I have already described Craigenputtoch as the dreariest spot in all the British dominions. The nearest cottage is more than a mile from it; the elevation, seven hundred feet above the sea, stunts the trees and limits the garden produce to the hardiest vegetables. The house is gaunt and hungry-looking. It stands with the scanty fields attached as an island in a sea of morass. The landscape is unredeemed either by grace or grandeur, mere undulating hills of grass and heather, with peat bogs in the hollows between them. The belts of firs which now relieve the eye and furnish some kind of shelter were scarcely planted when the Carlyles were in possession. No wonder Mrs. Carlyle shuddered at the thought of making her home in so stern a solitude, delicate as she was, with a weak chest, and with the fatal nervous disorder of which she eventually died already beginning to show itself. Yet so it was to be. She had seen the place in March for the first time in her life, and then, probably, it had looked its very worst. But in May, when they came to settle, the aspect would have scarcely been mended. The spring is late in Scotland; on the high moors the trees are still bare. The fields are scarcely coloured with the first shoots of green, and winter lingers in the lengthening days as if unwilling to relax its grasp. To Mrs. Carlyle herself the adventure might well seem desperate. She concealed the extent of her anxiety from her husband, though not entirely from others. Jeffrey especially felt serious alarm. He feared not without reason that Carlyle was too
Craigenputtoch. The house and extensive grounds had long been in the Welsh family, and to economize the Carlyles moved here in 1828. Visible in the foreground is the old carriage drive, up which Francis Jeffrey and his family came in a memorable visit that autumn. Carlyle wrote of Craigenputtoch in his Reminiscences: "I incline to think it the poor best place that could have been selected for the ripening into fixity and composure of anything useful which there may have been in me against the years that were coming." He retained to the end mixed feelings about the moorland home where he and his wife spent six years and where Sartor was written. (Photograph by John Patrick, courtesy of the University of Edinburgh.)
much occupied with his own thoughts to be trusted in such a situation with the charge of a delicate and high-spirited woman, who would not spare herself in the hard duties of her situation.¹

The decision had been made, however, and was not to be reconsidered. Jeffrey could only hope that the exile to Siberia would be of short duration. When the furniture at Comely Bank was packed and despatched, he invited Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle to stay with him in Moray Place, while the carts were on the road. After two days they followed, and in the last week of May they were set down at the door of the house which was now to be their home. The one bright feature in the situation to Carlyle was the continual presence of his brother at the farm. The cottage in which Alexander Carlyle lived was attached to the premises; and the outdoor establishment of field, stall, and dairy servants was common to both households.

The carpenters and plasterers were at last dismissed. Craigenputtoch became tolerable, if not yet "cosmic," and as soon as all was quiet again, Carlyle settled himself to work. [An article on] Tasso was abandoned, or at least postponed, but the article on Burns was written—not so ungraciously, so far as regarded Lockhart, as the epithet "trivial" which had been applied to his book might have foreboded.² But it is rather on Burns himself than on his biographer's account of him that Carlyle's attention was concentrated. It is one of the very best of his essays, and was composed with an evidently peculiar interest, because the outward circumstances of Burns's life, his origin, his early surroundings, his situation as a man of genius born in a farmhouse not many miles distant, among the same people and the same associations as were so familiar to himself, could not fail to make him think often of himself while he was writing about his countryman. How this article was judged by the contemporary critics will be presently seen. For himself, it is too plain that before he came to the end of it the pastoral simplicities of the moorland had not cured Carlyle of his humours and hypochondrias. He had expected that change of scene would enable him to fling off his shadow. His shadow remained sticking to him; and the poor place where he had cast his lot had as usual to bear...
the blame of his disappointment. In his diary there stands a
note: “Finished a Paper on Burns. September 16, 1828; at
this Devil’s Den, Craigenputtoch.”³

