CHAPTER III

CRAIGENPUTTOCK

[1826-1834]

"Ah, when she was young, she was a fleein', dancin', light-heartit thing, Jeannie Welsh, that naething would hae dauntit. But she grew grave a' at ance. There was Maister Irving, ye ken, that had been her teacher; and he cam' aboot her. Then there was Maister ——. Then there was Maister Carlyle himsel', and *he* cam' to finish her off like."—HADDINGTON NURSE.

"My broom, as I sweep up the withered leaves, might be heard at a furlong's distance."—T. CARLYLE, from Craigenputtock, Oct. 1830.

DURING the last days at Hoddam Hill, Carlyle was on the verge of a crisis of his career, *i.e.* his making a marriage, for the chequered fortune of which he was greatly himself to blame.

No biography can ignore the strange conditions of a domestic life, already made familiar in so many records that they are past evasion. Various opinions have been held regarding the lady whom he selected to share his lot. Any adequate estimate of this remarkable woman belongs to an account of her own career, such as that given by Mrs. Ireland in her judicious and interesting abridgment of the material amply supplied. Jane Baillie Welsh (*b.* 1801, *d.* 1866) —descended on the paternal side from Elizabeth, the youngest daughter of John Knox; on the maternal owning to an

inheritance of gipsy blood—belonged to a family long esteemed in the borders. Her father, a distinguished Edinburgh student, and afterwards eminent surgeon at Haddington, noted alike from his humanity and skill, made a small fortune, and purchased in advance from his father his inheritance of Craigenputtock, a remnant of the once larger family estate. He died in 1819, when his daughter was in her eighteenth year. To her he left the now world-famous farm and the bulk of his property. Jane, of precocious talents, seems to have been, almost from infancy, the tyrant of the house at Haddington, where her people took a place of precedence in the small county town. Her grandfathers, John of Penfillan and Walter of Templand, also a Welsh, though of another the gipsy stock, vied for her baby favours, while her mother's quick and shifty tempers seem at that date to have combined in the process of "spoiling" her. The records of the schooldays of the juvenile Jane all point to a somewhat masculine strength of character. Through life, it must be acknowledged, this brilliant creature was essentially "a mocking-bird," and made game of every one till she met her mate. The little lady was learned, reading Virgil at nine, ambitious enough to venture a tragedy at fourteen, and cynical; writing to her life-long friend, Miss Eliza Stodart, of Haddington as a "bottomless pit of dulness," where "all my little world lay glittering in tinsel at my feet." She was ruthless to the suitors—as numerous, says Mr. Froude, "as those of Penelope"—who flocked about the young beauty, wit, and heiress. Of the discarded rivals there was only one of note—George Rennie, long afterwards referred to by Carlyle as a "clever, decisive, very ambitious, but quite unmelodious young fellow whom we knew here (in Chelsea) as sculptor and M.P." She dismissed him in 1821 for some cause of displeasure, "due to pride,

reserve, and his soured temper about the world"; but when he came to take leave, she confesses, "I scarcely heard a word he said, my own heart beat so loud." Years after, in London, she went by request of his wife to Rennie's death-bed.

Meanwhile she had fallen under the spell of her tutor, Edward Irving, and, as she, after much *finesse* and evasion, admitted, came to love him in earnest. Irving saw her weak points, saying she was apt to turn her powers to "arts of cruelty which satire and scorn are," and "to contemplate the inferiority of others rather from the point of view of ridicule and contempt than of commiseration and relief." Later she retaliated, "There would have been no 'tongues' had Irving married me." But he was fettered by a previous engagement, to which, after some struggle for release, he held, leaving in charge of his ward, as guide, philosopher, and friend, his old ally and successor, Thomas Carlyle. Between this exceptional pair there began in 1821 a relationship of constant growth in intimacy, marked by frequent visits, conversations, confidences, and a correspondence, long, full, and varied, starting with interchange of literary sympathies, and sliding by degrees into the dangerous friendship called Platonical. At the outset it was plain that Carlyle was not the St. Preux or Wolmar whose ideas of elegance Jane Welsh—a hasty student of Rousseau—had set in unhappy contrast to the honest young swains of Haddington. Uncouth, ungainly in manner and attire, he first excited her ridicule even more than he attracted her esteem, and her written descriptions of him recall that of Johnson by Lord Chesterfield. "He scrapes the fender, . . . only his tongue should be left at liberty, his other members are most fantastically awkward"; but the poor mocking-bird had met her fate. The correspondence falls under two sections, the critical and the personal. The

