Mrs. Carlyle, writing at the end of 1840, says of the state of things in Cheyne Row: "Carlyle is reading voraciously great folios preparatory to writing a new book—for the rest he growls away much in the old style—but one gets to feel a certain indifference to his growling—if one did not, it would be the worse for one."¹

One asks with wonder why he found existence (such as it had become to him) so intolerable; why he seemed to suffer so much more under the small ills of life than when he had to face real troubles in his first years in London. He was now successful far beyond his hopes. The fashionable world admired and flattered him. The cleverest men had recognised his genius, and accepted him as their equal or superior. He was listened to with respect by all; and, far more valuable to him, he was believed in by a fast-increasing circle as a dear and honoured teacher. His money anxieties were over. If his liver occasionally troubled him, livers trouble most of us as we advance in life, and his actual constitution was a great deal stronger than that of ordinary men. As to outward annoyances, the world is so made that there will be such things, but they do not destroy the peace of our lives. Foolish people intrude upon us. Official people force us to do many things which we do not want to do, from sitting on juries to payment of rates and taxes. We express our opinion on such nuisances perhaps with imprecatory emphasis, but we bear them and forget them. Why could not Carlyle, with fame and honour and troops of friends, and the gates of a great career

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flung open before him, and a great intellect and a conscience unharassed by a single act which he need regret, bear and forget too? Why, indeed! The only answer is that Carlyle was Carlyle; and a man to whom the figures he met in the streets looked suddenly like spectres, who felt like a spectre himself, and in the green flowery earth, with the sky bending over it, could see "Tartarus itself and the pale kingdoms of Dis," was not to be expected to think and act like any other human being.

Fraser came to terms about the same time for the lectures on "Hero Worship." They were set in type, and he liked them a great deal better when he read them in proof. "It is," he said, "a gowsterous [boisterous] determined speaking out of the truth about several things; the people will be no worse for it at present! The astonishment of many of them is likely to be considerable."3

The Miscellanies, Sartor, and the other books were selling well, and fresh editions were wanted. Young people in earnest about their souls had begun to write to him, thanking him for delivering them from Egypt, begging to be allowed to come to Cheyne Row and see the face and hear the voice of one who had done such great things for them. Amongst the rest came Miss Geraldine Jewsbury, a Manchester lady, afterwards famous as a novelist, and the closest friend of Carlyle's wife; then fresh to life, eager to use it nobly, and looking passionately for some one to guide her. Carlyle's first impressions were unusually favourable.

Miss Jewsbury, our fair Pilgrimess, is coming again tomorrow; and then departs for the North. She is one of the most interesting young women I have seen for years. Clear delicate sense and courage looking out of her small sylph figure,—a most heroic-looking damsel.4

The next impression was less satisfactory, though the young lady was still found interesting.

Que deviendra-t-elle? A notable young woman; victim of much that she did not make; seeking passionately for some "paradise to be gained by battle,"—fancying George Sand &c and all that "Literature of Desperation," can help her thitherward! In the world there are few sadder sicklier phenomena for me than that George Sand and the response she meets with.5

For Madame Sand and all her works, for all sentimental,
Geraldine Jewsbury. This mid-Victorian novelist, an admirer of Jane as well as of Carlyle, became an intimate of the Cheyne Row household in the early 1840s. Carlyle described her in 1841: "Clear delicate sense and courage looking out of her small sylph figure;—a most heroic-looking damsel." From her testimony—not always reliable—Froude in part shaped his interpretation of the Carlyles' domestic relationship. This photograph was taken in April 1855. (Courtesy of the Columbia University Libraries.)
indecent literature whatsoever, Carlyle's dislike amounted to loathing. He calls it somewhere "of new astonishing Phallus-Worship," "with Balzac, Sue and Company for Evangelists, and Madame Sand for Virgin." Emerson, who admired this great French celebrity, complained to me once of Carlyle's want of charity about her. Emerson had been insisting to him on her high qualities, and could get for answer nothing except that she was a great—improper female. Geraldine Jewsbury's inclination that way had not recommended her, nor did her own early novels, Zoe, The Half-Sisters, etc., tend to restore her to favour. But she worked through all this. In a long and trying intimacy she won and kept the affectionate confidence of the Cheyne Row household, and on his wife's death Geraldine was the first of her friends to whom he turned for support.