Meanwhile, though he complained of hearing little from
the world outside, his friends had not forgotten him. Letters
came by the carrier from Dumfries, and the Saturday’s post
was the event of the week. Jeffrey especially was affection­
athe and assiduous. He reproached Carlyle for not writing
to him, complained of being so soon forgotten, and evidently
wished to keep his friend as close to him as possible.
The papers on German literature had brought a pamphlet
upon Jeffrey about Kant, from “some horrid German block­
head”; but he was patient under the affliction and forgave
the cause. King’s College had been set on foot in London
on orthodox principles, under the patronage of the Duke of
Wellington and the bishops. He offered to recommend Car­
lyle to them as Professor of Mysticism; although mysticism
itself he said he should like less than ever if it turned such
a man as Carlyle into a morbid misanthrope, which seemed
to be its present effect. Sir Walter had received his medals
and had acknowledged them; had spoken of Goethe as his
master, and had said civil things of Carlyle, which was more
than he had deserved.⁴ Jeffrey cautioned Carlyle to be care­
ful of the delicate companion who had been trusted to him;
offered his services in any direction in which he could be of
use, and throughout, and almost weekly, sent to one or other
of the “hermits” some note or letter, short or long, but al­
ways sparkling, airy, and honestly affectionate. I am sorry
that I am not at liberty to print these letters in extenso;
for they would show that Jeffrey had a genuine regard and
admiration for Carlyle, which was never completely appre­
ciated. It was impossible from their relative positions that
there should not be at least an appearance of patronage on
Jeffrey’s part. The reader has probably discovered that
Carlyle was proud, and proud men never wholly forgive
those to whom they feel themselves obliged.⁵

July this year had been intensely hot. Jeffrey had com­
plained of being stifled in the courts, and for the moment
had actually envied his friends their cool mountain breezes.
The heat had been followed in August by rain. It had been
“the wettest, warmest summer ever known.” Alexander
THE YEARS 1828–1830

Carlyle had been living hitherto with his brother, the cottage which he was to occupy with one of his sisters not being yet ready. The storms had delayed the masons; while the article on Burns was being written the premises were still littered with dirt, and Carlyle's impatience with small misfortunes perhaps had inspired the unpleasant epithet of Devil's Den with which he had already christened his home. He appears to have remained, however, in a—for him—tolerable humour.

The Jeffreys were to have come in September, while the weather was still fine, but they had gone first to the western Highlands, and their visit was put off till the next month. Meanwhile the article on Burns had been sent off, and before the appearance of the visitors at Craigenputtoch a sharp altercation had commenced between the editor and his contributor on certain portions of it, which was not easily ended. On the article itself the world has pronounced a more than favourable verdict. Goethe considered it so excellent that he translated long passages from it, and published them in his collected works; but, as Goethe had observed about Schiller, contemporaries always stumble at first over the writings of an original man. The novelty seems like presumption. The editor of the Edinburgh Review found the article long and diffuse, though he did not deny that it contained "much beauty and felicity of diction." He insisted that it must be cut down—cut down perhaps to half its dimensions. He was vexed with Carlyle for standing, as he supposed, in his own light, misusing his talents and throwing away his prospects. He took the opportunity of reading him a general lecture.

You will treat me as something worse than an ass I suppose when I say that I am firmly persuaded the great source of your extravagance, and of all that makes your writings intolerable to many—and ridiculous to not a few, is not so much any real peculiarity of opinions as an unlucky ambition to appear more original than you are—or the humbler and still more delusive hope of converting our English intellects to the creed of Germany—and being the apostle of another reformation—I wish to God I could persuade you to fling away these affections—and be contented to write like your famous countrymen of all ages—as long at least as you write to your countrymen and for them—The nationality for which you commend Burns so highly might teach you I think that there are nobler tasks for a man like you than to vamp up the vulgar...
dreams of these Dousterswivels you are so anxious to cram down our throats—but which I venture to predict no good judge among us will swallow—and the nation at large speedily reject with loathing—

So spoke the great literary authority of the day. The adventurous Prince who would win the golden water on the mountain’s crest is always assailed by cries that he is a fool and must turn back, from the enchanted stones which litter the track on which he is ascending. They too have once gone on the same quest. They have wanted faith, and are become blocks of rock echoing commonplaces; and if the Prince turns his head to listen to them, he too becomes as they. Jeffrey tried to sweeten his admonitions by compliments on the article upon Goethe; but here too he soon fell to scolding. “But tho’ I admire,” he said,

the talent of your paper, I am more and more convinced of the utter fallacy of your opinions—and the grossness of your idolatry. I predict too, with full and calm assurance, that your cause is quite hopeless—and that England never will admire—nor indeed endure your German divinities— It thinks better and more of them indeed at this moment than it ever will again— Your eloquence and ingenuity a little masks [sic] their dull extravagance and tiresome presumption—as soon as they appear in their own persons everybody will laugh and yawn. . . . I am really anxious to save you from this foeda superstitia [horrible fanaticism]— The only harm it has yet done you is to make you a little verbose and prone to exaggeration— There are strong symptoms of both in your Burns— I have tried to staunch the first but the latter is in the grain—and we must just risk the wonder and the ridicule it may bring on us—

