1858–1862

Second Tour of Germany. Publication of
First Two Volumes of *Frederick.*
Carlyle's Character. Jane Carlyle's
Declining Health. Friendship with
Ruskin. *Frederick* Marches On

No further progress could be made with *Frederick* till there
had been a second tour in Germany, which was to be
effected, if possible, in the summer or autumn of this year,
1858. The immediate necessity, after the completion of the
present volumes, was for rest. When the strain was taken
off, Carlyle fell into a collapsed condition. Notwithstanding
his good resolutions, he became slightly fretful and trouble­
some, having nothing immediate to do. He was somewhat
out of health, and fancied himself worse than he was. Mrs.
Carlyle had grown better with the warmer weather; he could
venture to leave her, and he went off in the middle of June to
his sister in Annandale.

He bethought himself that before he left London he had
been more cross than he ought to have been, indeed both
cross and perverse. It was "the nature of the beast," as he
often said, and had to be put up with, like the wind and the
rain. Gloom, as usual, clung to him like a shadow.

I go on well; am very sad and solitary; ill in want of a horse. . . .
The evening walks in the grey howl of the winds, by the loneliest
places I can find, are like walks in Hades; yet there is something
wholesome in them, something stern & grand: as if one had the
Eternities for company in defect of suitabler.¹

The Eternities, however fond he was of their company, left
him time to think of other things. His wife's cousin, John
Welsh, was ill. He at once insisted that the boy should go to
Madeira, and should go at his own and his wife's expense.
If thoughtful charity recommends men to the Higher Pow-
ers, none ever better deserved of them than Carlyle. But he thought nothing of such things.

One of Mrs. Carlyle's letters had been delayed in the post. It arrived a day later. He writes:

All yesterday, I remarked in speaking to [his sister] Jean, if any tragic topic came in sight, I had a difficulty to keep from breaking down in my speech, and becoming inarticulate with emotion over it! It is as if the scales were falling from my eyes; and I were beginning to see, in this my solitude, things that touch me into the very quick. Oh my little woman, what a suffering thou hast had; and how nobly borne,—with a simplicity, a silence, courage and patient heroism which are now only too evident to me! Three waer [sadder] days I can hardly remember in my life;—but they were not without worth either; very blessed some of the feelings, tho' many so sore and miserable. It is very good to be left alone with the truth sometimes; to hear with all its sternness what it will say to one.²

All this was extremely morbid; but it was not an unnatural consequence of habitual want of self-restraint, coupled with tenderness of conscience when conscience was awake and could speak. It was likely enough that in those night-watches, when the scales fell off, accusing remembrances must have risen before him which were not agreeable to look into. With all his splendid gifts, moral and intellectual alike, Carlyle was like a wayward child—a child in wilfulness, a child in the intensity of remorse.

His brother James provided him with a horse—a "dromedary," he called it, "a loyal horse too, but an extremely stupid"³—to ride or drive about among the scenes of his early years. One day he went past Hoddam Hill, Repentance Tower, Ecclefechan churchyard, etc., beautiful, quiet, all of it, in the soft summer air, and yet he said, "the Valley of Jehoshaphat could not have been more stern and terribly impressive to me. I shall never forget that afternoon and evening. The poor old Churchyard tree at Ecclefechan, . . . the white Headstone, of which I caught one steady look: . . . the deepest De Profundis is poor to the feeling one's poor heart has."⁴ The thought of his wife, ill and solitary in London, tortured him. Would she come to the Gill to be nursed? No one in the world loved her more dearly than his sister Mary. The daughters would wait on her, and be her servants. He would himself go away, that he might be
no trouble to her. Amidst his sorrows the ridiculous lay close at hand. If he was to go to Germany, his clothes had to be seen to. An entire new wardrobe was provided, dressing-gown, coats, trousers lying “like a considerable Hay-Coil round me”; rather well-made too, after all, though “this whole clothes operation has been scandalous and disgusting to me in some measure,—owing to the anarchy of things and shopkeepers in these parts.” He had been recommended to wear a leather belt for the future when he rode. His sisters did their best, but “the problem has become abstruse,—to me inexpressively wearisome”; a saddler had to be called in from Dumfries, and there was adjusting and readjusting. Carlyle, “sad and mournful,” impatient, irritated, declared himself disgusted with the “problem,” and more disgusted with himself, when he witnessed his sister’s “industrious helpfulness, and my own unhelpable nature.”

