

CHAPTER IV

CHEYNE ROW

[1834-1842]

THE curtain falls on Craigenputtock, the bleak farm by the bleak hills, and rises on Cheyne Row, a side street off the river Thames, winding as slowly by the reaches of Barnes and Battersea as Cowper's Ouse, dotted with brown-sailed ships and holiday boats in place of the excursion steamers that now stop at Carlyle Pier; hard by the Carlyle Statue on the new (1874) Embankment, in front the "Carlyle mansions," a stone's-throw from "Carlyle Square." Turning up the row, we find over No. 24, formerly No. 5, the Carlyle medallion in marble, marking the house where the Chelsea prophet, rejected, recognised, and adulated of men, lived over a stretch of forty-seven years. Here were his headquarters, but he was a frequent wanderer. About half the time was occupied in trips almost yearly to Scotland, one to Ireland, one to Belgium, one to France, and two to Germany; besides, in the later days, constant visits to admiring friends, more and more drawn from the higher ranks in English society, the members of which learnt to appreciate his genius before he found a hearing among the mass of the people.

The whole period falls readily under four sections,

marking as many phases of the author's outer and inner life, while the same character is preserved throughout:—

I. 1834-1842 —When the death of Mrs. Welsh and the late success of Carlyle's work relieved him from a long, sometimes severe struggle with narrow means. It is the period of the *French Revolution*, *The Lectures*, and *Hero-Worship*, and of *Chartism*, the last work with a vestige of adherence to the Radical creed.

II. 1842-1853 —When the death of his mother loosened his ties to the North. This decade of his literary career is mainly signalised by the writing and publication of the *Life and Letters of Cromwell*, of Carlyle's political works, *Past and Present* and the *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, and of the *Life of Sterling*, works which mark his now consummated disbelief in democracy, and his distinct abjuration of adherence, in any ordinary sense, to the "Creed of Christendom."

III. 1853-1866 —When the laurels of his triumphant speech as Lord Rector at Edinburgh were suddenly withered by the death of his wife. This period is filled with the *History of Friedrich II.*, and marked by a yet more decidedly accentuated trust in autocracy.

IV. 1866-1881.—Fifteen years of the setting of the sun.

The Carlyles, coming to the metropolis in a spirit of rarely realised audacity on a reserve fund of from £200 to £300 at most, could not propose to establish themselves in any centre of fashion. In their circumstances their choice of abode was on the whole a fortunate one. Chelsea,

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it,

was, even in those days of less constant communication, within measurable distance of the centres of London life : it had then and still preserves a host of interesting historic and literary traditions. Among the men who in old times lived or met together in that outlying region of London, we have memories of Sir Thomas More and of Erasmus, of the Essayists Addison and Steele, and of Swift. Hard by is the tomb of Bolingbroke and the square of Sir Hans Sloane ; Smollett lived for a time in Laurence Street ; nearer our own day, Turner resided in Cheyne Walk, later George Eliot, W. B. Scott, Dante Rossetti, Swinburne for a season, and George Meredith. When Carlyle came to settle there, Leigh Hunt¹ in Upper Cheyne Row, an almost next-door neighbour, was among the first of a series of visitors ; always welcome, despite his "hugger-mugger" household and his borrowing tendencies, his "unpractical messages" and "rose-coloured reform processes," as a bright "singing bird, musical in flowing talk," abounding in often subtle criticisms and constant good humour. To the Chelsea home, since the Mecca of many pilgrims, there also flocked other old Ampton Street friends, drawn thither by genuine regard. Mrs. Carlyle, by the testimony of Miss Cushman and all competent judges, was a "*raconteur* unparalleled." To quote the same authority, "that wonderful woman, able to live in the full light of Carlyle's genius without being overwhelmed by it," had a peculiar skill in drawing out the most brilliant conversationalist of the age. Burns and Wilson were his Scotch predecessors in an art of which the close of our century—when every fresh thought is treasured to be

¹ Cf. Byron's account of the same household at Pisa. Carlyle deals very leniently with the malignant volume on Byron which amply justified the epigram of Moore. But he afterwards spoke more slightly of his little satellite, attributing the faint praise, in the *Examiner*, of the second course of lectures to Hunt's jealousy of a friend now "beginning to be somebody."