critical consists of remarks, good, bad, and indifferent, on books and their writers. Carlyle began his siege by talking German to her, now extolling Schiller and Goethe to the skies, now, with a rare stretch of deference, half conniving at her sneers. Much also passed between them about English authors, among them comments on Byron, notably inconsistent. Of him Carlyle writes (April 15th 1824) as "a pampered lord," who would care nothing for the £500 a year that would make an honest man happy; but later, on hearing of the death at Mesolonghi, more in the vein of his master Goethe, he exclaims:—

> Alas, poor Byron! the news of his death came upon me like a mass of lead; and yet the thought of it sends a painful twinge through all my being, as if I had lost a brother. O God! that so many souls of mud and clay should fill up their base existence to the utmost bound; and this, the noblest spirit in Europe, should sink before half his course was run. . . . Late so full of fire and generous passion and proud purposes, and now for ever dumb and cold. . . . Had he been spared to the age of threescore and ten what might he not have been! what might he not have been! . . . I dreamed of seeing him and knowing him; but . . . we shall go to him, he shall not return to us.

This in answer to her account of the same intelligence: "I was told it all alone in a room full of people. If they had said the sun or the moon was gone out of the heavens, it could not have struck me with the idea of a more awful and dreary blank in the creation than the words 'Byron is dead.'" Other letters of the same period, from London, are studded or disfigured by the incisive ill-natured sarcasms above referred to, or they relate to the work and prospects of the writer. Those that bear on the progress of his suit mark it as the strangest and, when we look before and after, one of the saddest courtships in literary history. As early as 1822 Carlyle entertained the idea of making Jane Welsh his wife; she

writes, "I am resolved in spirit, in the face of every horrible fate," and says she has decided to put off mourning for her father, having found a second father. Carlyle proposed that after the "dreaded ceremony" he and his bride and his brother John should travel together by the stage-coach from Dumfries to Edinburgh. In "the last dying speech and marrying words" she objects to this arrangement, and after the event (October 17th 1826) they drove in a post-chaise to 21 Comely Bank, where Mrs. Welsh, now herself settled at Templand, had furnished a house for them. Meanwhile the Carlyle family migrated to Scotsbrig. There followed eighteen comparatively tranquil months, an oasis in the wilderness, where the anomalous pair lived in some respects like other people. They had seats in church, and social gatherings—Wednesday "At Homes," to which the celebrity of their brilliant conversational powers attracted the brightest spirits of the northern capital, among them Sir William Hamilton, Sir David Brewster, John Wilson, De Quincey, forgiven for his review, and above all Jeffrey, a friend, though of opposite character, nearly as true as Irving himself. Procter had introduced Carlyle to the famous editor, who, as a Scotch cousin of the Welshes, took from the first a keen interest in the still struggling author, and opened to him the door of the *Edinburgh Review*. The appearance of the article on *Richter*, 1827, and that, in the course of the same year, on *The State of German Literature*, marks the beginning of a long series of splendid historical and critical essays—closing in 1855 with the *Prinzenraub* — which set Carlyle in the front of the reviewers of the century. The success in the *Edinburgh* was an "open sesame;" and the conductors of the *Foreign* and *Foreign Quarterly* Reviews, later, those of *Fraser* and the *Westminster*, were ready to receive whatever the new writer might choose to send.

To the *Foreign Review* he contributed from Comely Bank the *Life and Writings of Werner*, a paper on *Helena*, the leading episode of the second part of "Faust," and the first of the two great Essays on *Goethe*, which fixed his place as the interpreter of Germany to England. In midsummer 1827 Carlyle received a letter from Goethe cordially acknowledging the *Life of Schiller*, and enclosing presents of books for himself and his wife. This, followed by a later inquiry as to the author of the article on *German Literature*, was the opening of a correspondence of sage advice on the one side and of lively gratitude on the other, that lasted till the death of the veteran in 1832. Goethe assisted, or tried to assist, his admirer by giving him a testimonial in a candidature for the Chair (vacant by the promotion of Dr. Chalmers) of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews. Jeffrey, a frequent visitor and host of the Carlyles, still regarded as "a jewel of advocates . . . the most lovable of little men," urged and aided the canvass, but in vain. The testimonials were too strong to be judicious, and "it was enough that" the candidate "was described as a man of original and extraordinary gifts to make college patrons shrink from contact with him." Another failure, about the same date and with the same backing, was an application for a Professorship in London University, practically under the patronage of Brougham; yet another, of a different kind, was Carlyle's attempt to write a novel, which having been found—better before than after publication—to be a failure, was for the most part burnt. "He could not," says Froude, "write a novel any more than he could write poetry. He had no *invention*.[1]

