The river Annan, rising above Moffat in Hartfell, descends from the mountains through a valley gradually widening and spreading out, as the fells are left behind, into the rich and well-cultivated district known as Annandale. Picturesque and broken in the upper part of its course, the stream, when it reaches the level country, steals slowly among meadows and undulating wooded hills, till at the end of forty miles it falls into the Solway at Annan town. Annandale, famous always for its pasturage, suffered especially before the union of the kingdoms from border forays, the effects of which were long to be traced in a certain wildness of disposition in the inhabitants. Dumfriesshire, to which it belongs, was sternly Cameronian. Stories of the persecutions survived in the farmhouses as their most treasured historical traditions. Cameronian congregations lingered till the beginning of the present century, when they merged in other bodies of seceders from the established religion.

In its hard fight for spiritual freedom Scotch Protestantism lost respect for kings and nobles, and looked to Christ rather than to earthly rulers; but before the Reformation all Scotland was clannish or feudal; and the Dumfriesshire yeomanry, like the rest, were organised under great noble families, whose pennon they followed, whose name they bore, and the remotest kindred with which, even to a tenth generation, they were proud to claim. Among the families of the western border the Carlyles were not the least distinguished.
They were originally English, and were called probably after Carlisle town. They came to Annandale with the Bruces in the time of David the Second. A Sir John Carlyle was created Lord Carlyle of Torthorwald in reward for a beating which he had given the English at Annan. Michael, the fourth lord, signed the Association Bond among the Protestant lords when Queen Mary was sent to Lochleven, being the only one among them, it was observed, who could not write his name. Their work was rough. They were rough men themselves, and with the change of times their importance declined. The title lapsed, the estates were dissipated in lawsuits, and by the middle of the last century nothing remained of the Carlyles but one or two households in the neighbourhood of Burnswark who had inherited the name either through the adoption of their forefathers of the name of their leader, or by some descent of blood which had trickled down through younger sons.

In one of these families, in a house which his father, who was a mason, had built with his own hands, Thomas Carlyle was born on December 4, 1795. Ecclefechan, where his father lived, is a small market town on the east side of Annandale, six miles inland from the Solway, and about sixteen on the great north road from Carlisle. It consists of a single street, down one side of which, at that time, ran an open brook. The aspect, like that of most Scotch towns, is cold, but clean and orderly, with an air of thrifty comfort. The houses are plain, that in which the Carlyles lived alone having pretensions to originality. In appearance one, it is really double, a central arch dividing it. James Carlyle, Thomas Carlyle's father, occupied one part. His brother, who was his partner in trade, lived in the other.

Of their ancestors they knew nothing beyond the second generation. Tradition said that they had been long settled as farmers at Birrens, the Roman station at Middlebie (two miles from Ecclefechan). One of them, it was said, had been unjustly hanged on pretext of border cattle-stealing. The case was so cruel that the farm had been given as some compensation to the widow, and the family had continued to possess it till their title was questioned, and they were turned out, by the Duke of Queensberry. Whether this story was true or not, it is certain that James Carlyle's grand-
Arched House, Ecclefechan, Carlyle's Birthplace. Photograph taken in the 1890s just after the planting of the beech trees that now tower over the brook in the foreground—"the little Kuhbach [cow-brook] gushing kindly by, among beech rows" of Sartor Resartus. "This umbrageous Man's-nest," Carlyle described it in Sartor. (Photograph by John Patrick, courtesy of the University of Edinburgh.)
Street View, Ecclefechan. "Changes take place so slowly in Scottish villages that the Ecclefechan of to-day differs but little from the Ecclefechan of Carlyle's boyhood," wrote Henry C. Shelley in 1895 (Literary By-paths in Old England). Although the pace of life has accelerated in the twentieth century, this Dumfriesshire village remains much as it was in earlier times. The visitor can still see the Arched House (now protected by the National Trust) and the graves of the Carlyles in Ecclefechan Kirkyard. (Photograph by John Patrick, courtesy of the University of Edinburgh.)
mother lived at Middlebie in extreme poverty, and that she
died in the early part of the last century, leaving two sons. Thomas, the elder, was a carpenter, worked for some time at Lancaster, came home afterwards, and saw the Highlanders pass through Ecclefechan in 1745 on their way to England. Leaving his trade, he settled at a small farm called Brownknowe, near Burnswark Hill, and, marrying a certain Mary Gillespie, produced four sons and two daughters. Of these sons James Carlyle was the second. The household life was in a high degree disorderly. Old Thomas Carlyle was formed after the border type, more given to fighting and wild adventure than to patient industry. "My Grandfather did not drink," his grandson says, but "he was a fiery man; irascible, indomitable: of the toughness and springiness of steel. An old market-brawl, called 'the Ecclefechan Dog-fight,' in which he was a principal, survives in tradition there to this day." He was proud, poor, and discontented, leaving his family for the most part to shift for themselves. They were often without food or fuel; his sons were dressed in breeks made mostly of leather.

