

PAST AND PRESENT

BY

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Ernst ist das Leben.

SCHILLER.

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PAST AND PRESENT.

BOOK FIRST.

PROEM.

CHAPTER I.

MIDAS.

THE condition of England, on which many pamphlets are now in the course of publication, and many thoughts unpublished are going on in every reflective head, is justly regarded as one of the most ominous, and withal one of the strangest, ever seen in this world. England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind ; yet England is dying of inanition. With unabated bounty the land of England blooms and grows ; waving with yellow harvests ; thick-studded with workshops, industrial implements, with fifteen millions of workers, understood to be the strongest, the cunningest and the willingest our Earth ever had ; these men are here ; the work they have done, the fruit they have realised is here, abundant, exuberant on every hand of us : and behold, some baleful fiat as of Enchantment has gone forth, saying, " Touch it not, ye workers, ye master-workers, ye master-idlers ; none of you can touch it, no man of you shall be the better for it ; this is enchanted fruit ! " On the poor workers such fiat falls first, in its rudest shape ; but on the rich master-workers too it falls ; neither can the rich master-idlers, nor any richest or highest