[1] Carlyle's verses also demonstrate that he had no metrical ear. The only really good lines he ever wrote, save in translations where the rhythm was set to him, are those constantly quoted about the dawn of "another blue day." Those sent to his mother on

His genius was for fact; to lay hold on truth, with all his intellect and all his imagination. He could no more invent than he could lie."

The remaining incidents of Carlyle's Edinburgh life are few: a visit from his mother; a message from Goethe transmitting a medal for Sir Walter Scott; sums generously sent for his brother John's medical education in Germany; loans to Alexander, and a frustrate scheme for starting a new Annual Register, designed to be a literary *résumé* of the year, make up the record. The "rift in the lute," Carlyle's incapacity for domestic life, was already showing itself. Within the course of an orthodox honeymoon he had begun to shut himself up in interior solitude, seldom saw his wife from breakfast till 4 P.M., when they dined together and read *Don Quixote* in Spanish. The husband was half forgotten in the author beginning to prophesy: he wrote alone, walked alone, thought alone, and for the most part talked alone, *i.e.* in monologue that did not wait or care for answer. There was respect, there was affection, but there was little companionship. Meanwhile, despite the *Review* articles, Carlyle's other works, especially the volumes on German romance, were not succeeding, and the mill had to grind without grist. It seemed doubtful if he could longer afford to live in Edinburgh; he craved after greater quiet, and when the farm, which was the main Welsh inheritance, fell vacant, resolved on migrating thither. His wife yielding, though with a natural repugnance to the extreme seclusion in store for her, and the Jeffreys kindly assisting, they went together in May 1828 to the Hill of the Hawks.

Craigenputtock is by no means "the dreariest spot

"Proud Hapsburg," and to Jane Welsh before marriage are unworthy of Macaulay's school-boy, "Non dî non homines," but it took much hammering to persuade Carlyle of the fact, and when persuaded he concluded that verse-writing was a mere tinkling of cymbals!

in all the British dominions." On a sunny day it is an inland home, with wide billowy straths of grass around, inestimable silence broke only by the placid bleating of sheep, and the long rolling ridges of the Solway hills in front. But in the "winter wind," girt by drifts of snow, no post or apothecary within fifteen miles, it may be dreary enough. Here Carlyle allowed his wife to serve him through six years of household drudgery; an offence for which he was never quite forgiven, and to estimate its magnitude here seems the proper place. He was a model son and brother, and his conjugal fidelity has been much appraised, but he was as unfit, and for some of the same reasons, to make "a happy fireside clime" as was Jonathan Swift; and less even than Byron had he a share of the mutual forbearance which is essential to the closest of all relations.

"Napoleon," says Emerson, "to achieve his ends risked everything and spared nothing, neither ammunition, nor money, nor troops, nor generals, nor himself." With a slight change of phrase the same may be said of Carlyle's devotion to his work. There is no more prevailing refrain in his writing, public and private, than his denunciation of literature as a profession, nor any wiser words than those in which the veteran warns the young men, whose questions he answers with touching solicitude, against its adoption. "It should be," he declares, "the wine not the food of life, the ardent spirits of thought and fancy without the bread of action parches up nature and makes strong souls like Byron dangerous, the weak despicable." But it was nevertheless the profession of his deliberate choice, and he soon found himself bound to it as Ixion to his wheel. The most thorough worker on record, he found nothing easy that was great, and he would do nothing little. In his determination to pluck out the heart of the mystery, be it of