A visit to Craigenputtoch had become necessary. There was business to be attended to, the tenant to be seen and spoken with, etc. He rather dreaded this adventure, but it was not to be avoided.

Germany was to come next, and to come immediately, before the days drew in. He shuddered at the recollection of the zwei rühige Zimmer [two quiet rooms], etc., in which he had suffered so much torture. But he felt that he must go, cost what it might. Some friend had proposed to take him in a yacht to the Mediterranean and land him at Trieste. Lord Ashburton more reasonably had offered him a cast in another yacht to the Baltic. But Carlyle chose to stand by the ordinary modes of conveyance. He sent for his passport, nailed a map of Germany to his wall, daily perused it, and sketched an outline of his route. Mr. Neuberg, who was at Leipzig, was written to, but it was doubtful whether he was attainable. A Mr. Foxton, a slight acquaintance, offered his companionship, and was conditionally accepted; and after one or two “preliminary shivers” and “shuddering recoils,” Carlyle screwed his courage to the sticking-point and, in spite of nerves and the rest of it, got through with the operation. The plan was to go by steam to Hamburg; whither next was not quite decided when an invitation came from Baron von Usedom and his English wife to visit them in the Isle of Rügen. It was out of the way; but Stralsund, Rügen, the
Baltic, were themselves interesting. The Usedoms' letter was most warm, and Carlyle, who rather doubted Mr. Foxton's capabilities as courier, thought that this excursion might "put him on his trial." He could be dismissed afterwards if found unsuitable. Much anxiety was given to poor Mr. Foxton. Neuberg held out hopes of joining, and Foxton in that case would not be wanted. But John Carlyle suggested that Neuberg and he would perhaps neutralize each other, like alkali and acid. On August 21 Carlyle went off to Edinburgh, whither poor Mr. Foxton had come, at great inconvenience to himself. He found his friend "very talky, scratch'-o-plastery somewhat, but serviceable, assiduous, and good compared with nothing." The evening of the same day they sailed from Leith.

[Carlyle narrates his journey through his letters to Jane Carlyle.]

Hamburg . . .
24 August 1858
Dearest,—

Here I am safe enough since 8 hours, after such a voyage for tumult and discomfort (now forgotten) as I have seldom made. The Leith people, innocent but ineffectual souls, forgot every promise they had made,—except that of sailing 5 hours after their time, and landing us at last, 15 hours after ditto. . . . Neuberg had a man in wait (poor good soul, after all!) to say that he was ready at any hour &c. 

Carzitz,
Insel Rügen, bei Stralsund
27th August, 1858

Yesterday about 11 a.m. after two rather sleepless and miserable nights on land, which with the 3 preceding at sea, had reduced me to a bad pitch.—I had, with poor helpless but assiduous Foxton, stepped out of the railway train at Rostock (biggish Sea Capital of Mecklenburg); and was hurrying along to get a place in the Stralsund Diligence, with no prospect but eight hours of suffocation and a night to follow without sleep, when a jolly plump Lady attended by her maid addressed me with sunny voice and look, "Was not I Mr. Carlyle?" "I am the Frau von Usedom," rejoined she on my answer; "here to seek you" (64 miles from home!) "and you must go with me henceforth!" Hardly in my life had such a manus e nubibus [hand from heaven] been extended to me. I need not say how thrice gladly I accepted;—I had in fact done with all my labour then; and was carried on thenceforth like a mere child in arms, nothing to do or care for, but all conceivable accommoda-
tions gracefully provided me up hither to this pleasant Isle of the Sea, where I now am, a considerably rested man! . . . Oh my poor little Jeannie, if I knew you were but well, I think I could be almost happy here today, in the silent sunshine, on these remote Scandinavian shores. . . . The wind is singing and the sun sporting in the Lindens, and I hear doves cooing: windows up—two rooms all to myself—"Coo, cool!"  