printed and paid for—knows little but the shadow. Of Carlyle, as of Johnson, it might have been said, "There is no use arguing with him, for if his pistol misses fire he knocks you down with the butt": both men would have benefited by revolt from their dictation, but the power to contradict either was overborne by a superior power to assert. Swift's occasional insolence, in like manner, prevailed by reason of the colossal strength that made him a Gulliver in Lilliput. Carlyle in earlier, as in later times, would have been the better of meeting his mate, or of being overmatched; but there was no Wellington found for this "grand Napoleon of the realms" of prose. His reverence for men, if not for things, grew weaker with the strengthening of his sway, a sway due to the fact that men of extensive learning are rarely men of incisive force, and Carlyle—in this respect more akin to Johnson than to Swift—had the acquired material to serve as fuel for the inborn fire. Hence the least satisfactory of his criticisms are those passed on his peers. Injustices of conversation should be pardoned to an impulsive nature, even those of correspondence in the case of a man who had a mania for pouring out his moods to all and sundry; but where Carlyle has carefully recarved false estimates in cameo, his memory must abide the consequence. Quite late in life, referring to the Chelsea days, he says, "The best of those who then flocked about us was Leigh Hunt," who never seriously said him nay; "and the worst Lamb," who was not among the worshippers. No one now doubts that Carlyle's best adviser and most candid critic might have been John Stuart Mill, for whom he long felt as much regard as it was possible for him to entertain towards a proximate equal. The following is characteristic: "He had taken a great attachment to me (which lasted about ten years and then sud-

denly ended, I never knew how), an altogether clear, logical, honest, amicable, affectionate young man, and respected as such here, though sometimes felt to be rather colourless, even aqueous, no religion in any form traceable in him." And similarly of his friend, Mrs. Taylor, "She was a will-o'-the-wispish iridescence of a creature; meaning nothing bad either"; and again of Mill himself, "His talk is sawdustish, like ale when there is no wine to be had." Such criticisms, some ungrateful, others unjust, may be relieved by reference to the close of two friendships to which (though even these were clouded by a touch of personal jealousy) he was faithful in the main; for the references of both husband and wife to Irving's "delirations" are the tears due to the sufferings of errant minds. Their last glimpse of this best friend of earlier days was in October 1834, when he came on horseback to the door of their new home, and left with the benediction to his lost Jane, "You have made a little Paradise around you." He died in Glasgow in the December of the same year, and his memory is pathetically embalmed in Carlyle's threnody. The final phases of another old relationship were in some degree similar. During the first years of their settlement, Lord Jeffrey frequently called at Cheyne Row, and sent kind letters to his cousin, received by her husband with the growl, "I am at work stern and grim, not to be interrupted by Jeffrey's theoretic flourish of epistolary trumpeting." Carlyle, however, paid more than one visit to Craigmook, seeing his host for the last time in the autumn of 1849, "worn in body and thin in mind," "grown lunar now and not solar any more." Three months later he heard of the death of this benefactor of his youth, and wrote the memorial which finds its place in the second volume of the *Reminiscences*.

The work "stern and grim" was the *French Revolution*,

the production of which is the dominant theme of the first chapter of Carlyle's London life. Mr. Froude, in the course of an estimate of this work which leaves little room for other criticism, dwells on the fact that it was written for a purpose, *i.e.* to show that rulers, like those of the French in the eighteenth century, who are solely bent on the pleasures and oblivious of the duties of life, must end by being "burnt up." This, doubtless, is one of the morals of the *French Revolution*—the other being that anarchy ends in despotism—and unquestionably a writer who never ceased to be a preacher must have had it in his mind. But Carlyle's peculiarity is that he combined the functions of a prophet and of an artist, and that while now the one, now the other, was foremost, he never wholly forgot the one in the other. In this instance he found a theme well fit for both, and threw his heart into it, though under much discouragement. Despite the Essays, into each of which he had put work enough for a volume, the Reviews were shy of him; while his *Sartor* had, on this side of the Atlantic, been received mainly with jeers. Carlyle, never unconscious of his prerogative and apostolic primogeniture, felt like a knight who had performed his vigils, and finding himself still ignored, became a knight of the rueful countenance. Thoroughly equipped, adept enough in ancient tongues to appreciate Homer, a master of German and a fluent reader of French, a critic whose range stretched from Diderot to John Knox, he regarded his treatment as "tragically hard," exclaiming, "I could learn to do all things I have seen done, and am forbidden to try any of them." The efforts to keep the wolf from his own doors were harder than any but a few were till lately aware of. Landed in London with his £200 reserve, he could easily have made way in the usual ruts; but he would have none of them, and refused to accept the employment which is