Meanwhile Whitelocke and Rushworth did not grow more digestible. The proofs of Hero Worship were finished. The want of rest in the past summer had upset Carlyle's internal system. Work he could not; and at Easter he was glad to accept an invitation from Milnes to accompany him to his father's house at Fryston, in Yorkshire. His letters give a graphic and attractive picture of the Fryston circle.

The James Marshalls dined one evening at Fryston, Mrs. James Marshall being the Miss Spring Rice who was mentioned above as an attendant at the lectures. They lived at Headingly, near Leeds, and pressed Carlyle to pay them a visit when he left Fryston. He said he was "a waiter on Providence," and could not say what he could do, but decided eventually to go. The Fryston visit lasted a fortnight. "Alas," he says, on closing his account of it, "we were at Church on Sunday; Roebuck (much tamer than before) was here again, with lawyers, with louts;—'this way leads not to peace!' Yet I actually slept last night (for the first time) without rising to smoke!"

Life in great English country houses may be as well spent as life elsewhere by the owners of them who have occupations to attend to. For visitors, when large numbers are brought together, some practice is required if they are to enjoy the elaborate idleness. The habits of such places as Fryston and Headingly, to which he went afterwards, were as yet a new experience to Carlyle.
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Two pleasant days were spent with the Marshalls, and then Carlyle pursued his way. He had nothing definite to do. He was taking holiday with set purpose, and being so far north he went on by Liverpool, and by steamer thence to Dumfriesshire. His mother had been slightly ailing, and he was glad to be with her till she recovered. But he was among his own people, no longer under restraint as among strangers, and he grew restless and "atrabilious." "The stillness of this region," he wrote when at Scotsbrig, "would be a kind of Heaven for me, could I get it enjoyed. But I have no home here; I am growing weary of the perfect idleness: like that 'everlasting Jew,' I must weiter, weiter, weiter [onward, onward, onward]!" Accordingly in May he was in Cheyne Row again, but in no very improved condition. "My sickness is more than of body; it is of mind too, and my own blame. I ought to know what I am going to work at: all lies there! . . . Despicable mortal! Know thy own mind; go then and do it—in silence." He could not do it; he could not work, he could not rest. There was no help for it; he had to do what in the past year he knew he must do, allow himself a season of complete rest and sea air. The weather grew hot, and London intolerable. He went back to Scotsbrig, and took a cottage at Newby close to Annan, on the Solway, for the summer. Mrs. Carlyle came down with a maid who was to act as cook for them. They were to take possession at the end of July.

He had made so little secret of his dislike of London, and his wish to leave it, that when he was so much absent this season a report went abroad that he had finally gone, and Sterling had written to him to inquire. He told his friend, in answer, that for the present he had merely taken a cottage for the summer; for the rest "I never had any thought, only vague rebellious impulses, blind longings and vel-lietés." "I do not think," he said, "I shall leave London for a while yet! I might readily go farther and fare worse; indeed in no other corner of the Earth have I ever been able to get any kind of reasonable social existence at all; everywhere else I have been a kind of exceptional anomalous anonymous product of Nature,—provoked and provoking in a very foolish unprofitable way."
The Newby lodgings were arranged, and he and his wife were settled in them. Rest was the object, the most desirable and the least attainable. He was determined to have nothing to say to his fellow-creatures. There he was, in the very centre of his oldest acquaintances. Not a place or a name or a person but was familiar to him from his boyhood. At Annan he had been at school. At the same school he had been an usher.12 Annan was Irving's home, and Irving's relations were all round him. Yet he visited no one, he recognised no one, he allowed no one to speak to him, and he wandered in the dusk like a restless spirit amidst the scenes of his early dreams and his early sufferings. The month at Newby over, he stayed another week at Scotsbrig with his mother, went for a few days to the Speddings in Cumberland, thence with his wife, before going back to London, to see Miss Martineau at Tynemouth. At last, in the end of September, he was at home again, the long holiday over, to which he had looked forward so eagerly.

