The economical situation of the Carlyles at Craigenputtoch grew daily more pressing. The editors gave no sign of desiring any further articles. "Teufelsdröckh" was still coming out in Fraser's; but the public verdict upon it was almost universally unfavourable. "The Diamond Necklace," which in my opinion is the very finest illustration of Carlyle's literary power, had been refused in its first form by the editor of the Foreign Quarterly. Fevered as he was with the burning thoughts which were consuming his very soul, which he felt instinctively, if once expressed, would make their mark on the mind of his country, Carlyle yet knew that his first duty was to provide honest maintenance for himself and his wife—somewhere and by some means; if not in England or Scotland, then in America. His aims in this direction were of the very humblest, not going beyond St. Paul's. With "food and raiment" both he and his wife could be well content. But even for these, the supplies to be derived from literature threatened to fail, and what to do next he knew not. In this situation he learnt from a paragraph in a newspaper that a new Astronomy Professorship was about to be established in Edinburgh. Some Rhetoric chair was also likely to be immediately vacant. One or other of these, especially the first, he thought that Jeffrey could, if he wished, procure for him. Hitherto all attempts to enter on the established roads of life had failed. He had little hopes that another would succeed; but he thought it to be his duty to make the attempt. He
was justly conscious of his qualifications. The mathematical ability which he had shown in earlier times had been so remarkable as to have drawn the attention of Legendre. Though by the high standard by which he habitually tried himself Carlyle could speak, and did speak, of his own capabilities with mere contempt, yet he was above the affectation of pretending to believe that any really fitter candidate was likely to offer himself. "I will this day write to Jeffrey about it," he says in his Journal on the 11th of January. "Any hope? Little. Any care of it? Also not much. Let us do what we can. The issues not with us." He cared perhaps more than he had acknowledged to himself. He allowed his imagination to rest on a possible future, where, delivered from the fiery unrest which was distracting him, he might spend the remainder of his life in the calm and calming study of the stars and their movements. It was a last effort to lay down the burden which had been laid upon him, yet not a cowardly effort—rather a wise and laudable one—undertaken as it was in submission to the Higher Will.

It failed—failed with an emphasis of which the effects can be traced in Carlyle's reminiscence of his connection with Jeffrey. He condemns especially the tone of Jeffrey, which he thought both ungenerous and insincere. Insincere it certainly was, if Jeffrey had any real influence, for he said that he had none, and if he had already secured the appointment for his own secretary, for he said that he had not recommended his secretary. It may have been ungenerous if, as Carlyle suspected, Jeffrey had resented some remarks in the article on Diderot as directed against himself, for he endeavoured to lay the blame of unfitness for promotion upon Carlyle himself.

The doubt which Jeffrey pretended to feel, whether Carlyle was equal to the duties of handling delicate instruments without injuring them, cannot have been quite sincere. The supposition that a man of supreme intellectual qualification could fail in mastering a mere mechanical operation could only have originated in irritation. Carlyle already possessed a scientific knowledge of his subject. A few days' instruction might easily have taught him the mere manual exercise. It is possible, too, that if Jeffrey had gone out of his way to represent to Airy and Herschel, with whom
the choice rested, what Carlyle's qualities really were, he
might have saved to a Scotch university Scotland's great-
est son, who would have made the School of Astronomy at
Edinburgh famous throughout Europe, and have saved
Scotland the scandal of neglect of him till his fame made
neglect impossible.