himself, as in *Sartor*; of Germany, as in his Goethes and Richters; the state of England, as in *Chartism* and *Past and Present*; of *Cromwell* or of *Friedrich*, he faced all obstacles and overthrew them. Dauntless and ruthless, he allowed nothing to divert or to mar his designs, least of all domestic cares or even duties. "Selfish he was,"—I again quote from his biographer,—"if it be selfish to be ready to sacrifice every person dependent on him as completely as he sacrificed himself." What such a man wanted was a housekeeper and a nurse, not a wife, and when we consider that he had chosen for the latter companionship a woman almost as ambitious as himself, whose conversation was only less brilliant than his own, of delicate health and dainty ways, loyal to death, but, according to Mr. Froude, in some respects "as hard as flint," with "dangerous sparks of fire," whose quick temper found vent in sarcasms that blistered and words like swords, who could declare during the time of the engagement, to which in spite of warnings manifold she clung, "I will not marry to live on less than my natural and artificial wants"; who, ridiculing his accent to his face and before his friends, could write, "apply your talents to gild over the inequality of our births"; and who found herself obliged to live sixteen miles from the nearest neighbour, to milk a cow, scour floors and mend shoes—when we consider all this we are constrained to admit that the 17th October 1826 was a *dies nefastus*, nor wonder that thirty years later Mrs. Carlyle wrote, "I married for ambition, Carlyle has exceeded all that my wildest hopes ever imagined of him, and I am miserable,"— and to a young friend, "My dear, whatever you do, never marry a man of genius."

Carlyle's own references to the life at Craigenputtock are marked by all his aggravating inconsistency. "How happy we shall be in this Craig o' Putta," he writes to his

wife from Scotsbrig, April 17th 1827; and later to Goethe:—

Here Rousseau would have been as happy as on his island of Saint Pierre. My town friends indeed ascribe my sojourn here to a similar disposition, and forebode me no good results. But I came here solely with the design to simplify my way of life, and to secure the independence through which I could be enabled to be true to myself. This bit of earth is our own; here we can live, write, and think as best pleases ourselves, even though Zoilus himself were to be crowned the monarch of literature. From some of our heights I can descry, about a day's journey to the west, the hill where Agricola and the Romans left a camp behind them. At the foot of it I was born, and there both father and mother still live to love me. . . . The only piece of any importance that I have written since I came here is an Essay on Burns.

This Essay, modified at first then let alone by Jeffrey, appeared in the *Edinburgh* in the autumn of 1828. We turn to Carlyle's journal and find the entry, "Finished a paper on Burns at this Devil's Den," elsewhere referred to as a "gaunt and hungry Siberia." Later still he confesses, when preparing for his final move south, "Of solitude I have really had enough."

Romæ Tibur amem ventosus, Tibure Romam.

Carlyle in the moor was always sighing for the town, and in the town for the moor. During the first twenty years of his London life, in what he called "the Devil's oven," he is constantly clamouring to return to the den. His wife, more and more forlorn though ever loyal, consistently disliked it; little wonder, between sluttish maid-servants and owl-like solitude: and she expressed her dislike in the pathetic verses, "To a Swallow Building under our Eaves," sent to Jeffrey in 1832, and ending—

God speed thee, pretty bird; may thy small nest
With little ones all in good time be blest;
I love thee much
For well thou managest that life of thine,
While I! Oh, ask not what I do with mine,
Would I were such! *The Desert.*

The monotony of the moorland life was relieved by visits of relations and others made and repaid, an excursion to Edinburgh, a residence in London, and the production of work, the best of which has a chance of living with the language. One of the most interesting of the correspondences of this period is a series of letters, addressed to an anonymous Edinburgh friend who seems to have had some idea of abandoning his profession of the Law for Literature, a course against which Carlyle strenuously protests. From these letters, which have only appeared in the columns of the *Glasgow Herald*, we may extract a few sentences:—

Don't disparage the work that gains your bread. What is all work but a drudgery? no labour for the present joyous, but grievous. A man who has nothing to admire except himself is in the minimum state. The question is, Does a man really love Truth, or only the market price of it? Even literary men should have something else to do. Kames was a lawyer, Roscoe a merchant, Hans Sachs a cobbler, Burns a gauger, etc.

The following singular passage, the style of which suggests an imitation of Sterne, is the acme of unconscious self-satire:—

You are infinitely unjust to Blockheads, as they are called. Ask yourself seriously within your own heart—what right have you to live wisely in God's world, and they not to live a little wisely? Is there a man more to be condoled with, nay, I will say to be cherished and tenderly treated, than a man that has no brain? My Purse is empty, it can be filled again; the Jew Rothschild could fill it; or I can even live with it very far from full. But, gracious heavens! what is to be done with my *empty Head*?

