and "The Everlasting Yea."

In "The Everlasting No" we watch the work of negation upon the soul of man. His life has capitulated to the Spirit that denies, and the unbelief is as bitter as it is hopeless. "Doubt had darkened into Unbelief; shade after shade goes grimly over your soul, till you have the fixed, starless, Tartarean black." "Is there no God, then; but at best an absentee God, sitting idle, ever since the first Sabbath, at the outside of his Universe, and seeing it go? Has the word Duty no meaning?"

"Thus has the bewildered Wanderer to stand, as so many have done, shouting question after question into the Sibyl-cave of Destiny, and receive no Answer but an Echo." Faith, indeed, lies dormant but alive beneath the doubt. But in the meantime the man's own weakness paralyzes action; and, while this paralysis lasts, all faith appears to have departed. He has ceased to believe in himself, and to believe in his friends. "The very Devil has been pulled down, you cannot so much as believe in a Devil. To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility: it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind men limb from limb. O, the vast, gloomy, solitary Golgotha, and Mill of Death!"

He is saved from suicide simply by the after-shine of Christianity. The religion of his fathers lingers, no longer as a creed, but as a powerful set of associations and emotions. It is a small thing to cling to amid the wrack of a man's universe; yet it holds until the appearance of a new phase in which he is to find escape from the prison-house. He has begun to realise that fear—a nameless fear of he knows not what—has taken hold upon him. "I lived in a continual, indefinite, pining fear; tremulous, pusillanimous." Fear affects men in widely different ways. We have seen how this same vague "sense of enemies" obsessed the youthful spirit of Marius the Epicurean, until it cleared itself eventually into the conscience of a Christian man. But Teufelsdröckh is prouder and more violent of spirit than the sedate and patrician Roman, and he leaps at the throat of fear in a wild defiance. "What art thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! What is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death: and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! Hast thou not a Heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee? Let it come, then; I will meet it and defy it!"

This is no permanent or stable resting-place, but it is the beginning of much. It is the assertion of self in indignation and wild defiance, instead of the former misery of a man merely haunted by himself. This is that "Baphometric Fire-baptism" or new-birth of spiritual awakening, which is the beginning of true manhood. The Everlasting No had said: "Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's); to which my whole Me now made answer: I am not thine, but Free, and forever hate thee!"

The immediate result of this awakening is told in "Centre of Indifference"—i.e., indifference to oneself, one's own feelings, and even to fate. It is the transition from subjective to objective interests, from eating one's own heart out to a sense of the wide and living world by which one is surrounded. It is the same process which, just about this time, Robert Browning was describing in *Paracelsus* and *Sordello*. Once more Teufelsdröckh travels, but this time how differently! Instead of being absorbed by the haunting shadow of himself, he sees the world full of vital interests—cities of men, tilled fields, books, battlefields. The great questions of the world—the true meanings alike of peace and war—claim his interest. The great men, whether Goethe or Napoleon, do their work before his astonished eyes. "Thus can the Professor, at least in lucid intervals, look away from his own sorrows, over the many-coloured world, and pertinently enough note what is passing there." He has reached—strangely enough through self-assertion—the centre of indifference to self, and of interest in other people and things. And the supreme lesson of it all is the value of *efficiency*. Napoleon "was a Divine Missionary, though unconscious of it; and preached, through the cannon's throat, that great doctrine, *La carrière ouverte aux talens* (the tools to him that can handle them)."

This bracing doctrine carries us at once into The Everlasting Yea. It is not enough that a man pass from the morbid and self-centered mood to an interest in the outward world that surrounds him. That might transform him simply into a curious but heartless dilettante, a mere tourist of the spirit, whose sole desire is to see and to take notes. But that could never satisfy Carlyle; for that is but self-indulgence in its more refined form of the lust of the eyes. It was not for this that the Everlasting No had set Teufelsdröckh wailing, nor for this that he had risen up in wrath and bidden defiance to fear. From his temptation in the wilderness the Son of Man must come forth, not to wander open-mouthed about the plain, but to work his way "into the higher sunlit slopes of that Mountain which has no summit, or whose summit is in Heaven only."