This was not merely the protest of an editor, but the reproach of a sincere friend. Jeffrey ardently desired to recommend Carlyle and to help him forward in the world. For Carlyle’s own sake, and still more for the sake of his young and delicate relative, he was vexed and irritated that he should have buried himself at Craigenputtoch. He imagined, and in a certain sense with justice, that Carlyle looked on himself as the apostle of a new faith (to a clever man of the world the most absurd and provoking of illusions), which the solitude of the moors only tended to encourage.

With October the promised visit was accomplished. How he came with Mrs. Jeffrey and his daughter, how the big carriage stood wondering how it had got there in the rough farm-yard, how Carlyle and he rode about the country, with
what astonishment he learnt that his dinner had been cooked for him by his hostess’s own hands, how he delighted them all in the evenings with his brilliant anecdotes and mimicries—all this has been told elsewhere and need not be repeated. Those two days were a sunny island in the general dreariness, an Indian summer before winter cut the Carlyles off from the outside world and wrapped them round with snow and desolation. During the greater part of the Jeffreys’ stay controverted subjects were successfully avoided. But Carlyle’s talk had none the less provoked Jeffrey. He himself, with a spiritual creed which sat easy on him, believed nevertheless that it was the business of a sensible man to make his way in the world, use his faculties to practical purposes, and provide for those who were dependent upon him. He saw his friend given over as he supposed to a self-delusion which approached near to foolish vanity, to have fallen in love with clouds like Ixion, and to be begetting chimaeras which he imagined to be divine truths. All this to a clear practical intelligence like that of Jeffrey was mere nonsense, and on the last night of his stay he ended a long argument in a tone of severe reproach for which he felt himself afterwards obliged to apologise. His excuse, if excuse was needed, was a genuine anxiety for Carlyle’s welfare, and an equal alarm for his wife, whose delicacy, like enough, her husband was too much occupied with his own thoughts to consider sufficiently. “I cannot bring myself to think,” he said in a letter which he wrote after he had left them, “that either you [or] Mrs. C. are naturally placed at Craigenputtoch—and tho’ I know and reverence the feelings which have led you to fix there for the present, I must hope that it will not long be necessary to obey them in that retreat.”

The trouble with the article on Burns was not over. Jeffrey, as editor, had to consider the taste of the great Liberal party in literature and politics, and to disciples of Bentham, as indeed to the average reader of any political persuasion, Carlyle’s views were neither welcome nor intelligible. When the proof sheets came, he found “the first portion of it all into shreds,” “the body of a quadruped with the head of a bird; a man shortened by cutting out his thighs, and fixing the Knee-pans on the hips!” Carlyle refused to let it appear “in such a horrid shape.” He replaced the most impor-
tant passages, and returned the sheets with an intimation that the paper might be cancelled, but should not be mutilated. Few editors would have been so forbearing as Jeffrey when so audaciously defied. He complained, but he acquiesced. He admitted that the article would do the Review credit, though it would be called tedious and sprawling by people of weight whose mouths he could have stopped. He had wished to be of use to Carlyle by keeping out of sight in the Review his mannerism and affectation; but if Carlyle persisted he might have his way.

Carlyle was touched; such kindness was more than he had looked for. The proud self-assertion was followed by humility and almost penitence, and the gentle tone in which he wrote conquered Jeffrey in turn. Jeffrey said that he admired and approved of Carlyle's letter to him in all aspects. The "candour and sweet blood" which was shown in it deserved the highest praise; and, as the dying pagan said in the play, "If these are Christian virtues I am Christian," so Jeffrey, hating as he did what he called Carlyle's mysticism, was ready to exclaim, if these were mystic virtues he was mystic. "But it is not so—the virtues are your own," he said,

and you possess them not in consequence of your mysticism but in spite of it— You shall have the proof sheets—and any thing you like— I really cannot chaffer with such a man or do anything to vex him—and you shall write mysticism for me too—if it will not be otherwise—and I will print it too, at all hazards—with few, very few and temperate corrections— I think you have a great deal of eloquence and talent—and might do considerable things, if— but no matter—I will not tire of you—and after all there are many more things I believe as to which we agree—than about which we differ—and the difference is not radical, but formal chiefly.¹²