Berlin,  
5 September (Sunday) 1858—

The Herr von Usedom is a fine fat substantial intelligent and good man; we really had a great deal of nice speech together, and did beautifully together; only that I was so weak and sickly, and except keeping me to the picturesque, he would not take almost any wise charge of my ulterior affairs. At length, Friday afternoon last [3 September], he did set out with me towards Berlin and practicalities: "To stay overnight at Putbus the Richmond of Rügen, and then catch the Steamer for Stettin (& thence rail to Berlin) next day." . . .

Berlin is loud under my windows, a grey, close, hottish Sunday; but I will take care not to concern myself with it beyond the needful: tomorrow we [Carlyle, Neuberg, and Foxton] are off,—Liegnitz, Breslau, Prag, then Dresden; . . . after which, only two Battlefields remain; and London is within a week. Neuberg is also going straight to London: you may compute that all the travelling details, washtubs, railways, money-settlements &c are fairly off my hands from this point. I have strength enough in me, too; with the snatches of sleep fairly expectable, I conclude myself road-worthy for 14 days. Then adieu, Keil-kissen [wedge-shaped pillows of German beds], sloppy greasy victual (all cold too, including especially the coffee and the tea); adieu Teutschland; adieu travelling altogether, and I will never leave my Goody any more.

Brieg (Lower Silesia)  
10 September (Friday) 1858

We quitted Berlin, under fair auspices, Monday morning last; fortified with a general letter from "the Prince's Aide-de-camp" to all Prussian Officers whatsoever: but hitherto, owing to an immense review which occupies everybody, it has done us less good than was expected. At Cöstrin, that first Monday night, a benevolent Major did attend us to the Field of Zorndorf, & shewed us everything: but in other places hitherto the "review at Liegnitz" has been fatal to help from such quarter. We have done pretty well without;—have seen 3 other fields, and had adventures, of a confused, not wholly unpleasant, character. . . . Our second place was Liegnitz itself (full of soldiers, oak-garlands, coloured lamp-lights, and expectation of "the Prince"): we were on the Battlefield, and could use our natural eyes; but for the rest had no other guidance worth other than contempt. Did well enough, neverthe-
less, and got fairly out of Liegnitz, to Breslau, Wednesday Evening, which has been headquarters ever since (a dreadfully noisy place at night), out of which were excursions—yesterday to Leuthen (the grandest of all the Battles); today hither, about 50 miles away, to Molwitz the first of Fritz's Fights; from which we have just now returned. . . . Leuthen yesterday & Molwitz today, with their respective steeples and adventures, I shall never forget.  

Breslau  
11 September (10 a.m.) 1858

This is as queer an old City as you ever heard of. High, as Edinburgh or more so; streets very strait and winding: roofs 30 feet or so in height, and of proportionate steepness, ending in chimney-heads like the half of a Butter firkin set on its side. The people are not beautiful; but they seem innocent and obliging: brown-skinned scrubby bodies a good many of them, of Polack or Slavic breed. . . . Neuberg is a perfect Issachar for taking labour on him;—needs to be led with a strongish curb. Scratchy Foxton & he are much more tolerable together:—grease plus vinegar; that is the rule.  

Prag (Hotel zum Englischen Hof)  
14 September (Tuesday Evening) 1858—

From Breslau, where I wrote, our adventures have been miscellaneous, our course painful but successful. At Landshut (edge of the Riesengebirge) where we arrived near eleven the first night, in a crazy vehicle of one horse,—you never saw such a scene of squalid desolation. . . . The gents, that night led us to a place called Pardubitz (terribly familiar to me from those dull Fried­rich Books); where one of the detestablest nights of all this Expedition was provided me. Big noisy inn, full of evil smells; contemptible little wicked village; where a worse than Jerry[gin]-shop close over the way raged like Bedlam or Erebus,—to cheer one in a "bed" (i.e. trough) 18 inches too short, and a mattress forced into it, which cocked up at both ends, as if you had been lying in the trough of a saddle: Ach Himmel! We left it at 4 a.m. to do the hardest day of any: Chotusitz, Kolin; such a day: in a wicked vehicle, with a spavined horse, amid clouds of dust under a blazing sun. . . .