Ought I to write now of Oliver Cromwell? Gott weiss; I cannot yet see clearly: I have been scrawling somewhat during the last week; but entirely without effect. Go on, go on! Do I not see so much clearly? Why complain of wanting light? It is courage, energy, perseverance, that I want.

How many things of mine have already passed into public action! I can see them, with small exultation; really almost with a kind of sorrow,—so little light, how enormous is the darkness that renders it noticeable!13

This extract explains the difficulty Carlyle had in beginning *Cromwell*. He felt that he had something to say, something which he ought to say about the present time to the present age; something of infinite importance to it. England as he saw it was saturated with cant, dosed to surfeit with doctrines half true only or not true at all, doctrines religious, doctrines moral, doctrines political, till the once noble and at heart still noble English character was losing its truth, its simplicity, its energy, its integrity. Between England as it was and England as it might yet rouse itself to be, and as it once had been, there was to Carlyle visible an infinite difference. Jeffrey had told him that, though things were not as they should be, they were better than they had ever been before. This, in Carlyle's opinion, was one of
those commonly received falsehoods which were working like poison in the blood. England could never have grown to be what it was if there had been no more sincerity in Englishmen, no more hold on fact and truth, than he perceived in his own contemporaries. The "progress" so loudly talked of was progress downwards, and rapid and easy because it was downwards. There was not a statesman who could do honestly what he thought to be right and keep his office; not a member of Parliament who could vote by his conscience and keep his seat; not a clergyman who could hope for promotion if he spoke what he really believed; hardly anyone of any kind in any occupation who could earn a living if he only tried to do his work as well as it could be done; and the result of it all was that the very souls of men were being poisoned with universal mendacity. Chartism had been a partial relief, but the very attention which it had met with was an invitation to say more, and he had an inward impulse which was forcing him on to say it. How? was the question. The Westminster Review had collapsed. He thought for a time that he might have some Review of his own where he could teach what he called "believing Radicalism," in opposition to Political Economy and Parliamentary Radicalism. Of this he could make nothing. He could not find men enough with sufficient stuff in them to work with him. Thus all this autumn he was hanging restless, unable to settle his mind on Cromwell; unable to decide in what other direction to turn.

An interesting incident, though it led to nothing, lightened the close of this year. In the old days at Comely Bank and Craigenputtoch, Carlyle had desired nothing so much as a professorship at one or other of the Scotch universities. The door had been shut in his face, sometimes contemptuously. He was now famous, and the young Edinburgh students, having looked into his lectures on Heroes, began to think that, whatever might be the opinions of the authorities and patrons, they for their part would consider lectures such as those a good exchange for what was provided for them. A "History chair" was about to be established. A party of them, represented by a Mr. Duniface, presented a requisition to the Faculty of Advocates to appoint Carlyle. The Scotsman backed them up, and Mr. Duniface wrote to him to ask if he would consent to be
nominated. Seven years before, such an offer would have had a warm welcome from him. Now he was gratified to find himself so respected by the students. But then was then, and now was now [and he refused the offer].