the most open, as it is the most lucrative, to literary aspirants. To nine out of ten the "profession of literature" means Journalism; while Journalism often means dishonesty, always conformity. Carlyle was, in a sense deeper than that of the sects, essentially a nonconformist; he not only disdained to write a word he did not believe, he would not suppress a word he did believe—a rule of action fatal to swift success. During these years there began an acquaintance, soon ripening into intimacy, the memories of which are enshrined in one of the most beautiful of biographies. Carlyle's relation to John Sterling drew out the sort of affection which best suited him—the love of a master for a pupil, of superior for inferior, of the benefactor for the benefited; and consequently there is no line in the record of it that jars. Sterling once tried to benefit his friend, and perhaps fortunately failed. He introduced Carlyle to his father, then the editor of the *Times*, and the latter promptly invited the struggling author to contribute to its columns, but, according to Mr. Froude, "on the implied conditions . . . when a man enlists in the army, his soul as well as his body belong to his commanding officer." Carlyle talked, all his life, about what his greatest disciple calls "The Lamp of Obedience"; but he himself would obey no one, and found it hard to be civil to those who did not see with his eyes. He rejected—we trust in polite terms—the offer of "the Thunderer." "In other respects also," says our main authority, "he was impracticable, unmalleable, and as independent and wilful as if he were the heir to a peerage. He had created no 'public' of his own; the public which existed could not understand his writings and would not buy them; and thus it was that in Cheyne Row he was more neglected than he had been in Scotland." Welcome to a limited range of literary society, he astonished and amused by his vehement eloquence, but when crossed he was not only



“sarcastic” but rude, and speaking of people, as he wrote of them, with various shades of contempt, naturally gave frequent offence. Those whose toes are trodden on, not by accident, justifiably retaliate. “Are you looking for your t-t-turban?” Charles Lamb is reported to have said in some entertainer’s lobby after listening for an evening to his invectives, and the phrase may have rankled in Carlyle’s mind. Living in a glass case, while throwing stones about, super-sensitive to criticism though professing to despise critics, he made at least as many enemies as friends, and by his own confession became an Ishmaelite. In view of the reception of *Sartor*, we do not wonder to find him writing in 1833—

It is twenty-three months since I earned a penny by the craft of literature, and yet I know no fault I have committed. . . . I am tempted to go to America. . . . I shall quit literature, it does not invite me. Providence warns me to have done with it. I have failed in the Divine Infernal Universe ;

or meditating, when at the lowest ebb, to go wandering about the world like Teufelsdröckh, looking for a rest for the sole of his foot. And yet all the time, with incomparable naïveté, he was asserting :—

The longer I live among this people the deeper grows my feeling of natural superiority to them. . . . The literary world here is a thing which I have no other course left me but to defy. . . . I can reverence no existing man. With health and peace for one year, I could write a better book than there has been in this country for generations.

All through his journal and his correspondence there is a perpetual alternation of despair and confidence, always closing with the refrain, “Working, trying is the only remover of doubt,” and wise counsels often echoed from Goethe, “Accomplish as well as you can the task on hand, and the next step will become clear ;” on the other hand—

A man must not only be able to work but to give over working. . . . If a man wait till he has entirely brushed off his imperfections, he will spin for ever on his axis, advancing no whither. . . . The *French Revolution* stands pretty fair in my head, nor do I mean to investigate much more about it, but to splash down what I know in large masses of colours, that it may look like a smoke-and-flame conflagration in the distance.

The progress of this work was retarded by the calamity familiar to every reader, but it must be referred to as throwing one of the finest lights on his character. Carlyle's closest intellectual link with J. S. Mill was their common interest in French politics and literature; the latter, himself meditating a history of the Revolution, not only surrendered in favour of the man whose superior pictorial genius he recognised, but supplied him freely with the books he had accumulated for the enterprise. His interest in the work was unfortunately so great as to induce him to borrow the MS. of the first volume, completed in the early spring of 1835, and his business habits so defective as to permit him to leave it lying about when read, so that, as appears from the received accounts, it was mistaken by the servant for waste paper: certainly it was destroyed; and Mill came to Cheyne Row to announce the fact in such a desperate state of mind that Carlyle's first anxiety seems to have been to console his friend. According to Mrs. Carlyle, as reported by Froude, "the first words her husband uttered as the door closed were, 'Well, Mill, poor fellow, is terribly cut up; we must endeavour to hide from him how very serious this business is to us.'" This trait of magnanimity under the first blow of a disaster which seemed to cancel the work of years¹ should be set against his nearly contemporaneous criticisms of

Carlyle's
Carlyle's

¹ Carlyle had only been writing the volume for five months; but he was preparing for it during much of his life at Craigenputtock.

