Craigenputtoch, craig, or whinstone hill of the puttocks,\(^1\) is a high moorland farm on the watershed between Dumfrieshire and Galloway, sixteen miles from the town of Dumfries. The manor house, solid and gaunt, and built to stand for centuries, lies on a slope protected by a plantation of pines, and surrounded by a few acres of reclaimed grass land—a green island in the midst of heathery hills, sheep-walks, and undrained peat-bogs. A sterner spot is hardly to be found in Scotland. Here for many generations had resided a family of Welshes, holding the rank of small gentry. The eldest son bore always the same name—John Welsh had succeeded John Welsh as far back as tradition could record; the earliest John of whom authentic memory remained being the famous Welsh, the minister of Ayr, who married the daughter of John Knox.\(^2\) This lady it was who, when her husband was banished, and when she was told by King James that he might return to Scotland if he would acknowledge the authority of bishops, raised her apron and said, “Please your Majesty I’d rather kep his head there.” The king asked her who she was. “Knox and Welsh,” he exclaimed, when she told him her parentage, “Knox and Welsh! The devil never made such a match as that.” “It’s right like, sir,” said she, “for we never speered [asked] his advice.”

A family with such an ancestry naturally showed remarkable qualities. “Several blackguards among them, but not
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one blockhead that I heard of," was the account of her kinsfolk given to Jane Welsh by her grandfather.

John Welsh [Jane's father] was the eldest of fourteen. He was born at Craigenputtoch in 1776, and spent his childish years there. Scotch lads learn early to take care of themselves. He was sent to Edinburgh University when a mere lad to study medicine. While attending the classes he drew attention to himself by his intelligence, and was taken as an apprentice by the celebrated John Bell. Dr. Bell saw his extraordinary merit, and in 1796, when he was but twenty, recommended him for a commission as regimental surgeon to the Perthshire Fencibles. This post he held for two years, and afterwards, in 1798, he succeeded either by purchase or otherwise to the local practice of the town and neighbourhood of Haddington. His reputation rose rapidly, and along with it he made a rapid fortune. To help his brothers and sisters he purchased Craigenputtoch from his father, without waiting till it came to him by inheritance. He paid off the encumbrances, and he intended eventually to retire thither when he should give up business.

In 1800 Dr. Welsh married, the wife whom he chose being a Welsh also, though of another family entirely unrelated to his own. She, too, if tradition might be trusted, came of famous blood. John Welsh was descended from Knox. Grace or Grizzie Welsh traced her pedigree through her mother, who was a Baillie, to Wallace. Her father was a well-to-do stock farmer, then living at Caplegill on Moffat Water. Walter Welsh (this was his name), when his daughter left him to go to Haddington, moved himself into Nithsdale, and took a farm then known as Templand, near Penfillan. Thus Jane Welsh's two grandfathers, old Walter and old John, Welshes both of them, though connected only through their children's marriage, became close neighbours and friends. Walter of Templand lived to a great age, and Carlyle after his marriage knew him well. He took to Carlyle, indeed, from the first, having but two faults to find with him, that he smoked tobacco and would not drink whisky punch; not that old Walter drank to excess himself, or at all cared for drinking, but he thought that total abstinence in a young man was a sign of conceit or affectation.
The beautiful Miss Baillie, Walter's wife, who came of Wallace, died early. Their son, called also John (the many John Welshes may cause some confusion in this biography unless the reader can remember the distinctions), went into business at Liverpool, and was prospering as a merchant there, when a partner who was to have been his brother-in-law proved dishonest, ran off with all the property that he could lay hands on, and left John Welsh to bankruptcy and a debt of £12,000. The creditors were lenient, knowing how the catastrophe had been brought about. John Welsh exerted himself, remade his fortune, and after eight years invited them all to dinner, where each found under his cover a cheque for the full amount of his claim. He was still living at Liverpool long after Carlyle settled in London with his niece, and will be heard of often in her correspondence.

His sister Grace, or Grizzie, was the wife of Dr. Welsh at Haddington. In appearance she was like her mother, tall, aquiline, and commanding. Dr. Welsh himself did not live to know Carlyle. He died in 1819, while still only forty-three, of a fever caught from a patient, [two] years before Carlyle's acquaintance with the family began. His daughter was so passionately attached to him, that she rarely mentioned his name even to her husband.