In fairness to Jeffrey, however, whose own name will be
remembered in connection with Carlyle as his first liter-
ary friend, we must put the Lord Advocate's case in his
own way. If he was mistaken, he was mistaken about Car-
lyle's character with all the world. Everyone in Jeffrey's
high Whig circle, the Broughams and Macaulays and such
like, thought of Carlyle as he did. High original genius is
always ridiculed on its first appearance; most of all by
those who have won themselves the highest reputation in
working on the established lines. Genius only commands
recognition when it has created the taste which is to ap-
preciate it. Carlyle acknowledged that "no more unpromot-
able man than thou is perhaps extant at present."¹

In the first week in December [1833, Jeffrey] had written
affectionately to Mrs. Carlyle and kindly to Carlyle him-
self, pressing them to pay him a visit at Craigcrook. He
professed and assuredly felt (for his active kindness in the
past years places his sincerity above suspicion) a continued
interest in Carlyle, some provocation, some admiration,
and a genuine desire for his happiness. Carlyle thought
that he did not please Jeffrey because he was "so dread-
fully in earnest."² The expression had in fact been used
by Jeffrey; but what really offended and estranged him
was Carlyle's extraordinary arrogance—a fault of which no
one who knew Carlyle, or who has ever read his letters, can
possibly acquit him. He was superior to the people that he
came in contact with. He knew that he was, and being in-
capable of disguise or affectation, he let it be seen in every
sentence that he spoke or wrote. It was arrogance, but not
the arrogance of a fool, swollen with conceit and vapour,
but the arrogance of Aristotle's "man of lofty soul," "who
being of great merit," knows that he is so, and chooses to
be so regarded. It was not that Carlyle ever said to himself
that he was wiser than others. When it came to introspec-
tion, never had anyone a lower opinion of himself; but let
him be crossed in argument, let some rash person, whoever he might be, dare to contradict him, and Johnson himself was not more rude, disdainful, and imperious; and this quality in him had very naturally displeased Jeffrey, and had served to blind him, at least in some degree, to the actual greatness of Carlyle's powers. In this letter Jeffrey frankly admitted that he disliked the wrangling to which Carlyle treated him. Never having had much of a creed himself, he thought he had daily less; and having no tendency to dogmatism and no impatience of indecision, he thought zeal for creeds and anxiety about positive opinions more and more ludicrous. In fact, he regarded discussions which aimed at more than exercising the faculties and exposing intolerance very tiresome and foolish.

But for all that he invited Carlyle with genuine heartiness to come down from his mountains and join the Christmas party at Craigcrook. Carlyle professed to be a lover of his fellow-creatures. Jeffrey said he had no patience with a philanthropy that drew people into the desert and made them fly from the face of man.

The good-humoured tone of his letter, and the pleasant banter of it, ending as it did with reiterated professions of a willingness to serve Carlyle if an opportunity offered, made it natural on Carlyle's part to apply to him when an opportunity did present itself immediately after. Jeffrey's letter had been written on December 8. Three weeks later the news of the intended Astronomy Professorship reached Craigenputtoch, while Carlyle was told also that Jeffrey would probably have the decisive voice in the appointment. Carlyle wrote to him at once to ask for his good word, and there came by return of post the answer which he calls the "Fishwoman-shriek," and which it is clear that he never forgave. For some reason—for the reason, possibly, which Carlyle surmised, that he expected the situation to be given to his own secretary—Jeffrey was certainly put out by being taken thus at his word when he had volunteered to be of use.

Impatiently, and even abruptly, he told Carlyle that he had no chance of getting the Astronomy Chair, and that it would be idle for him (Jeffrey) to ask for it. The appointment was entirely out of his own sphere, and he would be
laughed at if he interfered. As a matter of fact, the most promising candidate was his secretary, a gentleman who had already been nominated for the Observatory at the Cape, and wished to go through some preliminary observing work at Edinburgh. But this gentleman, he said, had not applied to him for a recommendation, but trusted to his own merits. It was matter of notoriety that no testimonial would be looked at except from persons of weight and authority in that particular branch of science, and he was perfectly certain—indeed he knew—that the Government would be entirely guided by their opinions. The place would be given, and it was difficult to say that it ought not to be given, according to the recommendations of Herschel, Airy, Babbage, and six or seven other men of unquestionable eminence in the astronomical department, without the least regard to unprofessional advisers. If Carlyle could satisfy them that he was the fittest person for the place, he might be sure of obtaining it; if he could not, he might be equally sure that it was needless to think of it. Whether Carlyle's scientific qualifications were such that he would be able to satisfy them, Jeffrey would not pretend to judge. But he added a further reason for thinking that Carlyle had no chance of success. He had had no practice in observing, and nobody would be appointed who was not both practised and of acknowledged skill.