There are now but 3 Battlefields to do: one double, day after to-morrow by a "return-ticket" to be had in Dresden; the two next (Torgau, Rossbach) in two days following.  

Dresden (zum Stadt Wien),  
15th September, 1858 (7 p.m.)

Our journey from Prag has excelled in confusion all I ever wit­nessed in this world; the beautifullest country ever seen too, and the beautifullest weather; but—Ach Gott! However, we are now
FREDERICK THE GREAT. Attached to this engraving is a sprig of pink, under which Carlyle has written, "wild pink, plucked from the Battlefield of Prag (e. of the Ziscaberg half a mile or more) Sept 1858." Frederick's wide-eyed, no-nonsense stare seems to have intrigued Carlyle, for this engraving is similar to several others that hung in his soundproof room. (An engraving of the portrait by Anton Graff, courtesy of the Manuscript Division, Duke University Library.)
near the end of it. . . . I am not hurt, I really do not think myself much hurt: but Oh what a need of sleep, of silence, of a right good washing with soap and water all over!¹⁵

On September 22 he was safe at home again at Chelsea—having finished his work in exactly a month. Nero was there to express "a decent joy"¹⁶ at seeing him again—Nero, but not his mistress. She was away in Scotland with her friends, Dr. and Mrs. Russell. He had charged her not to return on his account as long as she was getting good from the change of air and scene.

Such was Carlyle's second tour in Germany, as sketched in these letters by himself. One misses something of the liveliness of the experiences of the first, when everything was new, and was seized upon by his insatiable curiosity.¹⁷ It was a journey of business, and was executed with a vigour and rapidity remarkable in so old a man. There were fewer complaints about sleep—fewer complaints of any kind. How well his surveying work was done, the history of Frederick's campaigns, when he came to write them, were ample evidence. He speaks lightly of having seen Kolin, Torgau, etc., etc. No one would guess from reading these short notices that he had mastered the details of every field which he visited; not a turn of the ground, not a brook, not a wood, or spot where wood had been, had escaped him. Each picture was complete in itself, unconfused with any other; and, besides the picture, there was the character of the soil, the extent of cultivation—every particle of information which would help to elucidate the story.

There are no mistakes.¹⁸ Military students in Germany are set to learn Frederick's battles in Carlyle's account of them—altogether an extraordinary feat on Carlyle's part, to have been accomplished in so short a time. His friends had helped him no doubt; but the eye that saw and the mind that comprehended were his own.

Very soon after his return the already finished volumes of Frederick were given to the world. No work of his had as yet obtained so instant and wide a welcome. The literary success was immediate and exceptionally great. Two thousand copies had been printed—they were sold at the first issue. A second two thousand were disposed of almost as rapidly, and by December there was a demand for more. He had
himself been singularly indifferent on this part of the business. In his summer correspondence there is not a single word of expectation or anxiety. As little was there sign of exultation when the world's verdict was pronounced. The child that is born with greatest difficulty is generally a favourite, but it was not so in this instance. In his Journal he speaks of the book as "by far the most heartrending enterprise he had ever had" as "worth nothing," though "faithfully done on his part." In Scotland he describes himself as having been "perfectly dormant," "in a sluggish, sad way, till the end of August." In Germany he had seen the battlefields—"a quite frightful month of physical discomfort," with no result that he could be sure of, "except a great mischief to health." He had returned, he said, "utterly broken and degraded." This state of feeling, exaggerated as it was, survived the appearance of the two volumes. He had complained little while the journey was in progress—when he was at home again there was little else but sadness and dispiritment.