Coleridge, Lamb, Wordsworth, Sydney Smith, Macaulay, etc.

Mill sent a cheque of £200 as "the slightest external compensation" for the loss, and only, by urgent entreaty, procured the acceptance of half the sum. Carlyle here, as in every real emergency, bracing his resolve by courageous words, as "never tine heart or get provoked heart," set himself to re-write the volume with an energy that recalls that of Scott rebuilding his ruined estate; but the work was at first so "wretched" that it had to be laid aside for a season, during which the author wisely took a restorative bath of comparatively commonplace novels. The re-writing of the first volume was completed in September 1835; the whole book in January 1837. The mood in which it was written throws a light on the excellences as on the defects of the history. The *Reminiscences* again record the gloom and defiance of "Thomas the Doubter" walking through the London streets "with a feeling similar to Satan's stepping the burning marl," and scowling at the equipages about Hyde Park Corner, sternly thinking, "Yes, and perhaps none of you could do what I am at. I shall finish this book, throw it at your feet, buy a rifle and spade, and withdraw to the Transatlantic wilderness." In an adjacent page he reports himself as having said to his wife—

What they will do with this book none knows, my lass; but they have not had for two hundred years any book that came more truly from a man's very heart, and so let them trample it under foot and hoof as they see best. . . . "They cannot trample that," she would cheerily answer.

This passage points at once to the secret of the writer's spell and the limits of his lasting power. His works were written seldom with perfect fairness, never with the dry light required for a clear presentation of the truth; they have all "an infusion from the will and the affections"; but

they were all written with a whole sincerity and utter fervour; they rose from his hot heart, and rushed through the air "like rockets driv' by their own burning." Consequently his readers confess that he has never forgot the Horatian maxim—

Si vis me flere dolendum est,
Primum ipsi tibi.

About this time Carlyle writes, "My friends think I have found the art of living upon nothing," and there must, despite of Mill's contribution, have been "bitter thrift" in Cheyne Row during the years 1835-1837. He struggled through the unremunerative interval of waiting for the sale of a great work by help of fees derived from his essay on the *Diamond Necklace* (which, after being refused by the *Foreign Quarterly*, appeared in *Fraser*, 1837), that on *Mirabeau* in the *Westminster*, and in the following year, for the same periodical, the article on *Sir Walter Scott*. To the last work, undertaken against the grain, he refers in one of the renewed wails of the year: "O that literature had never been devised. I am scourged back to it by the whip of necessity." The circumstance may account for some of the manifest defects of one of the least satisfactory of Carlyle's longer reviews. Frequent references in previous letters show that he never appreciated Scott, to whom he refers as a mere Restaurateur.

Meanwhile the appearance of the *French Revolution* had brought the name of its author, then in his forty-third year, for the first time prominently before the public. It attracted the attention of Thackeray, who wrote a generous review in the *Times*, of Southey, Jeffrey, Macaulay, Hallam, and Brougham, who recognised the advent of an equal, if sometimes an adverse power in the world of letters. But, though the book established his reputation, the sale

was slow, and for some years the only substantial profits, amounting to about £400, came from America, through the indefatigable activity and good management of Emerson. It is pleasant to note a passage in the interesting volumes of their *Correspondence* which shows that in this instance the benefited understood his financial relation to the benefactor: "A reflection I cannot but make is that, at bottom, this money was all yours; not a penny of it belonged to me by any law except that of helpful friendship. I feel as if I could not examine it without a kind of crime." Others who, at this period, made efforts to assist "the polar Bear" were less fortunate. In several instances good intentions paved the palace of Momus, and in one led a well-meaning man into a notoriously false position. Mr. Basil Montagu being in want of a private secretary offered the post to his former guest, as a temporary makeshift, at a salary of £200, and so brought upon his memory a torrent of contempt. Undeterred by this and similar warnings, the indefatigable philanthropist, Miss Harriet Martineau, who at first conciliated the Carlyles by her affection for "this side of the street," and was afterwards an object of their joint ridicule, conceived the idea of organising a course of lectures to an audience collected by canvass to hear the strange being from the moors talk for an hour on end about literature, morals, and history. He was then an object of curiosity to those who knew anything about him at all, and lecturing was at that time a lucrative and an honourable employment. The "good Harriet," so called by Cheyne Row in its condescending mood, aided by other kind friends of the Sterling and Mill circles—the former including Frederick Denison Maurice—made so great a success of the enterprise that it was thrice repeated. The *first* course of six lectures on "German Literature," May 1837, delivered in Willis's Rooms, realised £135; the

second of twelve, on the "History of European Literature," at 17 Edward Street, Portman Square, had a net result of £300; the *third*, in the same rooms, on "Revolutions," brought £200; the *fourth*, on "Heroes," the same. In closing this course Carlyle appeared for the last time on a public platform until 1866, when he delivered his Inaugural Address as Lord Rector to the students of Edinburgh.