Such was the genealogy of the young lady to whom Carlyle was now about to be introduced by Irving, and who was afterwards to be his wife. Tradition traced her lineage to Knox and Wallace. Authentic history connected her with parents and kindred of singular, original, and strikingly superior quality. Jane Baillie Welsh was an only child, and was born in 1801. In her earliest years she showed that she was a girl of no common quality. She had black hair, large black eyes shining with soft mockery, pale complexion, broad forehead, nose not regularly formed, but mocking also like the eyes, figure slight, airy, and perfectly graceful. She was called beautiful, and beautiful she was even to the end of her life, if a face be beautiful which to look at is to admire. But beauty was only the second thought which her appearance suggested; the first was intellectual vivacity. Precious as she was to parents who had no other child, she was brought up with exceptional care. Strict obedience in essentials was the rule of the Haddington household. But the
stories of her young days show that there was no harsh interference with her natural playfulness. Occasional visits were allowed to Templand, to her grandfather Walter, who was especially fond of her. In that house she was called "Pen" (short for Penfillan) to distinguish her from a second Jane Welsh of the other family. On one of these occasions, when she was six years old, her grandfather took her out for a ride on a quiet little pony. When they had gone as far as was desirable, Walter burring his r's and intoning his vowels as usual said, "Now we will go back by So-and-so, 'to vary the scene' (to vah-ry, properly 'to vah-chy' the shane)." "Where did you ride to, Pen?" the company asked at dinner. "We rode to so, then to so;" answered she, punctually; "then from so, returned by so 'to vah-chy the shane!'" at which, says Carlyle, "the old man himself burst into his cheeriest laugh at the mimicry of tiny little Pen.'"4

She was a collected little lady, with a fine readiness in difficulties. The Welshes were the leading family at Haddington, and were prominent in the social entertainments there. She learned rapidly the usual young lady's accomplishments—music, drawing, modern languages; and she had an appetite for knowledge not easily to be satisfied. A girl's education was not enough. She demanded to "learn Latin like a boy." Her mother was against it. Her father, who thought well of her talents, inclined to let her have her way. The question was settled at last in a characteristic fashion by herself. She found some lad in Haddington who introduced her to the mysteries of nouns of the first declension. Having mastered her lesson, one night when she was thought to be in bed, she had hidden herself under the drawing-room table. When an opportunity offered, the small voice was heard from below the cover, "'Penna, a pen; pennae, of a pen;' etc." She crept out amidst the general amusement, ran to her father, and said, "I want to learn Latin; please let me be a boy."5 Haddington school was a furlong's distance from her father's house. Boys and girls were taught together there; and to this accordingly she was sent.

A fiery temper there was in her too. Boys and girls were kept for the most part in separate rooms at the school,6 but arithmetic and algebra, in which she was especially profi-
cient, they learnt together,—or perhaps she in her zeal for knowledge was made an exception. The boys were generally devoted to her, but differences rose now and then. A lad one day was impertinent. She doubled her little fist, struck him on the nose, and made it bleed. Fighting in school was punished by flogging. The master came in at the instant, saw the marks of the fray and asked who was the delinquent. All were silent. No one would betray a girl. The master threatened to tawse [whip] the whole school, and being a man of his word would have done it, when the small Jeannie looked up and said, “Please it was I.” The master tried to look grave, failed entirely, and burst out laughing. He told her she was “a little deevil,” and had no business there, and bade her “go her ways” to the girls’ room.

Soon after this there was a change in the school management. Edward Irving, then fresh from college honours, came as master, and, along with the school, was trusted with the private education of Jane Welsh. Dr. Welsh had recognised his fine qualities, and took him into the intimacy of his household, where he was treated as an elder son. He watched over the little lady’s studies, took her out with him on bright nights to show her the stars and teach her the movements of them. Irving was then a young man, and his pupil was a child. A few years were to make a difference. She worked with feverish eagerness, getting up at five in the morning and busy with her books at all hours. She was soon dux in mathematics. Her tutor introduced her to “Virgil,” and the effect of “Virgil” and of her other Latin studies was “to change her religion and make her into a sort of Pagan.”

When she was fourteen she wrote a tragedy, rather inflated, but extraordinary for her age. She never repeated the experiment, but for many years she continued to write poetry. She had inherited from her mother the gift of verse-making. Mrs. Welsh’s lyrics were soft, sweet, passionate, musical, and nothing besides. Her daughter had less sweetness, but touched intellectual chords which her mother never reached.