A few words which I will quote tell of something which proved of immeasurable consequence, both to Carlyle and to his wife.

Lord Ashburton has wedded again, a Miss Stuart-Mackenzie; and they are off to Egypt about a fortnight ago: "The changes of this age," (as minstrel Burns has it), "which fleeting Time procureth,"—ah me, ah me!19

Carlyle sighed; but the second Lady Ashburton became the guardian genius of the Cheyne Row household;20 to Mrs. Carlyle the tenderest of sisters, to Carlyle, especially after his own bereavement, sister, daughter, mother, all that can be conveyed in the names of the warmest human ties. But the acquaintance had yet to begin. Miss Stuart-Mackenzie had hitherto been seen by neither of them.

No one who has read the letters of Carlyle can entertain a doubt of the tenderness of his heart, or of his real gratitude to those relations and friends who were exerting themselves to be of use to him. As little can anyone have failed to notice the waywardness of his humour, the gusts of "unjust impatience" and "sulky despair" with which he received sometimes their best endeavours to serve him, or, again, the

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remorse with which he afterwards reflected on his unreasonable outbursts. "The nature of the beast" was the main explanation. His temperament was so constituted. It could not be altered, and had to be put up with, like changes of weather. But nature and circumstances worked together; and Lord Jeffrey had judged rightly when he said that literature was not the employment best suited to a person of Carlyle's disposition. In active life a man works at the side of others. He has to consider them as well as himself. He has to check his impatience, he has to listen to objections even when he knows that he is right. He must be content to give and take, to be indifferent to trifles, to know and feel at all times that he is but one among many, who have all their humours. Every day, every hour teaches him the necessity of self-restraint. The man of letters has no such wholesome check upon himself. He lives alone, thinks alone, works alone. He must listen to his own mind; for no other mind can help him. He requires correction as others do; but he must be his own school-master. His peculiarities are part of his originality, and may not be eradicated. The friends among whom he lives are not the partners of his employment; they share in it, if they share at all, only as instruments or dependents. Thus he is an autocrat in his own circle, and exposed to all the temptations which beset autocracy. He is subject to no will, no law, no authority outside himself; and the finest natures suffer something from such unbounded independence. Carlyle had been made by nature sufficiently despotic, and needed no impulse in that direction from the character of his occupations,—while his very virtues helped to blind him when it would have been better if he could have been more on his guard. He knew that his general aim in life was pure and unselfish, and that in the use of his time and talents he had nothing to fear from the sternest examination of his stewardship. His conscience was clear. His life from his earliest years had been pure and simple, without taint of selfish ambition. He had stood upright always in many trials. He had become at last an undisputed intellectual sovereign over a large section of his contemporaries, who looked to him as disciples to a master whose word was a law to their belief. And thus habit, temperament, success itself had combined to deprive him of
the salutary admonitions with which the wisest and best of mortals cannot entirely dispense. From first to last he was surrounded by people who allowed him his own way, because they felt his superiority—who found it a privilege to minister to him as they became more and more conscious of his greatness—who, when their eyes were open to his defects, were content to put up with them, as the mere accidents of a nervously sensitive organization.