They had to scramble ("scraffle!") for their very clothes and food. They knit, they thatched, for hire; above all they hunted. My Father had tried all these things, almost in boyhood. Every dell and burngate and cleugh of that district he had traversed, seeking hares and the like: he used to tell of these pilgrimages: once, I remember, his gun-flint was "tied on with a hatband." He was a real hunter, like a wild Indian, from Necessity. The hares' flesh was food: hare-skins (at some sixpence each) would accumulate into the purchase-money of a coat. . . . His hunting years were not useless to him. Misery was early training the rugged boy into a Stoic;—that, one day, there might be assurance of a Scottish Man.4

"Travelling tinkers," "Highland drovers," and such like were occasional guests at Brownknowe. Sandy Macleod, a pensioned soldier who had served under Wolfe, lived in an adjoining cottage, and had stories to tell of his adventures.5 Old Thomas Carlyle, notwithstanding his rough, careless ways, was not without cultivation. He studied Anson's Voyages, and in his old age, strange to say, when his sons were growing into young men, he would sit with a neighbour over the fire, reading, much to their scandal, the Arabian Nights. They had become, James Carlyle especially, and his brothers through him, serious lads, and they were shocked to
see two old men occupied on the edge of the grave with such idle vanities.  

Religion had been introduced into the house through another singular figure, John Orr, the schoolmaster of Hoddam, who was also by trade a shoemaker. Schoolmastering in those days fell to persons of clever irregular habits, who took it from taste partly, and also because other forms of business did not answer with them. Orr was a man of strong pious tendencies, but was given to drink. He would disappear for weeks into pothouses, and then come back to his friends shattered and remorseful. He, too, was a friend and visitor at Brownknowe, teaching the boys by day, sleeping in the room with them at night, and discussing arithmetical problems with their father. From him James Carlyle gained such knowledge as he had, part of it a knowledge of the Bible, which became the guiding principle of his life. The effect was soon visible on a remarkable occasion. While he was still a boy, he and three of his companions had met to play cards. There was some disagreement among them, when James Carlyle said that they were fools and worse for quarrelling over a probably sinful amusement. They threw the cards into the fire, and perhaps no one of the four, certainly not James Carlyle, ever touched a card again. Hitherto he and his brother had gleaned a subsistence on the skirts of settled life. They were now to find an entrance into regular occupation. James Carlyle was born in 1757. In 1773, when he was sixteen, a certain William Brown, a mason from Peebles, came into Annandale, became acquainted with the Carlyles, and married Thomas Carlyle's eldest daughter Fanny. He took her brothers as apprentices, and they became known before long as the most skilful and diligent workmen in the neighbourhood. James, though not the eldest, had the strongest character, and guided the rest. “They were (censoriously) noted for their brotherly affection, and coherence.” They all prospered. They were noted also for their “hard sayings,” and it must be said also, in their early manhood, for “hard strikings.” They were warmly liked by those near them; “by those at a distance, viewed, as something dangerous to meddle with, something not to be meddled with.”
James Carlyle never spoke with pleasure of his young days, regarding them as "days of folly, perhaps sinful days"; but it was well known that he was strictly temperate, pure, abstemious, prudent, and industrious. Feared he was from his promptness of hand, but never aggressive, and using his strength only to put down rudeness and violence. On one occasion, says Carlyle, "a huge rude peasant was rudely defying and insulting the party my Father belonged to; the others quailed, and bore it, till he could bear it no longer; but clutches his rough adversary . . . by the two flanks, swings him with ireful force round in the air (hitting his feet against some open door), and hurls him to a distance —supine, lamed, vanquished and utterly humbled. . . . He would say of such things: 'I am wae to think on't'—wae from repentance: Happy who has nothing worse to repent off!'"