So the winter settled down over Craigenputtoch. The weekly cart struggled up when possible from Dumfries with letters and parcels, but storms and rain made the communications more and more difficult. Old James Carlyle came over from Scotsbrig for a week after the Jeffreys went, an Edinburgh friend followed for three days more, and after that few faces save those of their own household were seen at the Carlyles' door. Happily for him he was fully employed. The Foreign Review and the Edinburgh gave him as much work as he could do. He had little need of money;
Scotsbrig supplied him with wheat flour and oatmeal, and 
the farm with milk and eggs and hams and poultry. There 
was little that needed buying save tea and sugar and to-
bacco; and his finances (for his articles were long and 
handsomely paid for) promised for a time to be on an easy 
footing in spite of the constant expenses of his brother John 
at Munich. There were two horses in the stable—Larry, the 
Irish horse of "genius," and Harry, Mrs. Carlyle's pony. 
In fine weather they occasionally rode or walked together. 
But the occasions grew rarer and rarer. Carlyle was essen-
tially solitary. He went out in all weathers, indifferent to 
wet and, in spite of his imagined ill-health, impervious to 
cold. But he preferred to be alone with his thoughts, and 
Mrs. Carlyle was left at home to keep the house in proper 
order. She by education, and he by temperament, liked 
everything to be well kept and trim. He was extremely 
dainty about his food. He did not care for delicacies, but 
cleanliness and perfect cookery of common things he always 
insisted on, and if the porridge was smoked, or the bread 
heavy, or the butter less than perfect, or a plate or a dish 
ill-washed, he was entirely intolerable. Thus the necessary 
imperfections of Scotch farm-servant girls had to be supple-
mented by Mrs. Carlyle herself. She baked the bread, she 
dressed the dinner or saw it dressed, she cleaned the rooms. 
Among her other accomplishments she had to learn to milk 
the cows, in case the byre-woman should be out of the way, 
for fresh milk was the most essential article of Carlyle's 
diet. Nay, it might happen that she had to black the grates 
to the proper polish, or even scour the floors while Carlyle 
looked on encouragingly with his pipe. In addition to this 
she had charge of dairy and poultry; not herself necessar-
ily making butter or killing fowls, but directing what was 
to be done and seeing that it was done properly. Her de-
partment, in short, was the whole establishment. This 
winter she was tolerably well, and as long as her health 
lasted she complained of nothing. Her one object was to 
keep Carlyle contented, to prevent him from being fretted 
by any petty annoyance, and prevent him also from knowing 
with how much labour to herself his own comfort was se-
cured.

Thus the months passed on pleasantly. The "tempests,"
about which Jeffrey had been so anxious, howled over the
moors, but did not much affect them. Carlyle's letters were
written in fair spirits. The Devil's Den had become a tol-
erable home.

This house (bating some outskirt things which must be left till
Spring) is really a substantial, comfortable and even half-elegant
house[.] I sit here in my little library, and laugh at the howling
tempests, for there are green curtains and a clear fire and pa-
pered walls; the "old Kitchen" also is as tight a dining-room as
you would wish for me, and has a black clean-barred grate, at
which, when filled with Sanquhar coals, you might roast Boreas
himself. The goodwife too is happy, and contented with me, and
her solitude, which I believe is not to be equalled out of Sahara
itself. You cannot figure the stillness of these moors in a Novem-
ber drizzle: nevertheless I walk often under cloud of night (in good
Ecclefechan clogs) down as far as Carstammon-burn, [(]some-
times to Sandy-wells) conversing with the void heaven, in the most
pleasant fashion. Besides Jane also has a pony now, which can
canter to perfection even by the side of Larry! Tomorrow she is
going over to Templand with it; and it is by her that I send this
Letter. Grace, our servant, a tight, tidy, careful sharp-tempered
woman is the only other inmate of the house. . . . I write hard all
day; then Jane and I (both learning Spanish for the last month)
read a chapter of Don Quixote between dinner and tea, and are
already half thro' the first volume, and eager to persevere. After
tea, I sometimes writ[e] again (being [dre]adfully slow at the
business); and then generally go over to Alick and Ma[ry and]
smoke my last pipe with them; and so end the day, having done
little good perhaps [but] almost no ill that I could help to any
creature of God's.15