This was enough for friends who could be amused by peculiarities from which they did not personally suffer. But for those who actually lived with him—for his wife especially, on whom the fire-sparks fell first and always, and who could not escape from them—the trial was hard. The central grievance was gone, but was not entirely forgotten. His letters had failed to assure her of his affection, for she thought at times that they must be written for his biographer. She could not doubt his sincerity when, now after his circumstances became more easy, he gave her free command of money; when, as she could no longer walk, he insisted that she should have a brougham twice a week to drive in, and afterwards gave her a carriage of her own. But affection did not prevent outbursts of bilious humour, under which, for a whole fortnight, she felt as if she was “keeper in a madhouse.” When he was at a distance from her he was passionately anxious about her health. When he was at home, his own discomforts, real or imaginary, left no room for thought of others. “If Carlyle wakes once in a night,” she said to me, “he will complain of it for a week. I wake thirty times every night, but that is nothing.” Notwithstanding all his resolutions, notwithstanding the fall of “the scales . . . from my eyes” and the intended amendment for the future, things relapsed in Cheyne Row after Carlyle returned from Germany, and settled again to his work, much into their old condition. Generally the life was smooth and uneventful, but the atmosphere was always dubious, and a disturbed sleep or an indigestion would bring on a thunderstorm. Mrs. Carlyle grew continually more feeble, continual nervous anxiety allowing her no chance to rally; but her indomitable spirit held her up; she went out little in the evenings, but she had her own small tea parties, and the talk was as brilliant as ever. Carlyle worked all day, rode late in
the afternoon, came home, slept a little, then dined and went out afterwards to walk in the dark. If any of us were to spend the evening there, we generally found her alone; then he would come in, take possession of the conversation and deliver himself in a stream of splendid monologue, wise, tender, scornful, humorous, as the inclination took him—but never bitter, never malignant, always genial, the fiercest denunciations ending in a burst of laughter at his own exaggerations. Though I knew things were not altogether well, and her drawn, suffering face haunted me afterwards like a sort of ghost, I felt for myself that in him there could be nothing really wrong, and that he was as good as he was great.

So passed the next two or three years; he toiled on unweariedly, dining nowhere, and refusing to be disturbed.

In June [1859] after months of uselessness and wretchedness, he was “tumbled” into what he called “active chaos,” i.e. he took a house for the summer at Humbie, near Aberdour in Fife. The change was not very successful. He had his horse with him, and “rode fiercely about, haunted by the ghosts of the past.” Mrs. Carlyle followed him down. John Carlyle was charged to meet her at Edinburgh, and see her safe for the rest of her journey. “Be good and soft with her,” he said; “you have no notion what ill any flurry or fuss does her,—and I know always how kind your thoughts are (and also hers, in spite of any flaws that may arise!).” Was it that he could not “reck his own rede!” or was Mrs. Carlyle herself exaggerating, when she described the next fortnight with him at Humbie, as like being “keeper in a madhouse”? They went afterwards to the cousins at Auchtertool, and from Auchtertool she wrote the sad letter to a young friend in London who had asked to be congratulated on her marriage.

There was a short visit to the Grange in January (1860), another in April to Lord Sandwich at Hinchinbrook—from which he was frightened away prematurely by the arrival of Hepworth Dixon. He had evidently been troublesome at home, for from Hinchinbrook he wrote to his wife begging her to “be patient with me; I am the unhappy animal, but don’t mean ill!” With these exceptions, and a week at Brighton in July, he stayed fixed at his desk, and in August,
leaving his wife in London, where nervousness had reduced her to the brink of a bilious fever, he went off, taking his work with him, to stay at Thurso Castle with Sir George Sinclair. There he remained several weeks in seclusion as complete as he could wish.

He had wished his wife to have a taste of Scotch air too before the winter, and had arranged that she should go to his sister at the Gill. She had started, and was staying on the way with her friends the Stanleys at Alderley, when her husband discovered that he could do no more at Thurso, and must get home again. The period of his visit had been indefinite. She had supposed that he would remain longer than he proposed to do. The delay of posts and a misconstruction of meanings led Mrs. Carlyle to suppose that he was about to return to Chelsea immediately, and that her own presence there would be indispensable; and, with a resentment, which she did not care to conceal, at his imagined want of consideration for her, she gave up her expedition and went back. It was a mistake throughout, for he had intended himself to take Annandale on his way home from Thurso; but he had not been explicit enough, and she did not spare him. He was very miserable and very humble.\textsuperscript{28} He promised faithfully that when at home again he would worry her no more till she was strong enough to be "kept un[e]asy." \textsuperscript{29}

I will be quiet as a Dream... surely I ought to be rather a protection to your poor sick fancy than a new disturbance. Be still, be quiet, poor Goody of my heart; I swear to do thee no mischief at all!\textsuperscript{30}

Alas! he might swear; but with the excellentest intentions, he was an awkward companion for a nervous, suffering woman. He had \textit{meant} no mischief. It was impossible that he could have meant it. His misfortune was that he had no perception.\textsuperscript{31} He never understood that a delicate lady was not like his own robuster kindred, and might be shivered into fiddlestrings while they would only have laughed.