The apprenticeship over, the brothers began work on their own account, and with marked success; James Carlyle taking the lead. He built, as has been already said, a house for himself, which still stands in the street of Ecclefechan. His brothers occupied one part of it, he himself the other; and his father, the old Thomas, life now wearing out, came in from Brownknowe to live with them. James, perhaps the others, but James decisively, became an avowedly religious man. He had a maternal uncle, one Robert Brand, whose advice and example influenced him in this matter. Brand was a "vigorous Religionist," of strict Presbyterian type. From him James Carlyle received a definite faith, and made his profession as a "Burgher," a seceding sect which had separated from the Establishment as insufficiently in earnest for them. They had their humble meeting-house, "thatched with heath"; and for minister a certain John Johnston, from whom Carlyle himself learned afterwards his first Latin; "the priestliest man," he says, "I ever under any ecclesiastical guise was privileged to look upon."

In 1791, having then a house of his own, James Carlyle married a distant cousin of the same name, Janet Carlyle. They had one son, John, and then she died of fever. Her long fair hair, which had been cut off in her illness, remained as a memorial of her in a drawer, into which the children
MARGARET AITKEN CARLYLE. "A pious mother, if there ever was one," Carlyle wrote of her after her death; "pious to God the Maker and to all He had made. Intellect, humour, softest pity, love, and, before all, perfect veracity in thought, in word, mind, and action; these were her characteristics, and had been now for above eighty-three years, in a humbly diligent, beneficent, and often toilsome and suffering life." The book in her right hand may be the Bible. In 1881 this painting hung in Carlyle's bedroom. (Portrait in oil by Maxwell of Dumfries, 1842, courtesy of the Carlyle House, Chelsea.)
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afterwards looked with wondering awe. Two years after the husband married again Margaret Aitken, "a woman," says Carlyle, "of to me the fairest descent, that of the pious, the just and wise." Her character will unfold itself as the story goes on. Thomas Carlyle was her first child, born December 4, 1795; she lived to see him at the height of his fame, known and honoured wherever the English language was spoken. To her care "for body and soul" he never ceased to say that he owed "endless gratitude." After Thomas came eight others, three sons and five daughters, one of whom, Janet, so called after the first wife, died when she was a few months old.