Three of the visits of this period are memorable. Two from the Jeffreys (in 1828 and 1830) leave us with the same uncomfortable impression of kindness ungrudgingly bestowed and grudgingly received. Jeffrey had a double interest in the household at Craigenputtock—an almost brotherly regard for the wife, and a belief, restrained by the range of a keen though limited appreciation, in the powers of the husband, to whom he wrote: "Take care of the fair creature who has entrusted herself so entirely to you," and with a half truth, "You have no mission upon earth, whatever you may fancy, half so important as to be innocently happy." And again: "Bring your blooming Eve out of your blasted Paradise, and seek shelter in the lower world." But Carlyle held to the "banner with a strange device," and was either deaf or indignant. The visits passed, with satirical references from both the host and hostess; for Mrs. Carlyle, who could herself abundantly scoff and scold, would allow the liberty to no one else. Jeffrey meanwhile was never weary of well-doing. Previous to his promotion as Lord Advocate and consequent transference to London, he tried to negotiate for Carlyle's appointment as his successor in the editorship of the *Review*, but failed to make him accept the necessary conditions. The paper entitled *Signs of the Times* was the last production that he had to revise for his eccentric friend. Those following on Taylor's *German Literature* and the *Characteristics* were brought out in 1831 under the auspices of Macvey Napier. The other visit was from the most illustrious of Carlyle's English-speaking friends, in many respects a fellow-worker, yet "a spirit of another sort," and destined, though a transcendental mystic, to be the most practical of his benefactors. Twenty-four hours of Ralph Waldo Emerson (often referred to in the course of a long and intimate correspondence) are spoken of by Mrs. Carlyle as a visit from the clouds,

brightening the prevailing gray. He came to the remote inland home with "the pure intellectual gleam" of which Hawthorne speaks, and "the quiet night of clear fine talk" remained one of the memories which led Carlyle afterwards to say, "Perhaps our happiest days were spent at the Craig." Goethe's letters, especially that in which he acknowledges a lock of Mrs. Carlyle's hair, "eine unvergleichliche schwarze Haar locke," were also among the gleams of 1829. The great German died three years later, after receiving the birthday tribute in his 82nd year from English friends; and it is pleasant to remember that in this instance the disciple was to the end loyal to his master. To this period belong many other correspondences. "I am scribble scribbling," he says in a letter of 1832, and mere scribbling may fill many pages with few headaches; but Carlyle wrestled as he wrote, and not a page of those marvellous *Miscellanies* but is red with his life's blood. Under all his reviewing, he was set on a work whose fortunes were to be the strangest, whose result was, in some respects, the widest of his efforts. The plan of *Sartor Resartus* is far from original. Swift's *Tale of a Tub* distinctly anticipated the Clothes Philosophy; there are besides manifest obligations to Reinecke Fuchs, Jean Paul Richter, and other German authors: but in our days originality is only possible in the handling; Carlyle has made an imaginary German professor the mere mouthpiece of his own and the higher aspiration of the Scotland of his day, and it remains the most popular as surely as his *Friedrich* is the greatest of his works. The author was abundantly conscious of the value of the book, and superabundantly angry at the unconsciousness of the literary patrons of the time. In 1831 he resolved if possible to go up to London to push the prospects of this first-born male child. The *res angusta* stood in the way. Jeffrey, after asking his friend "what situation he could get him that he

would detest the least," pressed on him "in the coolest, lightest manner the use of his purse." This Carlyle, to the extent of £50 as a loan (carefully returned), was induced ultimately to accept. It has been said that "proud men never wholly forgive those to whom they feel themselves obliged," but their resenting of benefits is the worst feature of their pride. Carlyle made his second visit to London to seek types for *Sartor*, in vain. Always preaching reticence with the sound of artillery, he vents in many pages the rage of his chagrin at the "Arimaspian" publishers, who would not print his book, and the public which, "dosed with froth," would not buy it. The following is little softened by the chiaroscuro of five-and-thirty years :—

> Done, I think, at Craigenputtock between January and August 1830, *Teufelsdröckh* was ready, and I decided to make for London; night before going, how I remember it. . . . The beggarly history of poor *Sartor* among the blockheadisms is not worth recording or remembering, least of all here! In short, finding that I had got £100 (if memory serve) for *Schiller* six or seven years before, and for *Sartor*, at least twice as good, I could not only not get £200, but even get no Murray or the like to publish it on half profits. Murray, a most stupendous object to me, tumbling about eyeless, with the evidently strong wish to say "Yes" and "No,"—my first signal experience of that sad human predicament. I said, We will make it "No," then; wrap up our MS., and carry it about for some two years from one terrified owl to another; published at last experimentally in *Fraser*, and even then mostly laughed at, nothing coming of the volume except what was sent by Emerson from America.