Had Jeffrey stopped here, Carlyle would have had no right to complain. But Jeffrey went beyond what was necessary in using the occasion to give Carlyle a lecture. He was very sorry, he said; but the disappointment revived and increased the regret which he had always felt, that Carlyle was without the occupation, and consequent independence, of some regular profession. The profession of teacher was, no doubt, a useful and noble one; but it could not be exercised unless a man had something to teach which was thought worth learning, and in a way that was thought agreeable; and neither of those conditions was fulfilled by Carlyle. Jeffrey frankly said that he could not set much value on paradoxes and exaggerations, and no man ever did more than Carlyle to obstruct the success of his doctrines by the tone in which he set them forth. It was arrogant, obscure vituperation, and carried no conviction. It
might impress weak, fanciful minds, but it would only revolt calm, candid, and thoughtful persons. It might seem harsh to speak as he was doing; but he was speaking the truth, and Carlyle was being taught by experience to know that it was the truth. Never, never would he find or make the world friendly to him if he persisted in addressing it in so extravagant a tone. One thing he was glad to find, that Carlyle was growing tired of solitude. He would be on his way to amendment if he would live gently, humbly, and, if possible, gaily, with other men; let him once fairly come down from the barren and misty eminence where he had his bodily abode, and he would soon be reconciled to a no less salutary intellectual subsidence.

Disagreeable as language of this kind might be to Carlyle, it was, after all, not unnatural from Jeffrey's point of view; and there was still nothing in it which he was entitled to resent: certainly nothing of the "Fishwoman." It was the language of a sensible man of the world who had long earnestly endeavoured to befriend Carlyle, and had been thwarted by peculiarities in Carlyle's conduct and character which had neutralised all his efforts. There was, in fact, very little in what Jeffrey said which Carlyle in his note-book was not often saying to and of himself. We must look further to explain the deep, ineffaceable resentment which Carlyle evidently nourished against Jeffrey for his behaviour on this occasion. The Astronomical chair was not the only situation vacant to which Carlyle believed that he might aspire. There was a Rhetoric chair—whether at Edinburgh or in London University, I am not certain. To this it appears that there had been some allusion, for Jeffrey went on to say that if he was himself the patron of that chair he would appoint Carlyle, though not without misgivings. But the University Commissioners had decided that the Rhetoric chair was not to be refilled unless some man of great and established reputation was willing to accept it, and such a man Jeffrey said he could not in his conscience declare Carlyle to be. Had it been Macaulay that was the candidate, then, indeed, the Commissioners would see their way. Macaulay was the greatest of living Englishmen, not excepting the great Brougham himself. But Carlyle was—Carlyle. It was melancholy and provoking to feel
that perversions and absurdities (for as such alone he could regard Carlyle's peculiar methods and doctrines) were heaping up obstacles against his obtaining either the public position or the general respect to which his talents and his diligence would have otherwise entitled him. As long as society remained as it was and thought as it did, there was not the least chance of his ever being admitted as a teacher into any regular seminary.

There was no occasion for Jeffrey to have written with such extreme harshness. If he felt obliged to expostulate, he might have dressed his censures in a kinder form. To Carlyle such language was doubly wounding, for he was under obligations to Jeffrey, which his pride already endured with difficulty, and the tone of condescending superiority was infinitely galling. He was conscious, too, that Jeffrey did not understand him. His extravagances, as Jeffrey considered them, were but efforts to express thoughts of immeasurable consequence. From his boyhood upwards he had struggled to use his faculties honestly for the best purposes; to consider only what was true and good, and never to be led astray by any worldly interest; and for reward every door of preferment was closed in his face, and poverty and absolute want seemed advancing to overwhelm him. If he was tried in the fire, if he bore the worse that the world could do to him and came out at last triumphant, let those who think that they would have behaved better blame Carlyle for his occasional bursts of impatience and resentment. High-toned moral lectures were the harder to bear because Goethe far off in Germany could recognise in the same qualities at which Jeffrey was railing the workings of true original genius.