The impression he produced on his unusually select audiences was that of a man of genius, but roughly clad. The more superficial auditors had a new sensation, those who came to stare remained to wonder; the more reflective felt that they had learnt something of value. Carlyle had no inconsiderable share of the oratorical power which he latterly so derided; he was able to speak from a few notes; but there were comments more or less severe on his manner and style. J. Grant, in his *Portraits of Public Characters*, says: "At times he distorts his features as if suddenly seized by some paroxysm of pain . . . he makes mouths; he has a harsh accent and graceless gesticulation." Leigh Hunt, in the *Examiner*, remarks on the lecturer's power of extemporising; but adds that he often touches only the mountain-tops of the subject, and that the impression left was if some Puritan had come to life again, liberalised by German philosophy. Bunsen, present at one of the lectures, speaks of the striking and rugged thoughts thrown at people's heads; and Margaret Fuller, afterwards Countess D'Ossoli, referred to his arrogance redeemed by "the grandeur of a Siegfried melting down masses of iron into sunset red." Carlyle's own comments are for the most part slighting. He refers to his lectures as a mixture of prophecy and play-acting, and says that when about to open his course on "Heroes" he felt like a man going to be hanged. To Emerson, April 17th 1839, he writes:—

My lectures come on this day two weeks. O heaven! I cannot "speak"; I can only gasp and writhe and stutter, a spectacle to gods and fashionables,—being forced to it by want of money. In five weeks I shall be free, and then—! Shall it be Switzerland? shall it be Scotland? nay, shall it be America and Concord?

Emerson had written about a Boston publication of the *Miscellanies* (first there collected), and was continually urging his friend to emigrate and speak to more appreciative audiences in the States; but the London lectures, which had, with the remittances from over sea, practically saved Carlyle from ruin or from exile, had made him decide "to turn his back to the treacherous Syren"—the temptation to sink into oratory. Mr. Froude's explanation and defence of this decision may be clenched by a reference to the warning his master had received. He had announced himself as a preacher and a prophet, and been taken at his word; but similarly had Edward Irving, who for a season of sun of glamour gathered around him the same crowd and glitter: the end came; twilight and clouds of night. Fashion had flocked to the sermons of the elder Annandale youth—as to the recitatives of the younger—to see a wild man of the woods and hear him sing; but the novelty gone, they passed on "to Egyptian crocodiles, Iroquois hunters," and left him stranded with "unquiet fire" and "flaccid face." "O foulest Circæan draft," exclaimed his old admirer in his fine dirge, "thou poison of popular applause, madness is in thee and death, thy end is Bedlam and the grave," and with the fixed resolve, "De me fabula non narrabitur," he shut the book on this phase of his life.

The lectures on "Hero-Worship" (a phrase taken from Hume) were published in 1841, and met with considerable success, the name of the writer having then begun to run

“like wildfire through London.” At the close of the previous year he had published his long pamphlet on *Chartism*, it having proved unsuitable for its original destination as an article in the *Quarterly*. Here first he clearly enunciates, “*Might is right*”—one of the few strings on which, with all the variations of a political Paganini, he played through life. This tract is on the border line between the old modified Radicalism of *Sartor* and the less modified Conservatism of his later years. In 1840 Carlyle still speaks of himself as a man foiled; but at the close of that year all fear of penury was over, and in the following he was able to refuse a Chair of History at Edinburgh, as later another at St. Andrews. Meanwhile his practical power and genuine zeal for the diffusion of knowledge appeared in his foundation of the London Library, which brought him into more or less close contact with Tennyson, Milman, Forster, Helps, Spedding, Gladstone, and other leaders of the thought and action of the time.