When Carlyle was in good spirits, his wife had a pleas-
ant time with him. "Ill to deal wi'," impatient, irritable
over little things, that he always was; but he was charming,
too; no conversation in my experience ever equalled his;
and unless the evil spirit had possession of him, even his
invectives when they burst out piled themselves into meta-
phors so extravagant that they ended in convulsions of
laughter with his whole body and mind, and then all was
well again. Their Spanish studies together were delightful
to both. His writing was growing better and better. She
—the most watchful and severest of critics,—who never
praised where praise was not deserved, was happy in the
fulfilment of her prophecies, and her hardest work was a
delight to her when she could spare her husband's mind an
anxiety or his stomach an indigestion. At Christmas she had a holiday, going down to her mother and grandfather at Templand. But while away among her own people her heart was on the Craig.

The first year of Craigenputtoch thus drew to an end. The storms of December were succeeded by frost, and the moors were bound fast in ice. Carlyle continued as busy as ever at what he called "the despicable craft of reviewing," but doing his very best with it. No slop-work ever dropped from his pen. He never wrote down a word which he had not weighed, or a sentence which he had not assured himself contained a truth. Every one of the articles composed on this bare hill-top has come to be reprinted unaltered, and most of them have a calmness too often absent from his later writings. Handsome pay, as I said, came in, but not more than was needed. Brother John was a constant expense; and even in the "Dunscore wilderness" life was impossible without money. "Alas," Carlyle said, "for the days when Diogenes could fit up his tub, and let the 'literary world' and all other worlds, except the only true one within his own soul, wag hither and thither at discretion!"¹⁴

Voltaire was now his subject. His mind was already turning with an unconscious fascination towards the French Revolution. He had perceived it to be the most noteworthy phenomenon of modern times. It was interesting to him, as an illustration of his conviction that untruthfulness and injustice were as surely followed by divine retribution as the idolatries and tyrannies of Biblical Egypt and Assyria; that the Power which men professed on Sundays to believe in was a living Power, the most real, the most tremendous of all facts. France had rejected the Reformation. Truth had been offered her in the shape of light, and she would not have it, and it was now to come to her as lightning. She had murdered her prophets. She had received instead of them the scoffing Encyclopaedists. Yet with these transcendental or "mystic" notions in his head, Carlyle could write about the most worldly of all men of genius, as himself a man of the world. He meets Voltaire on his own ground, follows him into his private history with sympathising amusement; falls into no fits of horror over his opinions or his immoral-
ities; but regards them as the natural outcome of the circum-
stances of the time. In Voltaire he sees the representative
Frenchman of the age, whose function was to burn up
unrealities, out of the ashes of which some more healthy
verdure might eventually spring. He could not reverence
Voltaire, but he could not hate him. How could he hate a man
who had fought manfully against injustice in high places,
and had himself many a time in private done kind and gen-
erous actions? To Carlyle, Voltaire was no apostle charged
with any divine message of positive truth. Even in his cru-
sade against what he believed to be false, Voltaire was not
animated with a high and noble indignation. He was simply
an instrument of destruction, enjoying his work with the
pleasure of some mocking imp, yet preparing the way for the
tremendous conflagration which was impending. There is,
of course, audible in this article a deep undertone of feeling.
Yet the language of it is free from everything like excited
rhetoric. In the earlier part of his career Carlyle sympathised
with and expected more from the distinctive functions of
revolution than he was able to do after longer experience.
"I thought," he once said to me, "that it was the abolition of
rubbish. I find it has been only the kindling of a dunghill.
The dry straw on the outside burns off; but the huge damp
rotting mass remains where it was."