This summary is unfair to Murray, who was inclined, on Jeffrey's recommendation, to accept the book; but on finding that Carlyle had carried the MS. to Longmans and another publisher, in hopes of a better bargain, and that it had been refused, naturally wished to refer the matter to his "reader," and the negotiation closed. *Sartor* struggled into half life in parts of the

Magazine to which the writer had already contributed several of his German essays, and it was even then published with reluctance, and on half pay. The reception of this work, a nondescript, yet among the finest prose poems in our language, seemed to justify bookseller, editor, and readers alike, for the British public in general were of their worst opinion. "It is a heap of clotted nonsense," pronounced the *Sun*. "Stop that stuff or stop my paper," wrote one of *Fraser's* constituents. "When is that stupid series of articles by the crazy tailor going to end?" cried another. At this time Carlyle used to say there were only two people who found anything in his book worth reading —Emerson and a priest in Cork, who said to the editor that he would take the magazine when anything in it appeared by the author of *Sartor*. The volume was only published in 1838, by Saunders and Otley, after the *French Revolution* had further raised the writer's name, and then on a guarantee from friends willing to take the risk of loss. It does not appear whether Carlyle refers to this edition or to some slighter reissue of the magazine articles when he writes in the *Reminiscences*: "I sent off six copies to six Edinburgh literary friends, from not one of whom did I get the smallest whisper even of receipt—a thing disappointing more or less to human nature, and which has silently and insensibly led me never since to send any copy of a book to Edinburgh. . . . The plebs of literature might be divided in their verdicts about me; though by count of heads I always suspect the guilty clear had it; but the conscript fathers declined to vote at all."[1] In America *Sartor* was pieced together from *Fraser*, published in a volume introduced by Alexander Everett, extolled by

[1] *Tempora mutantur.* A few months before Carlyle's death a cheap edition of *Sartor* was issued, and 30,000 copies were sold within a few weeks.

Emerson as "A criticism of the spirit of the age in which we live; exhibiting in the most just and novel light the present aspect of religion, politics, literature, and social life." The editors add: "We believe no book has been published for many years . . . which discovers an equal mastery over all the riches of the language. The author makes ample amends for the occasional eccentricity of his genius not only by frequent bursts of pure splendour, but by the wit and sense which never fail him."

Americans are intolerant of honest criticism on themselves, but they are, more than any other nation, open to appreciate vigorous expressions of original views of life and ethics—all that we understand by philosophy—and equally so to new forms of art. The leading critics of the New England have often been the first and best testers of the fresh products of the Old. A land of experiment in all directions, ranging from Mount Lebanon to Oneida Creek, has been ready to welcome the suggestions, physical or metaphysical, of startling enterprise. Ideas which filter slowly through English soil and abide for generations, flash over the electric atmosphere of the West. Hence Coleridge, Carlyle, and Browning were already accepted as prophets in Boston while their own countrymen were still examining their credentials. To this readiness, as of a photographic plate, to receive, must be added the fact that the message of *Sartor* crossed the Atlantic when the hour to receive it had struck. To its publication has been attributed the origin of a movement that was almost simultaneously inaugurated by Emerson's *Harvard Discourse*. It was a revolt against the reign of Commerce in practice, Calvinism in theory, and precedent in Art that gave birth to the Transcendentalism of *The Dial*—a Pantheon in which Carlyle had at once assigned to him a place. He meanwhile was busy in London making friends by his conspicuous, almost