The family was prosperous, as Ecclefechan working life understood prosperity. In one year, his best, James Carlyle made in his business as much as £100. At worst he earned an artisan's substantial wages, and was thrifty and prudent. The children, as they passed out of infancy, ran about barefoot, but were otherwise cleanly clothed, and fed on oatmeal, milk, and potatoes. Our Carlyle learned to read from his mother too early for distinct remembrance; when he was five his father taught him arithmetic, and sent him with the other village boys to school. Like the Carlyles generally he had a violent temper. John, the son of the first marriage, lived usually with his grandfather, but came occasionally to visit his parents. Carlyle's earliest recollection is of throwing his little brown stool at his brother in a mad passion of rage, when he was scarcely more than two years old, breaking a leg of it, and feeling "for perhaps the first time, the united pangs of Loss and of Remorse." The next impression which most affected him was the small round heap under the sheet upon a bed where his little sister lay dead. Death, too, he made acquaintance with in another memorable form. His father's eldest brother John died. "I remember the funeral; and perhaps a day before it, how an ill-behaving servant-wench to some crony of hers, lifted up the coverlid from off his pale, ghastly-befilleted head to show it her: unheeding of me, who was alone with them there, and to whom the sight gave a new pang of horror." The grandfather followed next, closing finally his Anson and his Arabian Nights. He had a brother whose adventures had been remarkable. Francis Carlyle, so he was called, had been
apprenticed to a shoemaker. He, too, when his time was out, had gone to England, to Bristol among other places, where he fell into drink and gambling. He lost all his money; one morning after an orgy he flung himself desperately out of bed and broke his leg. When he recovered he enlisted in a brig of war, distinguished himself by special gallantry in supporting his captain in a mutiny, and was rewarded with the command of a Solway revenue cutter. After many years of rough creditable service he retired on half-pay to his native village of Middlebie. There had been some family quarrel, and the brothers, though living close to one another, had held no intercourse. They were both of them above eighty years of age. The old Thomas being on his death-bed, the sea captain's heart relented. He was a grim, broad, fierce-looking man; "prototype of Smollett's Trunnion."  

Being too unwieldy to walk, he was brought into Ecclefechan in a cart, and carried in a chair up the steep stairs to his dying brother's room. There he remained some twenty minutes, and came down again with a face which printed itself in the little Carlyle's memory. They saw him no more, and after a brief interval the old generation had disappeared.

Amidst such scenes our Carlyle struggled through his early boyhood.

It was not a joyful life (what life is), yet a safe, quiet one; above most others (or any other I have witnessed) a wholesome one. We were taciturn rather than talkative; but if little were said, that little had generally a meaning. I cannot be thankful enough for my parents.

[Carlyle spoke of his father as]

Considerably the most . . . [remarkable man] I have ever met with in my journey throu' life. Sterling veracity, in thought, in word, and in deed; courage mostly quiet, but capable of blazing into fire-whirlwinds when needful: these, and such a flash of just insight, and of brief natural eloquence and emphasis, true to every feature, as I have never met with in any other man (myself included) were the leading features of him. "Humour," of a most grim Scandinavian type, he occasionally had; "wit" rarely or never, too serious for "wit." My excellent Mother, with perhaps the deeper piety in most senses, had also the most sport,—of what is called wit, humour &c. No man of my day, or hardly any man, can have had better parents.
The Sunday services in Mr. Johnston's meeting-house were the events of the week. The congregation were "Dissenters" of a marked type, some of them coming from as far as Carlisle; another party, and among these at times a little eager boy, known afterwards as Edward Irving, appearing regularly from Annan.

Education is a passion in Scotland. It is the pride of every honourable peasant, if he has a son of any promise, to give him a chance of rising as a scholar. As a child Carlyle could not have failed to show that there was something unusual in him. The schoolmaster in Ecclefechan gave a good account of his progress in "figures." The minister reported favourably of his Latin. "Tom, I do not grudge thy schooling," his father said to him one day, "now when thy uncle Frank owns thee to be a better Arithmetician than himself." It was decided that he should go to Annan Grammar School, and thence, if he prospered, to the University, with final outlook to the ministry.

He was a shy thoughtful boy, shrinking generally from rough companions, but with the hot temper of his race. His mother, naturally anxious for him, and fearing perhaps the family tendency, extracted a promise before parting with him that he would never return a blow, and, as might be expected, his first experiences of school were extremely miserable. Boys of genius are never well received by the common flock, and escape persecution only when they are able to defend themselves.