She lost [her father], as has been said, at an age when she most needed his guiding hand. Had Dr. Welsh lived, her life would have been happier, whether more useful it is
unprofitable to conjecture. The patient from whom he caught the fever which killed him was at some distance from Haddington. She being then eighteen had accompanied him in the carriage in this his last drive, and it was for ever memorable to her. Carlyle writes:

The usually tacit man, tacit especially about his bright Daughter's gifts and merits, took to talking with her that day, in a style quite new; told her she was a good girl, capable of being useful and precious to him and to the circle she would live in; that she must summon her utmost judgment and seriousness to choose her path, and be what he expected of her; that he did not think she had ever yet seen the Life-Partner that would be worthy of her; . . . in short that he expected her to be wise, as well as good-looking and good. All this in a tone and manner which filled her poor little heart with surprise, and a kind of sacred joy; coming from the man she of all men revered. Often she told me about this. For it was her last talk with him: on the morrow, perhaps that evening, certainly within a day or two, he caught from some poor old woman patient (who, I think, recovered of it) a typhus fever; which, under injudicious treatment, killed him in three or four days (September 1819)—and drowned the world for her in the very blackness of darkness. In effect, it was her first sorrow; and her greatest of all. It broke her health, permanently, within the next two or three years; and, in a sense, almost broke her heart. A Father so mourned and loved I have never seen: to the end of her life, his title even to me was "He" and "Him;" not above twice or thrice, quite in late years, did she ever mention (and then in what a sweet slow tone!), "my Father." 9

After her father's death, Miss Welsh continued with her mother at Haddington. With the exception of some small annuity for his widow, Dr. Welsh had left everything belonging to him to his daughter. Craigenputtoch became hers; other money investments became hers; and though the property altogether was not large according to modern estimates of such things, it was sufficient as long as mother and child remained together to enable them to live with comfort and even elegance. Miss Welsh was now an heiress. Her wit and beauty added to her distinctions, and she was called the flower of Haddington. Her hand became an object of speculation. She had as many suitors as Penelope. They were eligible, many of them, in point of worldly station. Some afterwards distinguished themselves. She amused herself with them, but listened favourably to none, being protected perhaps by a secret attachment,
which had grown up unconsciously between herself and her tutor. There were difficulties in the way which prevented them from acknowledging to one another, or even to themselves, the condition of their feelings. Edward Irving had been removed from Haddington to Kirkcaldy, where he had entered while Jane Welsh was still a child into a half-formed engagement with the daughter of the Kirkcaldy minister, Miss Isabella Martin. In England young people often fancy themselves in love. They exchange vows which as they grow older are repented of, and are broken without harm to either party. In Scotland, perhaps as a remains of the ecclesiastical precontract which had legal validity, these connections had a more binding character. They could be dissolved by mutual consent; but if the consent of both was wanting, there was a moral stain on the person escaping from the bond. Irving had long been conscious that he had been too hasty, and was longing for release. But there was no encouragement on the side of the Martins. Marriage was out of the question till he had made a position for himself, and he had allowed the matter to drift on, since immediate decision was unnecessary. Jane Welsh meanwhile had grown into a woman. Irving, who was a constant visitor at Haddington, discovered when he looked into his heart that his real love was for his old pupil, and the feeling on her part was—the word is her own—"passionately" returned. The mischief was done before they became aware of their danger. Irving's situation being explained, Miss Welsh refused to listen to any language but that of friendship from him until Miss Martin had set him free. Irving, too, was equally high principled, and was resolved to keep his word. But there was an unexpressed hope on both sides that he would not be held to it, and on these dangerous terms Irving continued to visit at Haddington, when he could be spared from his duties. Miss Welsh was working eagerly at literature, with an ambition of becoming an authoress, and winning name and fame. Unable or too much occupied himself to be of use to her, Irving thought of his friend Carlyle, who was living in obscurity and poverty at Edinburgh, as a fit person to assist and advise her. The acquaintance, he considered, would be mutually agreeable. He obtained leave from Mrs. Welsh to bring him over and intro-
duce him. The introduction was effected a little before Carlyle had taken “the Devil by the nose,” as he describes in Sartor Resartus;¹² and perhaps the first visit to Haddington had contributed to bringing him off victorious from that critical encounter.