This was his last visit to Scotland before the completion of \textit{Frederick}. In his wife's weakened condition he thought it no longer right that she should be left to struggle on with a single maid-of-all-work. He had insisted that she should have a superior class of woman as cook and housekeeper,
with a girl to assist. He himself was fixed to his garret room again, rarely stirring out except to ride, and dining nowhere save now and then with Forster, to meet only Dickens, who loved him with all his heart.

The new year brought the Grange again, where Mrs. Carlyle was now as glad to go as before she had been reluctant. "Everybody, especially the Lady, is as kind as possible: our party too is small & insignificant; nobody but ourselves, and Venables (an honest old dish) and Kingsley (a new, of higher pretensions but inferior flavour)."

In this year he lost a friend whom he valued beyond any one of the younger men whom he had learnt to know. Arthur Clough died at Florence, leaving behind him, of work accomplished, a translation of Plutarch, a volume of poems (which by-and-by, when the sincere writing of this ambitious age of ours is sifted from the insincere, may survive as an evidence of what he might have been had fulness of years been granted to him), and, besides these, a beautiful memory in the minds of those who had known him. "A man more vivid, ingenious, veracious, mildly radiant, I have seldom met with" [wrote Carlyle to Froude], "and in a character so honest, modest, kindly. I expected very considerable things of him."

Every available moment was guaranteed to Frederick. Clough was gone; but another friendship had been formed which was even more precious to Carlyle. He had long been acquainted with Ruskin, but hitherto there had been no close intimacy between them, art not being a subject especially interesting to him. But Ruskin was now writing his "Letters on Political Economy" in the Cornhill Magazine. The world's scornful anger witnessed to the effect of his strokes, and Carlyle was delighted. Political Economy had been a creed while it pretended to be a science. Science rests on reason and experiment, and can meet an opponent with calmness. A creed is always sensitive. To express a doubt of it shakes its authority, and is therefore treated as a moral offence. One looks back with amused interest on that indignant outcry now, when the pretentious science has ceased to answer a political purpose and has been banished by its chief professor to the exterior planets.
JOHN RUSKIN. The personal agony of Ruskin’s life finds reflection in the brooding, contemplative, worried face of this photograph, probably taken in the 1860s when Carlyle’s influence upon him was strongest. The large number of photographs of Ruskin in the Carlyle family albums indicates the esteem in which Carlyle held him. (Photograph by Elliott & Fry, courtesy of the Columbia University Libraries.)
But Carlyle had hitherto been preaching alone in the wilderness, and rejoiced in this new ally. He examined Ruskin more carefully. He saw, as who that looked could help seeing, that here was a true "man of genius," peculiar, uneven, passionate, but wielding in his hand real levin bolts, not mere flashes of light merely—but fiery arrows which pierced, where they struck, to the quick. He was tempted one night to go to hear Ruskin lecture, not on the "Dismal Science," but on some natural phenomena, which Ruskin, while the minutest observer, could convert into a poem. "Sermons in Stones" had been already Carlyle's name for *The Stones of Venice*. Such a preacher he was willing to listen to on any subject.

This was a mere episode, however, in a life which was as it were chained down to "an undoable task." Months went by; at last the matter became so complicated, and the notes and corrections so many, that the printers were called in to help. The rough fragments of manuscript were set in type that he might see his way through them.

No leisure—leisure even for thought—could be spared to other subjects. Even the great phenomenon of the century, the civil war in America, passed by him at its opening without commanding his serious attention. To him that tremendous struggle for the salvation of the American nationality was merely the efflorescence of the "Nigger Emancipation" agitation, which he had always despised. "No war ever raging in my time," he said, when the first news of the fighting came over, "was to me more profoundly foolish-looking. Neutral I am to a degree: I for one." He spoke of it scornfully as "a smoky chimney which had taken fire." When provoked to say something about it publicly, it was to write his brief *Ilias Americana in Nuce [American Iliad in a Nutshell]*.