_Sartor Resartus_ is generally mythic, but parts are historical, and among them the account of the first launch of Teufelsdröckh into the Hinterschlag Gymnasium. Hinterschlag (smite behind) is Annan. Thither, leaving home and his mother's side, Carlyle was taken by his father, being then in his tenth year, and "fluttering [with] boundless hopes," at Whitsuntide, 1806, to the school which was to be his first step into a higher life.

Well do I still remember the red sunny Whitsuntide morning, when, trotting full of hope by the side of Father Andreas, I entered the main street of the place, and saw its steeple-clock (then striking Eight) and Schuldthurm (Jail), and the aproned or disaproned Burghers moving-in to breakfast: a little dog, in mad terror, was
THE ACADEMY, ANNAN. “Well do I still remember the red sunny Whitsuntide morning, when, trotting full of hope by the side of Father Andreas, I entered the main street of the place,” Carlyle wrote in Sartor of his first day at the school to which he went, accompanied by his father, after previous study in Ecclefechan. He was ten years old. “‘With my first view of the Hinterschlag [Smite-behind] Gymnasium,’ writes he [Teufelsdröckh], ‘my evil days began.’” (Photograph by John Patrick, courtesy of the University of Edinburgh.)
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rushing past; for some human imps had tied a tin-kettle to its
tail. . . . Fit emblem also of much that awaited myself, in that
mischievous Den. . . .

"Alas, the kind beech-rows of Entepfuhl were hidden in the dis­
tance: I was among strangers, harshly, at best indifferently, dis­
posed towards me; the young heart felt, for the first time, quite
orphaned and alone." His schoolfellows . . . were . . . "mostly
rude Boys, and obeyed the impulse of rude Nature, which bids the
deer-herd fall upon any stricken hart, the duck-flock put to death
any broken-winged brother or sister, and on all hands the strong
tyrannise over the weak."

Carlyle retained to the end of his days a painful and indeed
resentful recollection of these school experiences of his. This, he said of the passage just quoted from Sartor, is
"true . . . and not half of the truth."

He had obeyed his mother's injunctions. He had courage
in plenty to resent ill usage, but his promise was sacred. He
was passionate, and often, probably, violent, but fight he
would not, and everyone who knows English and Scotch life
will understand what his fate must have been. One conse­
quence was a near escape from drowning. The boys had all
gone to bathe; the lonely child had stolen apart from the rest,
where he could escape from being tormented. He found him­
self in a deep pool which had been dug out for a dock and
had been filled with the tide. The mere accident of someone
passing at the time saved him. At length he could bear his
condition no longer; he turned on the biggest bully in the
school and furiously kicked him; a battle followed in which
he was beaten; but he left marks of his fists upon his adver­
sary, which were not forgotten. He taught his companions
to fear him, if only like Brasidas's mouse. He was persecuted
no longer, but he carried away bitter and resentful recollec­
tions of what he had borne, which were never entirely
obliterated.

The teaching which Carlyle received at Annan, he says,
was limited, and of its kind only moderately good. Elsewhere
in a note I find the following account of his first teaching
and school experience:

My Mother had taught me reading, I never remembered when.
"Tom Donaldson's School" at Ecclefechan,—a severely correct
young man, Tom; from Edinburgh College, one session probably;
grew afterwards to Manchester &c, & I never saw his face again,
tho' I still remember it well, as always merry & kind to me, tho' harsh & to the ill-deserving severe. Hoddam School afterwards; which then stood at the Kirk. "Sandy Beattie" (subsequently a Burgher Minister in Glasgow; I well remember his "examining" us that day) reported me "complete in English," age then about 7; that I must "go into Latin," or waste my time: Latin accordingly; with what enthusiasm! But the poor Schoolmaster did not himself know Latin; I gradually got altogether swamped and bewildered under him; reverend Mr Johnstone of Ecclefechan (or first, his son, home from College, and already teaching a young Nephew or Cousin, in a careless but intelligent manner) had to take me in hand; and, once pulled afloat again, I made rapid & sure way. . . .