obtrusive, genius, and sowing the seeds of discord by his equally obtrusive spleen. To his visit of 1831-1832 belongs one of the worst of the elaborate invectives against Lamb which have recoiled on the memory of his critic—to the credit of English sympathies with the most lovable of slightly erring men—with more than the force of a boomerang. A sheaf of sharp sayings of the same date owe their sting to their half truth, *e.g.* to a man who excused himself for profligate journalism on the old plea, "I must live, sir." "No, sir, you need not live, if your body cannot be kept together without selling your soul." Similarly he was abusing the periodicals—"mud," "sand," and "dust magazines"—to which he had contributed, *inter alia*, the great Essay on *Voltaire* and the consummate sketch of *Novalis*; with the second paper on *Richter* to the *Foreign Review*, the reviews of *History* and of *Schiller* to *Fraser*, and that on *Goethe's Works* to the *Foreign Quarterly*. During this period he was introduced to Molesworth, Austin, and J. S. Mill. On his summons, October 1st 1832, Mrs. Carlyle came up to Ampton Street, where he then resided, to see him safe through the rest of his London time. They lamented over the lapse of Irving, now lost in the delirium of tongues, and made a league of friendship with Mill, whom he describes as "a partial disciple of mine," a friendship that stood a hard test, but was broken when the author of *Liberty* naturally found it impossible to remain a disciple of the writer of *Latter-Day Pamphlets*. Mill, like Napier, was at first staggered by the *Characteristics*, though he afterwards said it was one of Carlyle's greatest works, and was enthusiastic over the review of Boswell's *Johnson*, published in *Fraser* in the course of this year. Meanwhile Margaret, Carlyle's favourite sister, had died, and his brightest, Jean, "the Craw," had married her cousin, James Aitken. In memory of the former he wrote as a

master of threnody: to the bridegroom of the latter he addressed a letter reminding him of the duties of a husband, "to do as he would be done by to his wife"! In 1832 John, again by Jeffrey's aid, obtained a situation at £300 a year as travelling physician to Lady Clare, and was enabled, as he promptly did, to pay back his debts. Alexander seems to have been still struggling with an imperfectly successful farm. In the same year, when Carlyle was in London, his father died at Scotsbrig, after a residence there of six years. His son saw him last in August 1831, when, referring to his Craigenputtock solitude, he said: "Man, it's surely a pity that thou shouldst sit yonder with nothing but the eye of Omniscience to see thee, and thou with such a gift to speak."

The Carlyles returned in March, she to her domestic services, baking bread, preserving eggs, and brightening grates till her eyes grew dim; he to work at his *Diderot*, doing justice to a character more alien to his own than even Voltaire's, reading twenty-five volumes, one per day, to complete the essay; then at *Count Cagliostro*, also for *Fraser*, a link between his last Craigenputtock and his first London toils. The period is marked by shoals of letters, a last present from Weimar, a visit to Edinburgh, and a candidature for a University Chair,[1] which Carlyle thought Jeffrey could have got for him; but the advocate did not, probably could not, in this case satisfy his client. In excusing himself he ventured to lecture the applicant on what he imagined to be the impracticable temper and perverse eccentricity which had retarded and might continue to retard his advancement. Carlyle, never tolerant of rebuke however just, was indignant, and though an open quarrel was avoided by letters on both sides of courteous compromise, the breach was in reality never healed, and

[1] The last was in 1836, for the Chair of Astronomy in Glasgow.

Jeffrey has a niche in the *Reminiscences* as a "little man who meant well but did not see far or know much." Carlyle went on, however, like Thor, at the *Diamond Necklace*, which is a proem to the *French Revolution*, but inly growling, "My own private impression is that I shall never get any promotion in this world." "A prophet is not readily acknowledged in his own country"; "Mein Leben geht sehr übel: all dim, misty, squally, disheartening at times, almost heartbreaking." This is the prose rather than the male of Byron. Of all men Carlyle could least reck his own rede. He never even tried to consume his own smoke. His *Sartor* is indeed more contained, and takes at its summit a higher flight than Rousseau's *Confessions*, or the *Sorrows of Werther*, or the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*: but reading Byron's letters is mingling with a world gay and grave; reading Goethe's walking in the Parthenon, though the Graces in the niches are sometimes unclad; reading Carlyle's is travelling through glimpses of sunny fields and then plunging into coal-black tunnels. At last he decided, "Puttock is no longer good for *me*," and his brave wife approving, and even inciting, he resolved to burn his ships and seek his fortune—sink or swim—in the metropolis. Carlyle, for once taking the initiative of practical trouble, went in advance on a house-hunt to London, and by advice of Leigh Hunt fixed on the now famous house in Chelsea near the Thames.