

within reach of the vindictive switch sure to fall sooner or later upon its devoted back.

The literary style of the "Reminiscences" is not a new one to Carlyle; it is but a phase of former compilations, the verbal presence of his genius in undress—thoughts, evidently jotted down as they shaped themselves in his rugged but capacious mind. Few attempts are there at graceful diction or rhetorical flourish; they are blunt, sententious, epigrammatic expressions, often in the form of apostrophe, yet thoroughly honest and straightforward, according to the writer's conceptions. Where he errs, he errs not through deliberate misstatement, but through misapprehension; utterly opposed to circumlocution, his meaning sometimes becomes involved, such short cuts does he take to arrive at his destination of expressed thought. He is moreover apt to become tiresome in places where graphic description, or anecdotal narrative, gives way to retrospective soliloquy or family laudation; then it is like ready dates or tabulated records of events in history without concurrent illustrative text.

His phraseology strikes the reader as quaintly unique—"splintered fire" one critic has termed it—and may be the result of a trained and peculiar habit of thought, or mere singularity of style, affected in defiance of all acknowledged rule and precedent. One of his favourite tricks seems to be the inversion of the order of words in sentences, in putting the subject and verb last in propositions, while frequently according the place of honour to modifying adjuncts—a rugged Latinity of expression, in short. Instances of this may be cited. Speaking of his father, he says, "but greatly his most important culture he had gathered." Again, "The feeling that he had not he could in no wise pretend to have," or "Singularity free from

envy I may reckon him too, and on pages 5 and 7, "thus are we not all beggars as the most like us have become." "Him I once saw." "There hangs it," etc., etc. There is a frequent elision of verbs, too, noticeable, as when speaking of his youth he says, "backwards beyond all, dim ruddy images of deeper and deeper brown shades into the dead beginnings of being." And alluding to his father, "At Langholm he once saw a heap of smuggled tobacco publicly burned. Dragoons were ranged round it with drawn swords, some old women stretched through their old withered arms to snatch a little of it, and the dragoons did not hinder them. *A natural Artist!*" His style has been described as truthful. It is strange with what reiteration he uses the word "perhaps"—nearly thirty times in six pages. "I think," is likewise a favourite expression. The frequent repetition of these unassertive common-places cannot but impress one with an idea of the inherent truthfulness of the man's nature, which cautions him to refrain from positive statement, where such statement cannot be justified by conscientious promptings, or memorial exactitude. In fact where many a less conscientious narrator would make a direct assertion with respect to some simple circumstance of every-day life, and be probably sufficiently near the truth, Carlyle limits himself to "perhaps," or "it may have been so." Another noticeable feature in his phraseology is the frequent recurrence of the word "quasi." He seems to hug it with a desperate affection, and drags it into service upon every conceivable opportunity: "quasi most," "quasi Satan," "quasi bier," "quasi pious," "quasi infernal," "quasi disciple," "quasi lover," "quasi humour," "quasi mockery," "quasi horror," "quasi mother-in-law," etc., etc. This repetition is singular as going to prove the tenacity with which