Thinking on these momentous subjects, Carlyle took his
nightly walks on the frozen moor, the ground crisp under his
feet, the stars shining over his head, and the hills of Dun-
score (for advantage had been taken of the dryness of the
air) "gleaming like Strombolis or Aetnas, with the burning
of heath; otherwise this place is silent, solitary as Tadmor of
the Wilderness. Yet the infinite Vault is over us, and this
Earth, our little Ship of Space, is under us; and man is every-
where in his Makers eye and hand!"15

Of outward incidents meanwhile the Craigenputtoch his-
tory was almost entirely destitute. The year 1829 rolled by
without interruption to the tranquil routine of daily life. John
Carlyle came home from Germany and became sometimes
his brother's guest till a situation as doctor could be found
for him. Carlyle himself wrote and rode and planted pota-
toes. His wife's faculty for spreading grace about her had
extended to the outside premises, and behind the shelter of
THE YEARS 1828-1830

the trees she had raised a rose garden. An old but strong and convenient gig was added to the establishment. When an article was finished Carlyle allowed himself a fortnight's holiday: he and Mrs. Carlyle driving off with Larry either to Templand or to Scotsbrig; the pipe and tobacco duly arranged under cover on the inner side of the splashboard. The Jeffreys passed through Dumfries in the summer. Their friends from the Craig drove down to see them, and were even meditating afterwards an expedition in the same style throughout England as far as Cornwall.

Carlyle was full of thoughts on the great social questions of the day. He wished to see with his own eyes the actual condition of the people of England, as they lived in their own homes. The plan had to be abandoned for want of means, but he had set his own heart upon it, and Mrs. Carlyle would have been glad too of a change from a solitude which was growing intolerably oppressive. Carlyle's ill humours had not come back, but he was occupied and indifferent. There is a letter from his wife to old Mrs. Carlyle at Scotsbrig, undated, but belonging evidently to March of this year, in which she complains of the loneliness. "Carlyle," she says, "never asks me to go with him, never even looks as if he desired my company."

One visitor, however, came to Craigenputtoch in the summer whose visit was more than welcome. Margaret, the eldest of Carlyle's sisters, had the superiority of mind and talent which belonged to her brother, and she had along with it an instinctive delicacy and nobleness of nature which had overcome the disadvantages of her education. She had become a most striking and interesting woman, but unhappily along with it she had shown symptoms of consumption. In the preceding autumn the family had been seriously alarmed about her. She had been ill all through the winter, but she had rallied with the return of warm weather. The cough ceased, the colour came back to her cheek, she was thought to have recovered entirely.

Life went on as usual; but the autumn brought anxieties of more than one description. The letters that remain are few, for his wife and his brother Alexander, to whom he wrote most confidentially, were both at Craigenputtoch, and his brother John also was for several months with him. He was
trying to produce something better than review articles, and
was engaged busily with an intended history of German lit-
erature, for which he had collected a large quantity of
books. But John Carlyle, who was naturally listless, had to
be stimulated to exertion, and was sent to London to look
for employment. Employment would not come; perhaps was
less assiduously looked for than it might have been. The
expense of his maintenance fell on Carlyle, and the reviews
were the only source to which he could look. More articles
therefore had to be produced if a market could be found for
them. Jeffrey, constant in his friendship, consulted the new
editor of the Edinburgh [Macvey Napier], and various sub-
jects were suggested and thought over. Carlyle proposed
Napoleon, but another contributor was in the way. Jeffrey
was in favour of Wycliffe, Luther, or "the Philosophy of
the Reformation." Napier thought a striking article might be
written on some poetical subject; but when Jeffrey hinted to
him some of Carlyle's views on those topics, and how con-
temptuously he regarded all the modern English singers, the
new editor "shuddered at the massacre of the innocents to
which he had dreamt of exciting him." Still, for himself,
Jeffrey thought that if Carlyle was in a relenting mood, and
wished to exalt or mystify the world by a fine rhapsody on
the divine art, he might be encouraged to try it.

Liking Jeffrey as Carlyle did, he was puzzled at so much
interest being shown in him. He called it a mystery. Jeffrey
humorously caught up the word, and accepted it as the
highest compliment which Carlyle could pay. In a humbler
sense, however, he was content to think it natural that one
man of a kind heart should feel attracted towards another,
and that signal purity and loftiness of character, joined to
great talents and something of a romantic history, should
excite interest and respect.