Sartor here, in good part [for the years at Annan Academy, 1806-9]; not to be trusted in details! "Greek," for example, consisted of the Alphabet mainly; "Hebrew" is quite a German entity,—nobody in that region, except my reverend old Mr Johnstone, could have read one sentence of it to save his life. I did get to read Latin & French with fluency (Latin quantity was left a frightful chaos, and I had to learn it afterwards); some geometry, algebra (arithmetic thoroughly well), vague outlines of geography &c I did learn;—all the Books I could get were also devoured. . . . Mythically true is what Sartor says of his Schoolfellows, and not half of the truth. Unspeakable is the damage & defilement I got out of those unguided tyrannous cubs,—especially till I revolted against them, and gave stroke for stroke; as my pious Mother, in her great love of peace and of my best interests, spiritual chiefly, had imprudently forbidden me to do. One way and another I had never been so wretched as here in that School, and the first 2 years of my time in it still count among the miserable of my life. "Academies," "High Schools," "Instructors of Youth"—Oh ye unspeakable!—

Of holidays we hear nothing, though holidays there must have been at Christmas and Midsummer; little also of school friendships or amusements. For the last, in such shape as could have been found in boys of his class in Annan, Carlyle could have had little interest. He speaks warmly of his mathematical teacher, a certain Mr. Morley, from Cumberland, "whom I loved much, and who taught me well." He had formed a comradeship with one or two boys of his own age, who were not entirely uncongenial to him; but only one incident is preserved which was of real moment. In his third school year Carlyle first consciously saw Edward Irving. Irving's family lived in Annan. He had himself been at the school, and had gone thence to the University of Edinburgh. He had distinguished himself there, gained prizes, and was otherwise honourably spoken of. Annan, both town and
school, was proud of the brilliant lad that they had produced. And Irving one day looked in upon the class room, the masters out of compliment attending him. "Irving was scrupulously dressed, black coat, ditto tight pantaloons in the fashion of the day . . . and looked very neat, self-possessed, and enviable: a flourishing slip of a youth; with coal-black hair, swarthy clear complexion; very straight on his feet; and, except for the glaring squint alone, decidedly handsome." The boys listened eagerly as he talked in a free airy way about Edinburgh and its professors. A University man who has made a name for himself is infinitely admirable to younger ones; he is not too far above them to be comprehensible. They know what he has done, and they hope distantly that they too one day may do the like. Of course Irving did not distinguish Carlyle. He walked through the rooms and disappeared.

The Hinterschlag Gymnasium was over soon after, and Carlyle's future career was now to be decided on. The Ecclefechan family life was not favourable to displays of precocious genius. Vanity was the last quality that such a man as James Carlyle would encourage, and there was a severity in his manner which effectively repressed any disposition to it.

We had all to complain that we durst not freely love [our father]. His heart seemed as if walled in . . . My Mother has owned to me that she could never understand him; that her affection, and . . . her admiration of him was obstructed: it seemed as if an atmosphere of Fear repelled us from him. To me it was especially so . . . My heart and tongue played freely only with my Mother. He had an air of deepest gravity, even sternness . . . He had the most entire and open contempt for all idle tattle, what he called "clatter." Any talk that had meaning in it he could listen to: what had no meaning in it, above all, what seemed false, he absolutely could and would not hear; but abruptly turned aside from it . . . Long may we remember his "I don't believe thee;" his tongue-paralysing, cold, indifferent "Hah!"

Besides fear, Carlyle, as he grew older, began to experience a certain awe of his father as of a person of altogether superior qualities.