There is little in Carlyle’s life at any time that can be called eventful. From first to last it was that of a retired scholar, a thinker demanding sympathy while craving after solitude, and the frequent inconsistency of the two requirements was the source of much of his unhappiness. Our authorities, for all that we do not see in his published works, are found in his voluminous correspondence, copious autobiographical jottings, and the three volumes of his wife’s letters and journal dating from the commencement of the struggle for recognition in London, and extending to the year of her death. Criticism of these remarkable documents, the theme of so much controversy, belongs rather to a life of Mrs. Carlyle; but a few salient facts may here be noted. It appears on the surface that husband and wife had in common several marked peculiarities; on the intellectual side they had not only an extraordinary amount

but the same kind of ability, superhumanly keen insight, and wonderful power of expression, both with tongue and pen; the same intensity of feeling, thoroughness, and courage to look the ugliest truths full in the face; in both, these high qualities were marred by a tendency to attribute the worst motives to almost every one. Their joint contempt for all whom they called "fools," *i.e.* the immense majority of mankind, was a serious drawback to the pleasure of their company. It is indeed obvious that, whether or not it be correct to say that "his nature was the soft one, her's the hard," Mrs. Carlyle was the severer cynic of the two. Much of her writing confirms the impression of those who have heard her talk that no one, not even her husband, was safe from the shafts of her ridicule. Her pride in his genius knew no bounds, and it is improbable that she would have tolerated from any outsider a breath of adverse criticism; but she herself claimed many liberties she would not grant. Clannish almost as Carlyle himself, even her relations are occasionally made to appear ridiculous. There was nothing in her affections, save her memory of her own father, corresponding to his devotion to his whole family. With equal penetration and greater scorn, she had no share of his underlying reverence. Such limited union as was granted to her married life had only soured the mocking-bird spirit of the child that derided her grandfather's accent on occasion of his bringing her back from a drive by another route to "varry the shane." Carlyle's constant wailings take from him any claim to such powers of endurance as might justify his later attacks on Byron.

But neither had his wife any real reticence. Whenever there were domestic troubles—fitting, repairing, building, etc., on every occasion of clamour or worry, he, with scarce pardonable oblivion of physical delicacy greater than his own, went off, generally to visit distinguished

friends, and left behind him the burden and the heat of the day. She performed her unpleasant work and all associated duties with a practical genius that he complimented as "triumphant." She performed them, ungrudgingly perhaps, but never without complaint; her invariable practice was to endure and tell. "Quelle vie," she writes in 1837 to John Sterling, whom she seems to have really liked, "let no woman who values peace of soul ever marry an author"; and again to the same in 1839, "Carlyle had to sit on a jury two days, to the ruin of his whole being, physical, moral, and intellectual," but "one gets to feel a sort of indifference to his growling." Conspicuous exceptions, as in the case of the Shelleys, the Dobells, and the Brownings, have been seen, within or almost within our memories, but as a rule it is a risk for two super-sensitive and nervous people to live together: when they are sensitive in opposite ways the alliance is fatal; fortunately the Carlyles were, in this respect, in the main sympathetic. With most of the household troubles which occupy so exaggerated a space in the letters and journals of both—papering, plastering, painting, deceitful or disorderly domestics—general readers have so little concern that they have reason to resent the number of pages wasted in printing them; but there was one common grievance of wider interest, to which we have before and must here again finally refer, premising that it affected not one period but the whole of their lives, *i.e.* their constant, only half-effectual struggle with the modern Hydra-headed monster, the reckless and needless Noises produced or permitted, sometimes increased rather than suppressed by modern civilisation. Mrs. Carlyle suffered almost as much as her husband from these murderers of sleep and assassins of repose; on her mainly fell the task of contending with the cochin-chinas, whose senseless shrieks went "through her

like a sword," of abating a "Der Freischütz of cats," or a pandemonium of barrel organs, of suppressing macaws for which Carlyle "could neither think nor live"; now mitigating the scales on a piano, now conjuring away, by threat or bribe, from their neighbours a shoal of "demon fowls"; lastly of superintending the troops of bricklayers, joiners, iron-hammerers employed with partial success to convert the top story of 5 Cheyne Row into a sound-proof room. Her hard-won victories in this field must have agreeably added to the sense of personality to which she resolutely clung. Her assertion, "Instead of boiling up individuals into the species, I would draw a chalk circle round every individuality," is the essence of much of her mate's philosophy; but, in the following to Sterling, she somewhat bitterly protests against her own absorption: "In spite of the honestest efforts to annihilate my I—ity or merge it in what the world doubtless considers my better half, I still find myself a self-subsisting, and, alas, self-seeking me."