Sterling was spending the winter of 1841-1842 at Falmouth. His chest was weak. He had tried the West Indies, he had tried Madeira, he had tried the south of France, with no permanent benefit. He was now trying whether the mild air of the south of Cornwall might not answer at least as well, and spare him another banishment abroad. It was here and at this time that I became myself acquainted with Sterling. I did not see him often, but in the occasional interviews which I had with him he said some things which I could never forget, and which affected all my subsequent life. Among the rest, he taught me to know what Carlyle was. I had read *The French Revolution*, had wondered at it like my contemporaries, but had not known what to make of it. Sterling made me understand that it was written by the greatest of living thinkers, if by the side of Carlyle any other person deserved to be called a thinker at all. He showed me, I remember, some of Carlyle’s letters to him, which have curiously come back into my hands after more than forty years. Looking over these letters now, I find at the beginning of this year some interesting remarks about Emerson, with whom also Sterling had fallen into some kind of correspondence. Besides his own *Essays*, Emerson had sent over copies of the *Dial*, the organ then of intellectual Liberal New England. Carlyle had not liked the *Dial*, which he thought high-flown, often even absurd. Yet it had something about it, too, which struck him as uncommon.

But the chief substance of these letters is about Sterling’s own work. He had just written *Strafford*, and had sent the manuscript to be read at Cheyne Row. Carlyle, when asked for his opinion, gave it faithfully. He never flattered. He said honestly and completely what he really thought. His verdict on Sterling’s tragedy was not and could not be favourable. He could find no true image of Strafford there, or of Strafford’s surroundings. He had been himself studying for two years the antecedents of the Civil War. He had first thought Montrose to have been the greatest man
on Charles's side. He had found that it was not Montrose, it was Wentworth; but Wentworth, as he conceived him, was not in Sterling's play. Even the form did not please him, though on this he confessed himself an inadequate judge.

But from his own work and from Sterling's and all concerns of his own he was called away at this moment by a blow which fell upon his wife, a blow so severe that it had but one alleviation. It showed her the intensity of the affection with which she was regarded by her husband. Her mother, Mrs. Welsh, had now resided alone for several years at her old home at Templand in Nithsdale, where the Carlyles had been married. Her father, Walter Welsh, and the two aunts had gone one after the other. Except for the occasional visits to Cheyne Row, Mrs. Welsh had lived on there by herself in easy circumstances, for she had the rent of Craigenputtoch as well as her own jointure, and, to all natural expectation, with many years of life still before her. The mother and daughter were passionately attached, yet on the daughter's part perhaps the passion lay in an intense sense of duty; for their habits did not suit, and their characters were strongly contrasted. Mrs. Welsh was enthusiastic, sentimental, Byronic. Mrs. Carlyle was fiery and generous, but with a keen sarcastic understanding; Mrs. Welsh was accustomed to rule; Mrs. Carlyle declined to be ruled when her judgement was unconvinced; and thus, as will have been seen, in spite of their mutual affection, they were seldom much together without a collision. Carlyle's caution—"Hadere nicht mit deinem [sic] Mutter, Liebstes. Trage, trage! Es wird bald enden! [Do not quarrel with your mother, dearest. Be patient, be patient! It will soon be over!]"—tells its own story. Mrs. Carlyle, as well as her husband, was not an easy person to live with. She had a terrible habit of speaking out the exact truth, cut as clear as with a graving tool, on occasions, too, when without harm it might have been left unspoken.

Mrs. Welsh had been as well as usual. There had been nothing in her condition to suggest alarm since the summer when the Carlyles had been in Annandale. On February 23 Mrs. Carlyle had written her a letter, little dreaming that it was to be the last which she was ever to write to her,
describing in her usual keen style the state of things in Cheyne Row.

I am continuing to mend. If I could only get a good sleep, I should be quite recovered; but, alas! we are gone to the devil again in the sleeping department. That dreadful woman next door, instead of putting away the cock which we so pathetically appealed against, has produced another. . . . they crow and screech not only from daylight, but from midnight, and so near that it goes through one's head every time like a sword. The night before last they woke me every quarter of an hour, but I slept some in the intervals; for they had not succeeded in rousing him above. But last night they had him up at three. He went to bed again, and got some sleep after, the "horrors" not recommencing their efforts till five; but I, listening every minute for a new screech that would send him down a second time and prepare such wretchedness for the day, could sleep no more. . . .

This despicable nuisance is not at all unlikely to drive us out of the house after all, just when he had reconciled himself to stay in it. How one is vexed with little things in this life! The great evils one triumphs over bravely, but the little eat away one's heart.