None of us will ever forget that bold glowing style of his, flowing free from the untutored Soul; full of metaphors (though he knew not what a metaphor was), with all manner of potent words (which
he appropriated and applied with a surprising accuracy; ... brief, energetic; and which ... conveyed the most perfect picture, definite, clear not in ambitious colours but in full white sunlight. ... Emphatic I have heard him beyond all men. In anger he had no need of oaths; his words were like sharp arrows that smote into the very heart. 29

Such a father may easily have been alarming and slow to gain his children's confidence. He had silently observed his little Tom, however. The reports from the Annan masters were all favourable, and when the question rose what was to be done with him, he inclined to venture the University. The wise men of Ecclefechan shook their heads. "Educate a boy," said one of them, "and he grows up to despise his ignorant parents." Others said it was a risk, it was waste of money, there was a large family to be provided for, too much must not be spent upon one. James Carlyle had seen something in his boy's character which showed him that the risk, if risk there was, must be encountered; and to Edinburgh it was decided that Tom should go and be made a scholar of.

To English ears university life suggests splendid buildings, luxurious rooms, rich endowments as the reward of successful industry; as students, young men between nineteen and twenty-three with handsome allowances, spending each of them on an average double the largest income which James Carlyle had earned in any year of his life. Universities north of the Tweed had in those days no money prizes to offer, no fellowships and scholarships, nothing at all but an education, and a discipline in poverty and self-denial. The lads who went to them were the children, most of them, of parents as poor as Carlyle's father. They knew at what a cost the expense of sending them to college, relatively small as it was, could be afforded; and they went with the fixed purpose of making the very utmost of their time. Five months only of each year they could remain in their classes; for the rest of it they taught pupils themselves, or worked on the farm at home to pay for their own learning.

Each student, as a rule, was the most promising member of the family to which he belonged, and extraordinary confidence was placed in them. They were sent to Edinburgh, Glasgow, or wherever it might be, when they were mere
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boys of fourteen. They had no one to look after them either on their journey or when they came to the end. They walked from their homes, being unable to pay for coach-hire. They entered their own names at the college. They found their own humble lodgings, and were left entirely to their own capacity for self-conduct. The carriers brought them oatmeal, potatoes, and salt butter from the home farm, with a few eggs occasionally as a luxury. With their thrifty habits they required no other food. In the return cart their linen went back to their mothers to be washed and mended. Poverty protected them from temptations to vicious amusements. They formed their economical friendships; they shared their breakfasts and their thoughts, and had their clubs for conversation or discussion. When term was over they walked home in parties, each district having its little knot belonging to it; and known along the roads as University scholars, they were assured of entertainment on the way.

As a training in self-dependence no better education could have been found in these islands. If the teaching had been as good as the discipline of character, the Scotch universities might have competed with the world. The teaching was the weak part. There were no funds, either in the colleges or with the students, to provide personal instruction as at Oxford and Cambridge. The professors were individually excellent, but they had to teach large classes, and had no leisure to attend particularly to this or that promising pupil. The universities were opportunities to boys who were able to take advantage of them, and that was all.

Such was the life on which Carlyle was now to enter, and such were the circumstances of it. It was the November term 1809. He was to be fourteen on the fourth of the approaching December. Edinburgh is nearly one hundred miles from Ecclefechan. He was to go on foot like the rest, under the guardianship of a boy named "Tom Smail," two or three years his senior, who had already been at college, and was held, therefore, to be a sufficient protector.

"Tom Smail" was a poor companion, very innocent, very conceited, an indifferent scholar. Carlyle in his own mind had a small opinion of him. The journey over the moors was a weary one, the elder lad stalking on generally ahead,
whistling an Irish tune; the younger given up to his bits of reflections in the silence of the hills. Twenty miles a day the boys walked, by Moffat and over Erikstane. They reached Edinburgh early one afternoon, got a lodging in Simon Square, got dinner, and sallied out again that "Palinurus Tom" might give the novice a glance of the great city.\textsuperscript{31}

