

PREFACE

THE task of the commentator on the trail of his facts is like that set the Irish herd-boy in the folk-tale, when he lost the heifers, namely, to search "every place likely and unlikely for them all to be in." The first part of this roving commission, it is possible, with time and luck, to execute; but to hunt the shy allusions, the remote quotations, the deep-lurking bits of information, through every "unlikely" covert, forms a too extensive programme. Indeed, the editor comes at last to a point, when he feels that nothing further can be effected by organized search. It is only by pure chance, when looking for other things, that he can hope to run across the fugitive erudition which will make his commentary as full as it should be. This is sadly true of any one who would edit Carlyle. In annotating *Heroes*, I have aimed at compression, and striven, as in *Sartor Resartus*, to make the author supply the comment on his own work. Some things which would tend to enlightenment I have not been able to find and I have said so in my Notes, in the hope that better scholars will discover them. Only after many toilsome hours did I give over the pursuit of any one. Fortunately *Heroes* needs little explanation; the difficulties are few.

The text used as a basis is that of the People's Edition, 1871-1874. It has been diligently compared with those of the first three editions, of 1841, 1842, and 1846; and the results of the collation are placed at the foot of the page. In the process of reprinting, year after year, some score or so of printer's errors had crept in. These have been silently corrected; otherwise the text is as Carlyle left it.