June 1821 (probably about the middle of June),¹³ Edward Irving, who was visiting & recreating about Edinburgh, one of his occasional Holiday Sallies from Glasgow, took me out to Haddington: we walked cheerily together, pleasantly and multifariously talking, not always by the highway, but meandering at our will (as has been explained elsewhere);—and about sunset of that same evening, I first saw Her who was to be so important to me thenceforth. A red dusky evening; the sky hanging huge & high, but dim as if with dust or drought over Irving Sc me, as we walked home to our Lodging in the George Inn. The visit lasted 3 or 4 days; and included Gilbert Burns and other Figures, besides the one fair Figure most of all important to me. We were often in her Mother's house; sat talking with the two for hours, almost every evening. I was in wretched health; had begun to be thoroughly dyspeptic (without Doctor to counsel me, or worse than without,—tho' a wise Dr might have greatly helped),—however I did my best. The beautiful, bright and earnest young Lady was intent on Literature, as the highest aim in life; and felt imprisoned in the dull element which yielded her no commerce in that kind, and would not even yield her Books to read. I obtained permission to send at least books from Edinburgh; Book-parcels naturally included bits of writing to and from;—and thus an acquaintance and correspondence was begun, which had hardly ever interruption, and no break at all while life lasted. She was often in Edinburgh on visit with her Mother, to “Uncle Robert in Northumberland Street,” to “Old Mr Bradfute in George's Square”; and I had leave to call on these occasions,—which I zealously enough, if not too zealously sometimes, in my awkward way, took advantage of. I was not her declared lover; nor could she admit me as such, in my waste & uncertain posture of affairs & prospects: but we were becoming thoroughly acquainted with each other; and her tacit, hidden, but to me visible friendship for me was the happy island in my otherwise altogether dreary, vacant and forlorn existence in those years.¹⁴

Eager as the interest which Carlyle was taking in his new acquaintance, he did not allow it to affect the regulation of his life, or to drive him into the beaten roads of the established professions on which he could arrive at fortune. His zeal for mathematics had by this time cooled. He had travelled, as he said, into more "pregnant inquiries." Inquiry had led to doubt, and doubt had enfeebled and dispirited him till he had grappled with it and conquered it. Tradition-
ary interpretations of things having finally broken down with him, he was now searching for some answer which he could believe to the great central question. What this world is, and what is man’s business in it? Of classical literature he knew little, and that little had not attracted him. He was not living in ancient Greece or Rome, but in modern Europe, modern Scotland, with the added experiences and discoveries of eighteen centuries; and light, if light there was, could be looked for only in the writers of his own era. English literature was already widely familiar to him. He had read every book in Irving’s library at Kirkcaldy, and his memory had the tenacity of steel. He had studied Italian and Spanish.\(^{15}\) He had worked at D’Alembert and Diderot, Rousseau and Voltaire. Still unsatisfied, he had now fastened himself upon German, and was devouring Schiller and Goethe. Having abandoned the law, he was becoming conscious that literature must be the profession of his life. He did not suppose that he had any special gift for it. He told me long after, when at the height of his fame, that he had perhaps less capability for literature than for any other occupation. But he was ambitious to use his time to honourable purposes. He was impatient of the trodden ways which led only to money or to worldly fame, and literature was the single avenue which offered an opening into higher regions. The fate of those who had gone before him was not encouraging. “The biographies of English men of letters,” he says somewhere, “are the wretchedest chapters in our history, except the Newgate Calendar.” Germany, however, and especially modern Germany, could furnish brighter examples. Schiller first took hold of him: pure, innocent, consistent, clear as the sunlight, with a character in which calumny could detect neither spot nor stain. The situation of Schiller was not unlike his own. A youth of poverty, surrounded by obstructions; long difficulty in finding a road on which he could travel; bad health besides, and despondent fits, with which Carlyle himself was but too familiar. Yet with all this Schiller had conquered adversity. He had raised himself to the second, if not to the highest place, in the admiration of his countrymen; and there was not a single act in his whole career which his biographer would regret to record. Schiller had found his inherited beliefs break
down under him, and had been left floating in uncertainties. But he had formed moral convictions of his own, independent of creeds and churches, and had governed his thought and conduct nobly by them. Nothing that he did required forgiveness, or even apology. No line ever fell from his pen which he could have wished unwritten when life was closing round him. Schiller's was thus an inspiring figure to a young man tremulously launching himself on the same waters. His work was high and serene, clear and healthy to the last fibre, noble thought and noble feeling rendered into words with true artistic skill.