In other words, a great compassion for his fellow-men has come upon him. "With other eyes, too, could I now look upon my fellow-man: with an infinite Love, an infinite Pity. Poor, wandering, wayward man! Art thou not tried, and beaten with stripes, even as I am? Ever, whether thou bear the royal mantle or the beggar's gabardine, art thou not so weary, so heavy-laden; and thy Bed of Rest is but a Grave. O my Brother, my Brother, why cannot I shelter thee in my bosom, and wipe away all tears from thy eyes!" The words remind us of the famous passage, occurring early in the book, which describes the Professor's Watchtower. It was suggested by the close-packed streets of Edinburgh's poorer quarter, as seen from the slopes of the hills which stand close on her eastern side. Probably no passage ever written has so vividly and suggestively massed together the various and contradictory aspects of the human tragedy.

One more question, however, has yet to be answered before we have solved our problem. What about happiness? We all cry aloud for it, and make its presence or absence the criterion for judging the worth of days. Teufelsdröckh goes to the heart of the matter with his usual directness. It is this search for happiness which is the explanation of all the unwholesomeness that culminated in the Everlasting No. "Because the thou (sweet

gentleman) is not sufficiently honoured, nourished, soft-bedded, and lovingly cared-for? Foolish soul! What Act of Legislature was there that *thou* shouldst be Happy? A little while ago thou hadst no right to be at all. What if thou wert born and predestined not to be Happy, but to be Unhappy! Art thou nothing other than a Vulture, then, that fliest through the Universe seeking after somewhat to eat; and shrieking dolefully because carrion enough is not given thee? Close thy *Byron*; open thy *Goethe*." In effect, happiness is a relative term, which we can alter as we please by altering the amount which we demand from life. "Fancy that thou deservest to be hanged (as is most likely), thou wilt feel it happiness to be only shot: fancy that thou deservest to be hanged in a hair-halter, it will be a luxury to die in hemp."

Such teaching is neither sympathetic enough nor positive enough to be of much use to poor mortals wrestling with their deepest problems. Yet in the very negation of happiness he discovers a positive religion—the religion of the Cross, the Worship of Sorrow. Expressed crudely, this seems to endorse the ascetic fallacy of the value of self-denial for its own sake. But from that it is saved by the divine element in sorrow which Christ has brought— "Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the Everlasting Yea, wherein all contradiction is solved: wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him."

This still leaves us perilously near to morbidness. The Worship of Sorrow might well be but a natural and not less morbid reaction from the former morbidness, the worship of self and happiness. From that, however, it is saved by the word "works," which is spoken with emphasis in this connection. So we pass to the last phase of the Everlasting Yea, in which we return to the thesis upon which we began, viz., that "Doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by action." "Do the Duty which *lies nearest thee*, which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer.... Yes here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal; work it out therefrom; and working, believe, live, be free.... Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee; out with it, then. Up, up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called Today; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work."

Thus the goal of human destiny is not any theory, however true; not any happiness, however alluring. It is for practical purposes that the universe is built, and he who would be "in tune with the universe" must first and last be practical. In various forms this doctrine has reappeared and shown itself potent. Ritschl based his system on practical values in religion, and Professor William James has proclaimed the same doctrine in a still wider application in his PRAGMATISM. The essential element in both systems is that they lay the direct stress of life, not upon abstract theory but upon experience and vital energy. This transference from theorising and emotionalism to the prompt and vigorous exercise of will upon the immediate circumstance, is Carlyle's understanding of the word Conversion. When it comes to the particular question of what work the Professor is to do, the answer is that he has within him the Word Omnipotent, waiting for a man to speak it forth. And here in this volume upon Clothes, this [SARTOR RESARTUS](#), is his