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

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

Peter: No, I won't. I will beat your brains out first! [And is trying dreadfully ever since, but cannot yet manage it.]
CARLYLE ON FRITZ. Photograph taken on 2 August 1861 in Hyde Park. To escape after his daily labor on Frederick, Carlyle took afternoon rides. He later wrote that he “rode some 35,000 miles,—more disgusting to me at last than walking in the Tread-wheel would have been,—during those 10 years of Friedrich.” (Courtesy of the Carlyle House, Chelsea.)
FROUDE'S LIFE OF CARLYLE

At the Grange where he had gone in January 1862, the subject was of course much talked of. The Argyles were there, the Sartonis's, the Kingsleys, the Bishop of Oxford, Milnes, Venables, and others. The Duke and Duchess were strong for the North, and there was much arguing, not to Carlyle's satisfaction. The Bishop and he were always pleased to meet each other, but he was not equally tolerant of the Bishop's friends. Of one of these there is a curious mention in a letter written from the Grange during this visit. Intellect was to him a quality which only showed itself in the discovery of truth. In science no man is allowed to be a man of intellect who uses his faculties to go ingeniously wrong. Still less could Carlyle acknowledge the presence of such high quality in those who went wrong in more important subjects. Cardinal Newman, he once said to me, had not the intellect of a moderate-sized rabbit. He was yet more uncomplimentary to another famous person whom the English Church has canonized. "We are a brisk party here, full of locomotion, speculation; and really are in some sort agreeable to one another. . . . The Bear, the Duke, with the woman-kind wholly are off some 20 miles,—mostly in an open carriage. . . . The Bishop of Oxford is here (gone with these women, to see some little Ape called Keble, of The 'Christian Year')."

Frederick, meanwhile, was making progress, though but slowly. The German authorities he found to be raw metallic matter, unwrought, unorganised, the ore nowhere smelted out of it. It is curious that on the human side of things the German genius should be so deficient, but so it is. We go to them for poetry, philosophy, criticism, theology. They have to come to us for a biography of their greatest poet and the history of their greatest king. The standard Life of Goethe in Germany is Lewes's; the standard History of Frederick is Carlyle's. But the labour was desperate, and told heavily both on him and on his wife. When the summer came she went for change to Folkestone. He in her absence was like a forsaken child.

"A spectre moving in a world of spectres"—"one mass of burning sulphur"—these were images in which he now and then described his condition. At such times, if his little finger ached he imagined that no mortal had ever suffered
so before. If his liver was amiss he was a chained Prometheus with the vulture at his breast, and earth, ether, sea, and sky were invoked to witness his injuries. When the fit was on him he could not, would not, restrain himself, and now when Mrs. Carlyle’s condition was so delicate, her friends, medical and others, had to insist that they must be kept apart as much as possible. He himself, lost as he was without her, felt the necessity, and when she returned from Folkestone he sent her off to her friend Mrs. Russell in Nithsdale.

The third volume of Frederick was finished and published this summer. The fourth volume was getting into type, and the fifth and last was partly written. The difficulties did not diminish; “one only consolation there was in it, that Frederick was better worth doing than other foul tasks he had had.”

He had one other great pleasure this summer. Ruskin’s Unto This Last, a volume of essays on political economy, was now collected and re-published. Carlyle sent a copy to Mr. Erskine, with the following letter:

Two years ago, when the Essays came out in the fashionable magazines, there rose a shriek of anathema from all newspaper and publishing persons. But I am happy to say that the subject is to be taken up again and heartily gone into by the valiant Ruskin, who, I hope, will reduce it to a dog’s likeness—its real physiognomy for a long time past to the unenchanted eye, and peremptorily bid it prepare to quit this afflicted earth, as R. has done to several things before now. He seems to me to have the best talent for preaching of all men now alive. . . . I have read nothing that pleased me better for many a year than these new Ruskiniana."