

instead of one. The theme was the History of Literature,¹ or, as the lecturer himself put it, unofficially, "about all things in the world; the whole spiritual history of man from the earliest times to the present." Carlyle was sometimes in doubt, his wife tells us, as to whether his audience thought he was giving them enough for their guinea; but surely such a programme must have satisfied the greediest.

This time his preparation was careful. Although he had not made up his mind, even as late as February, what he should lecture on, he was reading Dante daily and hoped "to give a sharp lecture on him for one." A fortnight later, he tells Aitken that his main business is getting something ready in the shape of lectures; and when he announced to Mrs. Aitken the success of the first of the series, he couples the "much preparation" with the "trembling" that always went before, and was, in part, the secret of his success. He rubbed up his Thucydides and Herodotus, and found profit in the labor; but much less in reading Niebuhr and Michelet. A better lecture-room than Willis's, quiet, lighted from the ceiling, properly seated, was secured at 17 Edward St., Portman Square. In March, Wilson and Darwin are again busy, engineering; but there seems to have been little difficulty in getting an audience. As the time drew near, Carlyle grew nervous, as usual, but he felt that this was "the harvest of the whole year," and he was not going to allow mere panic to keep him from filling his garner.

¹ These are the subjects and dates of the various lectures, as given in Professor Greene's edition of Anstey's reports:

Lecture I. *April 27th.* First Period. Of Literature in General — Language, Tradition, Religions, Races — The Greeks: Their Character in History, Their Fortune, Performance — Mythologies — Origin of Gods.

Lecture II. *May 4th.* First Period — *continued.* Homer: The Heroic Ages — From Æschylus to Socrates — Decline of the Greeks.