deliberate response to the great demand. At first he seems here to relapse from the high seriousness of the chapters we have just been reading, and to come with too great suddenness to earth again. Yet that is not the case; for, as we shall see, the rest of the volume is the attempt to reconstruct the universe on the principles he has discovered within his own experience. The story to which we have been listening is Teufelsdröckh's way of discovering reality; now we are to have the statement of it on the wider planes of social and other philosophy. This we shall briefly review, but the gist of the book is in what we have already found. To most readers the quotations must have been old and well-remembered friends. Yet they will pardon the reappearance of them here, for they have been amongst the most powerful of all winged words spoken in England for centuries. The reason for the popularity of the book is that these biographical chapters are the record of normal and typical human experience. This, or something like this, will repeat itself so long as human nature lasts; and men, grown discouraged with the mystery and bewilderment of life, will find heart from these chapters to start "once more on their adventure, brave and new." This, then, is Teufelsdröckh's reconstruction of the world; and the world of each one of us requires some such reconstruction. For life is full of deceptive outward appearances, from which it is the task of every man to come back in his own way to the realities within. The shining example of such reconstruction is that of George Fox, who sewed himself a suit of leather and went out to the woods with it— "Every stitch of his needle pricking into the heart of slavery, and world-worship, and the Mammon god." The leather suit is an allegory of the whole. The appearances of men and things are but the fantastic clothes with which they cover their nakedness. They take these clothes of theirs to be themselves, and the first duty and only hope of a man is to divest himself of all such coverings, and discover what manner of man he really is.

This process of divesting, however, may yield either of two results. A man may take, for the reality of himself, either the low view of human nature, in which man is but "a forked straddling animal with bandy legs," or the high view, in which he is a spirit, and unutterable Mystery of Mysteries. It is the latter view which [Thomas Carlyle](#) champions, through this and many other volumes, against the materialistic thought of his time.

The chapter on Dandies is a most extraordinary attack on the keeping up of appearances. The Dandy is he who not only keeps up appearances but actually worships them. He is their advocate and special pleader. His very office and function is to wear clothes. Here we have the illusion stripped from much that we have taken for reality. Sectarianism is a prominent example of it, the reading of fashionable novels is another. In the former two are seen the robes of eternity flung over one very vulgar form of self-worship, and in the latter the robe of fashionable society is flung over another. The reality of man's intercourse with Eternity and with his fellow-men has died within these vestures, but the eyes of the public are satisfied, and never guess the corpse within. Sectarianism and Vanity Fair are but common forms of self-worship, in which every one is keeping up appearances, and is so intent upon that exercise that all thought of reality has vanished.

A shallower philosopher would have been content with exposing

these and other shams; and consequently his philosophy would have led nowhere. Carlyle is a greater thinker, and one who takes a wider view. He is no enemy of clothes, although fools have put them to wrong uses and made them the instruments of deception. His choice is not between worshipping and abandoning the world and its appearances. He will frankly confess the value of it and of its vesture, and so we have the chapter on Adamitism, in defence of clothes, which acknowledges in great and ingenious detail the many uses of the existing order of institutions. But still, through all such acknowledgment, we are reminded constantly of the main truth. All appearance is for the sake of reality, and all tools for expressing the worker. When the appearance becomes a substitute for the reality, and the tools absorb the attention that should be devoted to the work for whose accomplishment they exist, then we have relapsed into the fundamental human error. The object of the book is to plunge back from appearance to reality, from clothes to him who wears them. "Who am I? What is this me?... some embodied, visualised Idea in the Eternal Mind."

This swift retreat upon reality occurs at intervals throughout the whole book, and in connection with every conceivable department of human life and interest. In many parts there is little attempt at sequence or order. The author has made voluminous notes on men and things, and the whole fantastic structure of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) is a device for introducing these disjointedly. In the remainder of this lecture we shall select and displace freely, in order to present the main teachings of the book in manageable groups.

1. *Language and Thought.*—Language is the natural garment of thoughts, and while sometimes it performs its function of revealing them, it often conceals them. Many people's whole intellectual life is spent in dealing with words, and they never penetrate to the thoughts at all. Still more commonly, people get lost among words, especially words which have come to be used metaphorically, and again fail to penetrate to the thought. Thus the *Name* is the first garment wrapped around the essential me; and all speech, whether of science, poetry, or politics, is simply an attempt at right naming. The names by which we call things are apt to become labelled pigeon-holes in which we bury them. Having catalogued and indexed our facts, we lose sight of them thenceforward, and think and speak in terms of the catalogue. If you are a Liberal, it is possible that all you may know or care to know about Conservatism is the name. Nay, having catalogued yourself a Liberal, you may seldom even find it necessary to inquire what the significance of Liberalism really is. If you happen to be a Conservative, the corresponding risks will certainly not be less.