The ever-restive consciousness of being submerged is one of the dominant notes of her journal, the other is the sense of being even within the circle unrecognised. "C. is a domestic wandering Jew. . . . When he is at work I hardly ever see his face from breakfast to dinner." . . . "Poor little wretch that I am, . . . I feel as if I were already half-buried . . . in some intermediate state between the living and the dead. . . . Oh, so lonely." These are among the *suspiria de profundis* of a life which her husband compared to "a great joyless stoicism," writing to the brother, whom he had proposed as a third on their first home-coming. "Solitude, indeed, is sad as Golgotha, but it is not mad like Bedlam; absence of delirium is possible only for me in solitude"; a sentiment almost literally acted on. In his offering of penitential cypress, referring to his wife's delight in the ultimate success of his work, he says, "She

flickered round me like a perpetual radiance." But during their joint lives their numerous visits and journeys were made at separate times or apart. They crossed continually on the roads up and down, but when absent wrote to one another often the most affectionate letters. Their attraction increased, contrary to Kepler's law, in the *direct* ratio of the square of the distance, and when it was stretched beyond the stars the long-latent love of the survivor became a worship.

Carlyle's devotion to his own kin, blood of his blood and bone of his bone, did not wait for any death to make itself declared. His veneration for his mother was reciprocated by a confidence and pride in him unruffled from cradle to grave, despite their widening theoretic differences, for with less distinct acknowledgment she seems to have practically shared his belief, "it matters little what a man holds in comparison with how he holds it." But on his wife's side the family bond was less absolute, and the fact adds a tragic interest to her first great bereavement after the settlement in London. There were many callers—increasing in number and eminence as time went on—at Cheyne Row; but naturally few guests. Among these, Mrs. Carlyle's mother paid, in 1838, her first and last visit, unhappily attended by some unpleasant friction. Grace Welsh (through whom her daughter derived the gipsy vein) had been in early years a beauty and a woman of fashion, endowed with so much natural ability that Carlyle, not altogether predisposed in her favour, confessed she had just missed being a genius; but she was accustomed to have her way, and old Walter of Penfillan confessed to having seen her in fifteen different humours in one evening. Welcomed on her arrival, misunderstandings soon arose. Carlyle himself had to interpose with conciliatory advice to his wife to bear with her mother's humours. One

household incident, though often quoted, is too characteristic to be omitted. On occasion of an evening party, Mrs. Welsh, whose ideas of hospitality, if not display, were perhaps larger than those suited for her still struggling hosts, had lighted a show of candles for the entertainment, whereupon the mistress of the house, with an air of authority, carried away two of them, an act which her mother resented with tears. The penitent daughter, in a mood like that which prompted Johnson to stand in the Uttoxeter market-place, left in her will that the candles were to be preserved and lit about her coffin, round which, nearly thirty years later, they were found burning. Carlyle has recorded their last sight of his mother-in-law in a few of his many graphic touches. It was at Dumfries in 1841, where she had brought Jane down from Templand to meet and accompany him back to the south. They parted at the door of the little inn, with deep suppressed emotion, perhaps overcharged by some presentiment; Mrs. Welsh looking sad but bright, and their last glimpse of her was the feather in her bonnet waving down the way to Lochmaben gate. Towards the close of February 1842 news came that she had had an apoplectic stroke, and Mrs. Carlyle hurried north, stopping to break the journey at her uncle's house in Liverpool; when there she was so prostrated by the sudden announcement of her mother's death that she was prohibited from going further, and Carlyle came down from London in her stead. On reaching Templand he found that the funeral had already taken place. He remained six weeks, acting as executor in winding up the estate, which now, by the previous will, devolved on his wife. To her during the interval he wrote a series of pathetic letters. Reading these,—which, with others from Haddington in the following years make an anthology of tenderness and truth, reading them alongside of his angry

invectives, with his wife's own accounts of the bilious earthquakes and peevish angers over petty cares; or worse, his ebullitions of jealousy assuming the mask of contempt, we again revert to the biographer who has said almost all that ought to be said of Carlyle, and more: "It seemed as if his soul was divided, like the Dioscuri, as if one part of it was in heaven, and the other in the place opposite heaven. But the misery had its origin in the same sensitiveness of nature which was so tremulously alive to soft and delicate emotion. Men of genius . . . are like the wind-harp which answers to the breath that touches it, now low and sweet, now rising into wild swell or angry scream, as the strings are swept by some passing gust." This applies completely to men like Burns, Byron, Heine, and Carlyle, less to the Miltons, Shakespeares, and Goethes of the world.