Nevertheless, the passionate questionings which were rising in Carlyle's mind could find no answer which would satisfy him in Schiller's prose or consolation in Schiller's lyrics. Schiller's nature was direct and simple rather than profound and many-sided. Kant had spoken the last word in philosophy to him. His emotions were generous, but seldom subtle or penetrating. He had never looked with a determined eye into the intellectual problems of humanity. He worked as an artist with composed vigour on subjects which suited his genius, and while his sentiments are lofty and his passion hearty and true, his speculative insight is limited. Thus Schiller is great, but not the greatest; and those who have gone to him for help in the enigmas social and spiritual which distract modern Europe, have found generally that they must look elsewhere. From Schiller Carlyle had turned to Goethe, and Goethe had opened a new world to him. Schiller believed in the principles for which Liberals had been fighting for three centuries. To him the enemy of human welfare was spiritual and political tyranny, and Don Carlos, William Tell, the revolt of the Netherlands, or the Thirty Years' War, were ready-made materials for his workshop. He was no vulgar politician. He soared far above the commonplace of popular orators and controversialists. He was a poet, with a poet's sympathies. He could admire greatness of soul in a Duke of Friedland; he could feel for suffering if the sufferer was a Mary Stuart. But the broad articles of faith professed by the believers in liberal progress were Schiller's also, and he never doubted their efficacy for man's salvation. Goethe had no such beliefs—no beliefs of any kind which could be reduced to formulas. If he distrusted
priests, he distrusted still more the *Freiheits Apostel* and the philosophic critics. He had studied his age on all its sides. He had shared its misgivings; he had suffered from its diseases; he had measured its possibilities; he had severed himself from all illusions; and held fast to nothing but what he could definitely recognise as truth. In *Werther*, in *Faust*, in "Prometheus," Carlyle found that another as well as he had experienced the same emotions with which he was himself so familiar. In *Wilhelm Meister*, that menagerie of tame creatures, as Niebuhr called it, he saw a picture of society, accurate precisely because it was so tame, as it existed in middle-class European communities; the ardent, well-disposed youth launched into the middle of it, beginning his apprenticeship in the false charms of the provincial theatre, and led at last into a recognition of the divine meaning of Christianity. Goethe had trod the thorny path before Carlyle. He had not rushed into atheism. He had not sunk into superstition. He remained true to all that intellect could teach him, and after facing all the spiritual dragons he seemed to have risen victorious into an atmosphere of tranquil wisdom. On finishing his first perusal of *Meister*, and walking out at midnight into the streets of Edinburgh to think about it, Carlyle said to himself, "with a very mixed sentiment in other respects, we could not but feel that here lay more insight into the elements of human nature, and a more poetically perfect combining of these, than in all the other fictitious literature of our generation."

Having been charged by Irving with the direction of Miss Welsh's studies, he at once introduced her to his German friends. Irving, of the nature of whose interest in her welfare Carlyle had no suspicion, was alarmed at what he had done. His own religious convictions were profound and sincere. He had occasioned unexpected mischief already with his "Virgil." He had laboured afterwards with all his energies to lead his pupil to think about Christianity as he thought himself, and when he heard of the books which she was set to read, he felt that he had been imprudent.

Irving identified "principle" with belief in the formulas of the Church, and therefore supposed Carlyle to be without it. He considered his friend no doubt to be playing with dangerous weapons, and likely to injure others with them.
besides himself. But Carlyle’s principles when applied to the common duties of life were as rigid as Irving’s. He had been struck by his new acquaintance at Haddington, but he was too wise to indulge in dreams of a nearer relation—which their respective positions seemed to put out of the question—and he was too much in earnest to allow himself to be disturbed in the course of life which he had adopted, or forget the dearer friends at Mainhill to whom he was so passionately attached. He had remained this summer in Edinburgh longer than usual, and he and Irving had meditated a small walking tour together at the end of it. Irving, however, was unable to take a holiday. Carlyle went home alone, walking as he always did, and sending his box by the carrier. For him, as for so many of his student countrymen, coaches were rarely tasted luxuries. They tramped over moor and road with their bundles on their shoulder, sleeping by the way at herdsmen’s cottages; and journeys which to the rich would be a delightful adventure, were not less pleasing to the sons of Scottish peasants because forced on them by honest poverty. Mainhill had become again by this time the happiest of shelters to him, and between his family and himself the old clear affection and mutual trust had completely re-established themselves. The passing cloud had risen only out of affectionate anxiety for his eternal well-being. Satisfied of the essential piety of his nature, his mother had been contented to believe that the differences between herself and her son were differences of expression merely, not of radical conviction. His father was beginning to be proud of him, and was sensible enough to leave him to his own guidance. Three quiet months were spent with his brothers and sisters while he was writing articles for Brewster’s Encyclopaedia. In November he was in Edinburgh again with improving prospects.