The dangers of these word-garments, and the habit of losing all contact with reality in our constant habit of living among mere words, naturally suggest to Carlyle his favourite theme—a plea for silence. We all talk too much, and the first lesson we have to learn on our way to reality is to be oftener silent. This duty of silence, as has been wittily remarked, Carlyle preaches in thirty-seven volumes of eloquent English speech. "Silence and secrecy! Altars might still be raised to them (were this an altar-building time) for universal worship. Silence is the element in which great things fashion themselves together; that at length they may emerge, full-formed and majestic, into the

daylight of Life, which they are thenceforth to rule.... Nay, in thy own mean perplexities, do thou thyself but *hold thy tongue for one day*: on the morrow how much clearer are thy purposes and duties." Andreas, in his old camp-sentinel days, once challenged the emperor himself with the demand for the password. "Schweig, Hund!" replied Frederich; and Andreas, telling the tale in after years would add, "There is what I call a King."

Yet silence may be as devoid of reality as words, and most minds require something external to quicken thought and fill up the emptiness of their silences. So we have symbols, whose doctrine is here most eloquently expounded. Man is not ruled by logic but by imagination, and a thousand thoughts will rise at the call of some well-chosen symbol. In itself it may be the poorest of things, with no intrinsic value at all—a clouted shoe, an iron crown, a flag whose market value may be almost nothing. Yet such a thing may so work upon men's silences as to fill them with the glimmer of a divine idea.

Other symbols there are which *have* intrinsic value—works of art, lives of heroes, death itself, in all of which we may see Eternity working through Time, and become aware of Reality amid the passing shows. Religious symbols are the highest of all, and highest among these stands Jesus of Nazareth. "Higher has the human Thought not yet reached: this is Christianity and Christendom; a symbol of quite perennial, infinite character; whose significance will ever demand to be anew enquired into, and anew made manifest." In other words, Jesus stands for all that is permanently noble and permanently real in human life. Such symbols as have intrinsic value are indeed perennial. Time at length effaces the others; they lose their associations, and become but meaningless lumber. But these significant works and personalities can never grow effete. They tell their own story to the succeeding generations, blessing them with visions of reality and preserving them from the Babel of meaningless words.

2. *Body and Spirit*.—Souls are "rendered visible in bodies that took shape and will lose it, melting into air." Thus bodies, and not spirits, are the true apparitions, the souls being the realities which they both reveal and hide. In fact, body is literally a garment of flesh—a garment which the soul has for a time put on, but which it will lay aside again. One of the greatest of all the idolatries of appearance is our constant habit of judging one another by the attractiveness of the bodily vesture. Many of the judgments which we pass upon our fellows would be reversed if we trained ourselves to look through the vestures of flesh to the men themselves—the souls that are hidden within.

The natural expansion of this is in the general doctrine of matter and spirit. Purely material science—science which has lost the faculty of wonder and of spiritual perception—is no true science at all. It is but a pair of spectacles without an eye. For all material things are but emblems of spiritual things—shadows or images of things in the heavens—and apart from these they have no reality at all.

3. *Society and Social Problems*.—It follows naturally that a change must come upon our ways of regarding the relations of man to man. If every man is indeed a temple of the divine, and therefore to be revered, then much of our accepted estimates and standards of social judgment will have to be abandoned. Society, as it exists, is founded on class distinctions which largely

consist in the exaltation of idleness and wealth. Against this we have much eloquent protest. "Venerable to me is the hard hand; crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a Man living man like." How far away we are from all this with our mammon-worship and our fantastic social unrealities, every student of our times must know, or at least must have often heard. He would not have heard it so often, however, had not [Thomas Carlyle](#) cried it out with that harsh voice of his, in this and many others of his books. It was his gunpowder, more than any other explosive of the nineteenth century, that broke up the immense complacency into which half England always tends to relapse.