The crisis of bereavement, which promised to bind the husband and wife more closely together, brought to an end a dispute in which for once Mrs. Carlyle had her way. During the eight years over which we have been glancing, Carlyle had been perpetually grumbling at his Chelsea life: the restless spirit, which never found peace on this side of the grave, was constantly goading him with an impulse of flight and change, from land to sea, from shore to hills; anywhere or everywhere, at the time, seemed better than where he was. America and the Teufelsdröckh wanderings abandoned, he reverted to the idea of returning to his own haunts. A letter to Emerson in 1839 best expresses his prevalent feeling:—

This foggy Babylon tumbles along as it was wont: and as for my particular case uses me not worse but better than of old. Nay, there are many in it that have a real friendliness for me. . . . The worst is the sore tear and wear of this huge roaring Niagara of things on such a poor excitable set of nerves as mine.

The velocity of all things, of the very word you hear on the streets, is at railway rate : joy itself is unenjoyable, to be avoided like pain ; there is no wish one has so pressingly as for quiet. Ah me ! I often swear I will be *buried* at least in free breezy Scotland, out of this insane hubbub . . . if ever the smallest competence of worldly means be mine, I will fly this whirlpool as I would the Lake of Malebolge.

The competence had come, the death of Mrs. Welsh leaving to his wife and himself practically from £200 to £300 a year : why not finally return to the home of their early married life, "in reductâ valle caniculæ," with no noise around it but the trickle of rills and the nibbling of sheep ? Craigenputtock was now their own, and within its "four walls" they would begin a calmer life. Fortunately Mrs. Carlyle, whose shrewd practical instinct was never at fault, saw through the fallacy, and set herself resolutely against the scheme. Scotland had lost much of its charm for her — a year later she refused an invitation from Mrs. Aitken, saying, "I could do nothing at Scotsbrig or Dumfries but cry from morning to night." She herself had enough of the Hill of the Hawks, and she knew that within a year Carlyle would again be calling it the Devil's Den and lamenting Cheyne Row. He gave way with the protest, "I cannot deliberately mean anything that is harmful to you," and certainly it was well for him.

There is no record of an original writer or artist coming from the north of our island to make his mark in the south, succeeding, and then retracing his steps. Had Carlyle done so, he would probably have passed from the growing recognition of a society he was beginning to find on the whole congenial, to the solitude of intellectual ostracism. Scotland may be breezy, but it is not conspicuously free. Erratic opinions when duly veiled are generally allowed ; but this concession is of little worth. On the tolerance of those

who have no strong belief in anything, Carlyle, thinking possibly of rose-water Hunt and the litterateurs of his tribe, expressed himself with incisive and memorable truth : " It is but doubt and indifference. *Touch the thing they do believe and value, their own self-conceit : they are rattlesnakes then.*"¹ Tolerance for the frank expression of views which clash with the sincere or professed faith of the majority is rare everywhere ; in Scotland rarest. Episcopalians, high and broad, were content to condone the grim Calvinism that still infiltrated Carlyle's thoughts, and to smile, at worst, at his idolatry of the iconoclast who said, " the idolater shall die the death." But the reproach of " Pantheism " was for long fatal to his reception across the Tweed.

Towards the close of this period he acknowledged that London was " among improper places " the best for " writing books, after all the one use of living " for him ; its inhabitants " greatly the best " he " had ever walked with," and its aristocracy—the Marshalls, Stanleys, Hollands, Russells, Ashburtons, Lansdownes, who held by him through life—its " choicest specimens." Other friendships equally valued he made among the leading authors of the age. Tennyson sought his company, and Connop Thirlwall. Arnold of Rugby wrote in commendation of the *French Revolution* and of *Chartism*. Thackeray admired and reviewed him well. Even in Macaulay, condemned to limbo under the suspicion of having reviewed him ill, he found, when the suspicion was proved unjust, a promise of better things. As early as 1839 Sterling had written an article in the *Westminster*, which gave him intense pleasure ; for while contemning it in almost the same words as Byron did, he loved praise equally well. In 1840 he had crossed the Rubicon that lies between aspiration and attainment. The populace

¹ The italics are Mr. Froude's.

might be blind or dumb, the "rattlesnakes"—the "irresponsible indolent reviewers," who from behind a hedge pelt every wrestler till they found societies for the victor—might still obscurely hiss; but Carlyle was at length safe by the verdict of the "Conscript Fathers."