Jeffrey's anxiety to be of use did not end in recommenda-
tions to Napier. He knew how the Carlyles were situated in
money matters. He knew that they were poor, and that their
poverty had risen from a voluntary surrender of means which
were properly their own, but which they would not touch
while Mrs. Welsh was alive. He knew also that Carlyle
had educated and was still supporting his brother out of his
own slender earnings. He saw, as he supposed, a man of real
The years 1828-1830

Brilliancy and genius weighed down and prevented from doing justice to himself by a drudgery which deprived him of the use of his more commanding talents; and with a generosity the merit of which was only exceeded by the delicacy with which the offer was made, he proposed that Carlyle should accept a small annuity from him. The whole matter he said should be an entire secret between them. He would tell no one—not even his wife. He bade Carlyle remember that he too would have been richer if he had not been himself a giver where there was less demand upon his liberality. He ought not to wish for a monopoly of generosity, and if he was really a religious man he must do as he would be done to; nor, he added, would he have made the offer did he not feel that in similar circumstances he would have freely accepted it himself. To show his confidence he enclosed £50, which he expected Carlyle to keep, and desired only to hear in reply that they had both done right.

Carlyle was grateful, but he was proud. He did not at the time, or perhaps ever, entirely misconstrue the spirit in which Jeffrey had volunteered to assist him; but it is hard, perhaps it is impossible, for a man to receive pecuniary help, or even the offer of pecuniary help, from a person who is not his relation without some sense that he is in a position of inferiority; and there is force in the objection to accepting favours which Carlyle thus describes, looking back over forty years:

Jeffrey . . . generously offered to confer on me an annuity of £100;—which annual sum, had it fallen on me from the clouds, would have been of very high convenience at that time; but which I could not, for a moment, have dreamt of accepting as gift or subventionary help from any fellow-mortal. It was at once, in my handsomest, gratefullest, but brief and conclusive way [declined] from Jeffrey: "Republican equality the silently fixed law of human society at present; each man to live on his own resources, and have an Equality of economies with every other man; dangerous, and not possible except through cowardice or folly, to depart from said clear rule,—till perhaps a better era rise on us again!"16

If anyone thinks that Carlyle was deficient in gratitude, let him remember that gratitude is but one of many feelings which are equally legitimate and reputable. The gentleman commoner at Pembroke College meant only kindness when he left the boots at Johnson's door; but Johnson, so far from
being grateful, flung the boots out of window, and has been praised by all mankind for it.\textsuperscript{17}

The Fates this winter were doing their very worst to Carlyle. His wife had escaped harm from the first season at Craigenputtoch, but was not to be let off so easily a second time. All went well till the close of December; a fat goose had been killed for the new year’s feast; when the snow fell and the frost came, and she caught a violent sore-throat, which threatened to end in diphtheria. There was no doctor nearer than Dumfries, and the road from the valley was hardly passable. Mrs. Welsh struggled up from Templand through the snow-drifts; care and nursing kept the enemy off, and the immediate danger in a few days was over; but the shock had left behind it a sense of insecurity, and the unsuitableness of such a home for so frail a frame became more than ever apparent.

It appears from the Journal that early in 1830 Carlyle had advanced so far with his “History of German Literature” that he was hoping soon to see it published and off his hands.\textsuperscript{18} A first sketch of “Teufelsdröckh”\textsuperscript{19}—the egg out of which \textit{Sartor Resartus} was to grow—had been offered without result to London magazine editors. Proposals were made to him for a Life of Goethe. But on Goethe he had said all that for the present he wished to say. Luther was hanging before him as the subject which he wanted next to grapple, could he but find the means of doing it. But the preliminary reading necessary for such a work was wide and varied. The books required were not to be had at Craigenputtoch; and if the literary history could once be finished, and any moderate sum of money realised upon it, he meditated spending six months in Germany, taking Mrs. Carlyle with him, to collect materials. He had great hopes of what he could do with Luther. An editor had offered to bring it out in parts in a magazine, but Carlyle would not hear of this.