An "evil" greater than she had yet known since her father was taken away hung over Mrs. Carlyle while she was writing this letter. Five days later there came news from Temp-land, like a bolt out of the blue sky, that Mrs. Welsh had been struck by apoplexy and was dangerously ill. Mrs. Carlyle, utterly unfit for travelling, "almost out of herself," flew to Euston Square and caught the first train to Liverpool. At Liverpool, at her uncle's house, she learnt that all was over, and that she would never see her mother more. She was carried to bed unconscious. When she recovered her senses she would have risen and gone on; but her uncle would not let her risk her own life, and to have proceeded in her existing condition would as likely as not have been fatal to her. Extreme, intense in everything, she could only think of her own shortcomings, of how her mother was gone now, and could never forgive her. The strongest natures suffer worst from remorse. Only a strong nature, perhaps, can know what remorse means. Mrs. Carlyle had surrendered her fortune to her mother, but the recollection of this could be no comfort; she would have hated herself if such a thought had occurred to her. Carlyle knew what she would be suffering. The fatal news had been sent on
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to him in London. He who could be driven into frenzy if a cock crow near him at midnight, had no sorrow to spare for himself in the presence of real calamity.

Mrs. Carlyle lay ill in Liverpool, unable to stir, and un­permitted to write. He himself felt that he must go, and he went without waiting to hear more. As it was, he was too late for the funeral, which had for some reason been hurried; but his brother James, with the instinct of good feeling, had gone of his own accord from Ecclefechan to represent him. Carlyle was sole executor, and there were business affairs requiring attention which might detain him several weeks. He was a few hours with his wife at Liver­pool on his way, and then went on, taking his wife’s cousin Helen with him to assist in the many arrangements which would require a woman’s hand. Everything was, of course, left to Mrs. Carlyle, and her own property was returned to her. It was not large, from £200 to £300 a year; but, with such habits as hers and her husband’s, it was independence, and even wealth.

But this was the last recollection which occurred to Car­lyle. He travelled down on the box of the mail in a half-dreamy state, seeing familiar faces at Annan and Dumfries, and along the road, but taking no heed of them. Templand, when he reached it, was a haunted place. There he had been married; there he had often spent his holidays when he could come down from Craigenputtoch; there he had conceived Sartor; there two years before his own mother and he had smoked their pipes together in the shrubbery. It was from Templand that he had rushed away desperate in the twilight of a summer morning and seen the herons fishing in the river pools. A thousand memories hung about the place, which was now standing desolate. During the six weeks while he remained there he wrote daily to his wife, and every one of these letters contained something tenderly beautiful.

In the quiet at Templand, and among such solemn sur­roundings, London and its noisy vanities, its dinners and its hencoops, did not seem more beautiful to Carlyle. More than ever he prayed to be away from it. At that house it was evident that Mrs. Carlyle could not bear the thought of living. But there was Craigenputtoch not far off, towards which he had often been wistfully looking. Of this, too,
hitherto she had refused to hear so much as a mention; but it was now her own, and her objection might be less.

Carlyle took his leave of Templand, and went to pass a few quiet days with his mother. At Scotsbrig ordinary subjects resumed their interest, and Carlyle began to think again, though not very heartily, of his own work. Tedious business still detained him in Dumfriesshire. He could not leave till he had disposed of the lease of Templand. The agents of the noble Duke could not, consistently with their master's dignity, be rapid in their resolutions.

He had small respect for dukes and such-like, and perhaps Templand would not have answered with him if he had kept it; but he had a curious pride also in his own family. There was reason to believe that his own father was the actual representative of the Lords Carlyle of Torthorwald; and, though he laughed when he spoke of it, he was clearly not displeased to know that he had noble blood in him. Rustic as he was in habits, dress, and complexion, he had a knightly, chivalrous temperament, and fine natural courtesy; another sure sign of good breeding was his hand, which was small, perfectly shaped, with long fine fingers and aristocratic finger-nails. He knew well enough, however, that with him, as he was, pedigrees and such-like had nothing to do. The descent which he prized was the descent from pious and worthy parents, and the fortunes and misfortunes of the neighbouring peasant families were of more real interest to him than aristocratic genealogies.

