

voluminous writers and astute thinkers will sometimes cling to favourite modes of expression, and adhere to stereotyped processes for the formulation of peculiar lines of thought.

It has been remarked time and again, that Carlyle's prose, regarded as English, is "execrable mongrel," that his style is moreover cumbersome, blatant, and not infrequently laboured, and that the same faults of diction which mar his more elaborate treatises, are to be found in the "Reminiscences." Without being absolutely true, it must be admitted that there are at least grounds for the statement. What tends doubtless to produce the blatant, laboured effect is the author's fondness for forcible yet redundant adverbs, and his frequent use of strings of strong adjectives—expletives they were better termed—which are lavished with a reckless prodigality of expression about the simplest noun forms, much in the same fashion as the shillalahs at an Irish Donnybrook might be supposed to play around the devoted heads of some prostrate yet still pugnacious sons of the soil. On further analysis we find a peculiar use of the comparatives and superlatives of these same adjectives; notablist, beautifuller, dreadfullest, etc.; a habit of inversion which has already been noticed; frequent elision of words left for the reader's imagination or taste to supply; and a parenthetic oddness of phraseology which is often bewildering. The digressions in the text are numerous, for the author's genius is a vagrant one, and the returns to the original theme are often effected in the most startling and unexpected manner, without premonition or preparatory intimation. This abrupt and ill-regulated method of approach might well cause the superficial or careless reader to become involved in the wordy labyrinth, if not utterly and hopelessly lost. Take the following

as an instance of perplexing and inelegant construction: "my early, yet not my earliest, recollections of my father have in them a certain awe which only now, or very lately, has passed into free reverence. I was parted from him in my tenth year, and never habitually lived with him afterwards, of the very earliest I have saved some, I would not for money's worth lose them."

Is it cynicism engendered by a dyspeptic habit, or is it the profound conviction of an honest but eccentric nature, reading, rightly or wrongly, the utter superficiality and insufficiency of social forms and individual merits—his own included, for he spares not himself—which prompts, not alone that severe self-censure and depreciation, but induces the very low estimate of alien human intellectual worth which defaces almost every page of the "Reminiscences?" Are all men and women, or even a moiety of them, the fools, the blunderers, the knaves, the dullards, that Carlyle loves to paint them? If so, alas! poor human nature, alas! poor hero-worshippers; this latter fraternity at least must perish. Yet strange to say, Carlyle himself was essentially a hero-worshipper. What about his own father? What about Jane Welsh Carlyle? about Frederick? about Cromwell? Had they no faults, or did family affection or self-interest blind the biographer to their demerits? Were they after all but ordinary mortals, transcendently magnified by the lenses of individual preference, or were they in very truth beings of a nobler type, and of a more lofty intellectuality and super-moral excellence? The author of the "Reminiscences" displays fine verbal family affection, if words are to be considered as expressions of true feeling, a matchless son, a devoted husband was he, for he has lavished panegyrics with no stinted hand upon the departed ones. Yet