Of the University he says that he learned little there. In the Latin class he was under Professor Christison, "who had never noticed me while in his class, nor could distinguish me from another 'Mr. Irving Carlyle,' an older, considerably bigger boy, with flaming red hair, wild buck-teeth, and scorched complexion, and the worst Latinist of all my acquaintance."\textsuperscript{32}

It was not much better with philosophy. "'Dugald Stewart' had gone, the year before I entered: my Professional Lecturer was Thomas Brown; an eloquent acute little gentleman; full of enthusiasm about 'simple suggestion' & 'relative' ditto,—to me unprofitable utterly & bewildering & dispiriting 'as the autumn winds among the withered leaves.'"\textsuperscript{33}

In mathematics only he made real progress. His temperament was impatient of uncertainties. He threw himself with delight into a form of knowledge in which the conclusions were indisputable, where at each step he could plant his foot with confidence. Professor Leslie (Sir John Leslie afterwards) discovered his talent and exerted himself to help him with a zeal of which Carlyle never afterwards ceased to speak with gratitude.\textsuperscript{34}

Yet even in mathematics, on ground with which he was familiar, his shy nature was unfitted for display. He carried off no prizes.\textsuperscript{35} He tried only once, and though he was notoriously superior to all his competitors the crowd and noise of the class room prevented him from even attempting to distinguish himself. I have heard him say late in life that his thoughts never came to him in proper form except when he was alone.

\textit{Sartor Resartus}, I have already said, must not be followed too literally as a biographical authority. It is mythic, not historical. Nevertheless, as mythic it may be trusted for the general outlines.
Among eleven-hundred Christian youths, there will not be wanting some eleven eager to learn. By collision with such, a certain warmth, a certain polish was communicated; by instinct and happy accident, I took less to rioting, . . . than to thinking and reading, which latter also I was free to do. Nay from the chaos of that Library, I succeeded in fishing-up more books than had been known to the very keepers thereof. The foundation of a Literary Life was hereby laid. I learned, on my own strength, to read fluently in almost all cultivated languages, on almost all subjects and sciences. . . . A certain groundplan of Human Nature and Life began to fashion itself in me; . . . by additional experiments might be corrected and indefinitely extended.36

The teaching at a university is but half what is learned there; the other half, and the most important, is what young men learn from one another. Carlyle's friends at Edinburgh, the eleven out of the eleven hundred, were of his own rank of life, sons of peasants who had their own way to make in life. From their letters, many of which have been preserved, it is clear that they were clever good lads, distinctly superior to ordinary boys of their age, Carlyle himself holding the first place in their narrow circle. Their lives were pure and simple. Nowhere in these letters is there any jesting with vice, or light allusions to it. The boys wrote to one another on the last novel of Scott or poem of Byron, on the Edinburgh Review, on the war, on the fall of Napoleon, occasionally on geometrical problems, sermons, college exercises, and divinity lectures, and again on innocent trifles, with sketches, now and then humorous and bright, of Annandale life as it was seventy years ago. They looked to Carlyle to direct their judgement and advise them in difficulties. He was the prudent one of the party, able, if money matters went wrong, to help them out of his humble savings. He was already noted, too, for power of effective speech—"far too sarcastic for so young a man" was what elder people said of him. One of his correspondents [John Edward Hill] addressed him always as "Jonathan," or "Dean," or "Doctor," as if he was to be a second Swift.37 Others called him Parson, perhaps from his intended profession. All foretold future greatness to him of one kind or another. They recognised that he was not like other young men, that he was superior to other young men, in character
as well as intellect. "Knowing how you abhor all affectation" is an expression used to him when he was still a mere boy.

His destination was "the ministry," and for this, knowing how much his father and mother wished it, he tried to prepare himself. He was already conscious, however, "that he had not the least enthusiasm for that business, that even grave prohibitory doubts were gradually rising ahead. Formalism was not the pinching point, had there been the preliminary of belief forthcoming." "No Church, or speaking Entity whatever," he admitted, "can do without 'formulas'; but it must believe them first, if it would be honest!"