It was on Carlyle's return from Scotland that he paid the visit to Rugby of which Dean Stanley speaks in his life of Dr. Arnold. Arnold, it will be remembered, had written to Carlyle after reading The French Revolution. He had sympathised warmly also with his tract on Chartism, and his views as to the mights or rights of English working men. Cromwell, who was to be the next subject, was equally interesting to Arnold; and hearing that Carlyle would be passing Rugby, he begged him to pause on the way, when they could examine Naseby field together.

Carlyle, on his side, had much personal respect for the great Arnold—for Arnold himself as a man, though very little for his opinions. He saw men of ability all round him professing orthodoxy and holding office in the Church, while
they regarded it merely as an institution of general expediency, with which their private convictions had nothing to do. Such men aimed only at success in the world, and if they chose to sell their souls for it, the article which they parted with was of no particular value. But Arnold was of a higher stamp. While a Liberal in politics and philosophy, and an historical student, he imagined himself a real believer in the Christian religion, and Carlyle was well assured that to men of Arnold's principles it had no ground to stand on, and that the clear-sighted among them would, before long, have to choose between an honest abandonment of an untenable position and a trifling with their own understandings, which must soon degenerate into conscious insincerity. Arnold, Carlyle once said to me, was happy in being taken away before the alternative was forced upon him. He died, in fact, six weeks after the visit.

The season was not over when Carlyle was again at home after his long absence, but the sad occupations of the spring, and the sad thoughts which they had brought with them, disinclined him for society. The summer opened with heat. He had a room arranged for him at the top of his house at the back, looking over gardens and red roofs and trees, with the river and its barges on his right hand, and the Abbey in the distance. There he sat and smoked, and read books on Cromwell, the sight of Naseby having brought the subject back out of the "the abysses." Forster's volumes were not sent back to him. Visitors were not admitted, or were left to be entertained in the drawing-room.

Of friends the most actively anxious to be kind were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Buller, with whom Carlyle had been at Kinnaird. Their eldest son, Charles, who had been his pupil, was now in the front rank in the House of Commons. Reginald, the youngest, had a living at Troston, in Suffolk, with a roomy parsonage. His father and mother had arranged to spend July and August there, and they pressed Mrs. Carlyle to go with them for change of scene. Mrs. Carlyle gratefully consented. She liked Mrs. Buller, and the Bullers' ways suited her. It was settled that they were to go first, and she was to follow. Carlyle's own movements were left doubtful. He, after so long an interruption of his work, did not wish to move again immediately; but he was very grateful to Mrs.
Buller for her kindness to his wife, and when she asked him in return to go to the House of Commons to hear her son speak, he could not refuse. He had never been there before; I believe he never went again; but it was a thing to see once, and though the sight did not inspire him with reverence, he was amused.

This single glance into the legislative sanctuary satisfied Carlyle's curiosity. Once, in after years, on some invitation from a northern borough, he did for a few moments contemplate the possibility of himself belonging to it; but it was for a moment only, and then with no more than a purpose of telling Parliament his opinion of its merits. For it was his fixed conviction that in that place lay not the strength of England, but the weakness of England, and that in time it would become a question which of the two would strangle the life out of the other. Of the debating department in the management of the affairs of this country he never spoke without contempt. In the administration of them there was still vigour inherited through the traditions of a great past, and kept alive in the spirit of the public service. The navy especially continued a reality. Having seen the House of Commons, he was next to have a sight of a Queen's ship on a small scale, and of naval discipline.

