

THOMAS
CARLYLE

NOTE ON SOME PORTRAITS OF THOMAS CARLYLE.

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(1839)
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portrait painted
by Sir J. E.
Millais, P.R.A.
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From a statue by
Sir J. E. Boehm,
R.A.
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This portrait is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. "Carlyle," writes David Hannay in the *Magazine of Art*, "already the author of *Sartor Resartus*, stands leaning against the traditional pillar with the conventional air of colourless good breeding. There is neither line in his face nor light in his eyes."

"He (D'Orsay) has contrived," says the same writer, "to make Carlyle look like the hero of a lady's novel—an excellent young man with a curl in his upper lip and a well-combed head of hair."

The medallion has been reproduced from a wood engraving by Pearson. It was presented to Carlyle in 1875, on his eightieth birthday, by friends and admirers in Edinburgh.

"Professor Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, of Weissnichtwo, is nothing if he is not Carlyle in disguise, the projection of the Scotchman's individuality upon a half-humorous, half-philosophical German background."—Ernest Rhys: Introductory Note to *Sartor Resartus*.

"Mr. Whistler, in the Glasgow Corporation Art Galleries, has distinctly succeeded in making the face of Carlyle interesting. He has avoided anything like exaggeration. He has not tried to make capital out of the rugged mass of the hair, or to give a wild-man-of-the-woods look to the face by laying stress on its deep lines and stern contours. The head is noble, quiet, and sad. The artist has tried to paint a serious portrait rather than to give a 'view,' and he has succeeded."—David Hannay in the *Magazine of Art*.

This portrait, executed for John Forster, who was very pleased with it, is now in the National Portrait Gallery. Carlyle himself describes it as "a delirious-looking mountebank, full of violence, awkwardness, atrocity, and stupidity, without recognisable likeness to anything I have ever known in any feature of me. *Fuit in fatis*. What care I, after all? Forster is much content."

The picture by Millais, also in the National Portrait Gallery, was painted in 1877 for Mr. J. A. Froude. His opinion of it was as follows:—"And yet under Millais's hands the old Carlyle stood again upon the canvas as I had not seen him for thirty years. The inner secret of the features had been evidently caught. There was a likeness which no sculptor, no photographer, had yet equalled or approached. Afterwards, I knew not how, it seemed to fade away. Millais grew dissatisfied with his work, and, I believe, never completed it."

In the gardens on the Chelsea Embankment stands a statue of Thomas Carlyle in bronze by the late Sir Edgar Boehm, which was placed there by subscription in 1882. Mr. Froude considered it "as satisfactory a likeness in face and figure as could be rendered in sculpture; and the warm regard which had grown up between the artist and Carlyle had enabled Boehm to catch with more than common success the shifting changes of his expression."