When I write that Book of the great German Lion, it shall be the best Book I have ever written, and go forth, I think, on its own legs. Do you know, we are actually talking of spending the next winter in Weimar; and preparing all the raw material of right \textit{Luther}, there at the fountain-head. That, of course, if I can get this \textit{History} done, and have the cash.\textsuperscript{20}

Jeffrey started at the idea of the winter at Weimar—at
least for Mrs. Carlyle—and suggested that if it was carried out she should be left in his charge at Edinburgh. He was inclined, he said, to be jealous of the possible influence of Goethe, who had half bewitched her at a distance—unless indeed the spell was broken by the personal presence of him. But Jeffrey's fears were unnecessary. There was no Weimar possible for Carlyle, and no Life of Luther. The unfortunate "German Literature" could not find a publisher who would so much as look at it. Boyd, who had brought out the volumes of German Romance, wrote that he would be proud to publish for Carlyle upon almost any other subject except German literature. He knew that in this department Carlyle was superior to any other author of the day, but the work proposed was not calculated to interest the British public. Every one of the books about German literature had been failures, most of them ruinous failures. The feeling in the public mind was that everything German was especially to be avoided, and with the highest esteem for Carlyle's talent he dared not make him an offer. Even cut up into articles he still found no one anxious to take it. There was still another hope. Carlyle's various essays had been greatly noticed and admired. An adventurous bookseller might perhaps be found who would bid for a collected edition of them. The suggestion took no effect however. The "Teufelsdröckh" had to be sent back from London, having created nothing but astonished dislike. Nothing was to be done therefore but to remain at Craigenputtoch and work on, hoping for better times. Fresh articles were written, a second on Jean Paul, a slight one on Madame de Staël, with the first of the two essays on history which are published in the Miscellanies. He was thus able to live, but not so far as money was concerned to overtake the time which he had spent over his unsaleable book; his finances remained sadly straitened, and he needed all his energy to fight on against discouragement.

The Carlyles as a family were passionately attached to each other. Margaret Carlyle's apparent recovery was as delusive as her sister-in-law had feared. In the winter she fell ill again; in the spring she was carried to Dumfries in the desperate hope that medical care might save her. Carlyle has written nothing more affecting than the account of her end in the Reminiscences.21
Margaret Carlyle sleeps in Ecclefechan churchyard. Her father followed soon, and was laid beside her. Then after him, but not for many years, the pious, tender, original, beautiful-minded mother. John Carlyle was the next of their children who rejoined them, and next he of whom I am now writing. The world and the world's business scatter families to the four winds, but they collect again in death. Alick lies far off in a Canadian resting-place; but in his last illness, when the memory wanders, he too had travelled in spirit back to Annandale and the old days when his brother was at college, and with the films of the last struggle closing over his eyes he asked anxiously "If Brother Tom were not coming back from Edinburgh tomorrow."  

The loss of this sister weighed heavily on Carlyle's spirits, and the disappointment about his book fretted him on the side to which he might naturally have turned to seek relief in work. Goethe's steady encouragement was of course inspiriting, but it brought no grist to the mill, and the problem of how he was to live was becoming extremely serious. Conscious though he was of exceptional powers, which the most grudging of his critics could not refuse to acknowledge, he was discovering to his cost that they were not marketable. He could not throw his thoughts into a shape for which the Sosii of the day would give him money. He had tried poetry, but his verse was cramped and unmelodious. He had tried to write stories, but his convictions were too intense for fiction. The dreadful earnestness of which Jeffrey complained was again in his way, and he could have as little written an entertaining novel as St. Paul or St. John. His entire faculty—intellect and imagination alike—was directed upon the sternest problems of human life. It was not possible for him, like his friend at Craigcrook, to take up with the first creed that came to hand and make the best of it. He required something which he could really believe. Thus his thoughts refused to move in any common groove. He had himself to form the taste by which he could be appreciated, and when he spoke his words provoked the same antagonism which every original thinker is inevitably condemned to encounter—antagonism first in the form of wonder, and when the wonder ceased of irritation and angry enmity. He taught like one that had authority—a tone which men
naturally resent, and must resent, till the teacher has made his pretensions good. Every element was absent from his writing which would command popularity, the quality to which booksellers and review editors are obliged to look if they would live themselves. Carlyle’s articles were magnetic enough, but with the magnetism which repelled, not which attracted. His faith in himself and in his own purposes never wavered; but it was becoming a subject of serious doubt to him whether he could make a living, even the humblest, by literature. The fair promises of the last year at Comely Bank had clouded over; instead of invitations to write, he was receiving cold answers to his own proposals. Editors, who had perhaps resented his haughty style, were making him “feel the difference,” neglecting to pay him even for the articles which had been accepted and put in type.