The thing came about in this way. He could not work in the hot weather, and doubtless lamented as loud as usual about it. Stephen Spring Rice, Commissioner of Customs, was going in an Admirality yacht to Ostend on public business. The days of steam were not yet. The yacht, a cutter of the largest size, was lying in Margate roads. Spring Rice and his younger brother were to join her by a Thames steamer on August 5, and the night before they invited Carlyle to go with them. Had there been time to consider, he would have answered "impossible." But the proposal came suddenly. Mrs. Carlyle, who was herself going to Troston, strongly urged its acceptance. The expedition was not to occupy more than four or five days. Carlyle was always well at sea. In short, he agreed, and the result was summed up in a narrative, written in his very best style, which he termed "The Shortest Tour on Record."\(^{19}\) He was well, he was in good humour; he was flung suddenly among scenes and people entirely new. Of all men whom I have ever
known, he had the greatest power of taking in and remembering the minute particulars of what he saw and heard, and of then reproducing them in language. The tour, if one of the shortest, is also therefore one of the most vivid.

His wife was still at Cheyne Row when he came back. The day after—August 11—she went off on the promised visit to the Bullers at Troston, of which she gives an account so humorous in the *Letters and Memorials.* Her husband stayed behind with a half purpose of following her at the end of the month, and occupied himself in writing down the story of his flight into the other world, the lightest and brightest of all tourist diaries. He gave five days to it, seeing few visitors in his wife’s absence.

[On the last day of August] he followed his wife into Suffolk. Charles Buller, who was to have met him at Troston, had not arrived, and, to use the time profitably, he obtained “a horse of the completest Rosinante species,” and set off for a ride through Oliver Cromwell’s country. His first halt was at Ely. He arrived in the evening, and walked into the cathedral, which, though fresh from Bruges and Ghent, he called “one of the most impressive buildings I have ever in my life seen.” It was empty apparently. No living thing was to be seen in the whole vast building but a solitary sparrow, when suddenly some invisible hand touched the organ, and the rolling sounds, soft, sweet, and solemn, went pealing through the solitary aisles. He was greatly affected. He had come to look at the spot where Oliver had called down out of his reading-desk a refractory High Church clergyman, and he had encountered a scene which seemed a rebuke to his fierceness. “I believe,” he said,

this Ely Cathedral is one of the “finest,” as they call it, in all England, and from me also few masses of architecture could win more admiration; but I recoil everywhere from treating these things as a *dilettantism* at all; the impressions they give me are too deep and sad to have anything to do with the shape of stones. Tonight, as the heaving bellows blew, and the yellow sunshine streamed in thro’ those high windows, and my footfalls and the poor country lad’s were the only sounds from below, I looked aloft, and my eyes filled with very tears to look at all this, and remember beside it (wedded to it now, and *reconciled* with it for me) Oliver Cromwell’s, “Cease your fooling, and come out, sir!” In these two antagonisms lie what volumes of meaning!\(^{21}\)
Oliver Cromwell. Carlyle first saw this early copy of a painting by Sir Peter Lely in September 1842 in the hall of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. In 1868 he recalled it as "the first real Oliver Cromwell... real not fictitious & imaginary, as above nine-tenths of them arc.—which was vouchsafed me. Nothing so excellent had I ever seen before." This was his favorite portrait of the man whom he considered England's greatest hero and whose reputation his edition with "elucidations" of the Letters and Speeches did much to rehabilitate. A number of other portraits of Cromwell hang in the Carlyle House today, including a replica of his death mask. (Courtesy of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.)
Cromwell had been Carlyle's first thought in this riding expedition, but other subjects, as I have said, were rising between him and the Commonwealth. At St. Ives he had seen and noted more than Cromwell's farm. He had seen St. Ives poorhouse, and the paupers sitting enchanted in the sun, willing to work, but with no work provided for them. In his Journal for the 25th of October he mentions that he has been reading Eadmer, and Jocelyn de Brakelonde's Chronicle, and been meditating on the old monks' life in St. Edmund's monastery. Round these, as an incipient motive, another book was shaping itself in his mind, and making Cromwell impossible till this should be done.