He is not hopeless of the future of society. Society is the true Phoenix, ever repeating the miracle of its resurrection from the ashes of the former fire. There are indestructible elements in the race of man—"organic filaments" he calls them—which bind society together, and which ensure a future for the race after any past, however lamentable. Those "organic filaments" are Carlyle's idea of Social Reality—the real things which survive all revolution. There are four such realities which ensure the future for society even when it seems extinct.

First, there is the fact of man's brotherhood to man—a fact quite independent of man's willingness to acknowledge that brotherhood. Second, there is the common bond of tradition, and all our debt to the past, which is a fact equally independent of our willingness to acknowledge it. Third, there is the natural and inevitable fact of man's necessity for reverencing some one above him. Obedience and reverence are forthcoming, whenever man is in the presence of what he *ought* to reverence, and so hero-worship is secure.

These three bonds of social reality are inseparable from one another. The first, the brotherhood of man, has often been used as the watchword of a false independence. It is only possible on the condition of reverence and obedience for that which is higher than oneself, either in the past or the present. "Suspicion of 'Servility,' of reverence for Superiors, the very dog-leech is anxious to disavow. Fools! Were your Superiors worthy to govern, and you worthy to obey, reverence for them were even your only possible freedom." These three, then, are the social realities, and all other social distinctions and conventionalities are but clothes, to be replaced or thrown away at need.

But there is a fourth bond of social reality—the greatest and most powerful of all. That reality is Religion. Here, too, we must distinguish clothes from that which they cover—forms of religion from religion itself. Church-clothes, indeed, are as necessary as any other clothes, and they will harm no one who remembers that they are but clothes, and distinguishes between faith and form. The old forms are already being discarded, yet Religion is so vital that it will always find new forms for itself, suited to the new age. For religion, in one form or in another, is absolutely essential to society; and, being a grand reality, will continue to keep society from collapse.

4. From this we pass naturally to the great and final doctrine in which the philosophy of clothes is expounded. That doctrine, condensed into a single sentence, is that "the whole Universe

is the Garment of God." This brings us back to the song of the *Erdegeist* in Goethe's *Faust*:-

"In Being's floods, in Action's storm,
I walk and work, above, beneath,
Work and weave in endless motion!
Birth and Death,
An infinite ocean;
A seizing and giving
The fire of Living:
'Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the Garment thou seest Him by."

This is, of course, no novelty invented by Goethe. We find it in Marius the Epicurean, and he found it in ancient wells of Greek philosophy. Carlyle's use of it has often been taken for Pantheism. In so mystic a region it is impossible to expect precise theological definition, and yet it is right to remember that Carlyle does not identify the garment with its Wearer. The whole argument of the book is to distinguish appearance from reality in every instance, and this is no exception. "What is Nature? Ha! why do I not name thee God? Art thou not the 'living garment of God'? O Heavens, is it in very deed He, then, that ever speaks through thee? that lives and loves in thee, that lives and loves in me?... The Universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-house with spectres: but godlike and my Father's." "This fair Universe, were it in the meanest province thereof, is in very deed the star-domed City of God; through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every Living Soul, the glory of a present God still beams. But Nature, which is the Time-vesture of God, and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish."

Such is some very broken sketch of this great book. It will at least serve to recall to the memory of some readers thoughts and words which long ago stirred their blood in youth. No volume could so fitly be chosen as a background against which to view the modern surge of the age-long battle. But the charm of [SARTOR RESARTUS](#) is, after all, personal. We go back to the life-story of *Teufelsdröckh*, out of which such varied and such lofty teachings sprang, and we read it over and over again because we find in it so much that is our own story too.



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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's *INTRUDER IN THE DUST*



Prepared: September 22, 2009

THOMAS CARLYLE'S

SARTOR RESARTUS

ARRGH: THE AUTOMATED RESEARCH

REPORT GENERATION HOTLINE



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