Even so it is strange that Carlyle, after the victory had long been won, when his trials were all over and he was standing on the highest point of literary fame, known, honoured, and admired over two continents, should have nourished still an evident grudge against the poor Lord Advocate, especially as, after the appearance of *The French Revolution*, Jeffrey had freely and without reserve acknowledged that he had all along been wrong in his judgement of Carlyle. One expression casually let fall at the end of one of Jeffrey's letters, to which I need not do more than
allude, contains a possible explanation. Jeffrey was always gentlemanlike, and it is not conceivable that he intended to affront Carlyle, but Carlyle may have taken the words to himself in a sense which they were not meant to bear; and a misunderstanding, to which self-respect would have forbidden him to refer, may have infected his recollections of a friend whom he had once cordially esteemed, and to whom both he and his brothers were under obligations which could hardly be overrated. But this is mere conjecture. It may be simply that Jeffrey had once led Carlyle to hope for his assistance in obtaining promotion in the world, and that when an opportunity seemed to offer itself, the assistance was not given.

Never any more did Carlyle seek admission into the beaten tracks of established industry. He was impatient of harness, and had felt all along that no official situation was fit for him, or he fit for it. He would have endeavoured loyally to do his duty in any position in which he might be placed. Never would he have accepted employment merely for its salary, going through the perfunctory forms, and reserving his best powers for other occupations. Anything which he undertook to do he would have done with all his might; but he would have carried into it the stern integrity which refused to bend to conventional exigencies. His tenure of office, whether of professor's chair or of office under government, would probably have been brief and would have come to a violent end. He never offered himself again, and in later times when a professorship might have been found for him at Edinburgh, he refused to be nominated. He called himself a Bedouin, and a Bedouin he was; a free lance owing no allegiance save to his Maker and his own conscience.

On receiving Jeffrey's letter, he adjusted himself resolutely and without complaining to the facts as they stood. He determined to make one more attempt, either at Craigenputtoch or elsewhere, to conquer a place for himself, and earn an honest livelihood as an English man of letters. If that failed, he had privately made up his mind to try his fortune in America, where he had learnt from Emerson, and where he himself instinctively felt, that he might expect more favourable hearing. He was in no hurry. In all that he
did he acted with a deliberate circumspection scarcely to have been looked for in so irritable a man. The words "judicious desperation,"
by which he describes the principle on which he guided his earlier life, are exactly a-

Including Fraser's payments for "Teufelsdröckh" he was possessed of about two hundred pounds, and until his brother John could repay him the sums which had been advanced for his education, he had no definite prospect of earning any more—a very serious outlook, but he did not allow it to discompose him. At any rate he had no debts; never had a debt in his life except the fifty pounds which he had borrowed from Jeffrey, and this with the Advocate's loan to his brother was now cleared off. "The Diamond Necklace" had proved unsaleable, but he worked quietly upon it, making additions and alterations as new books came in. He was not solitary this winter. In some respects he was worse off than if he had been solitary. With characteristic kindness he had taken charge of the young Scotchman whom he had met in London, William Glen, gifted, accomplished, with the fragments in him of a true man of genius, but with symptoms showing themselves of approaching insanity, in which after a year or two he sank into total eclipse. With Glen, half for his friend's sake, he read Homer and mathematics. Glen, who was a good scholar, taught Carlyle Greek. Carlyle taught Glen Newtonian geometry; in the intervals studying hard at French Revolution history.

[In the first months of 1834, Carlyle tried to set afoot various literary projects—all in vain. Amidst increasing despair he and Jane, as he recorded in his Journal, began to speak "seriously of setting off for London to take up our abode there next Whitsunday. Nothing but the wretchedest, forsaken, discontented existence here, where almost your whole energy is spent in keeping yourself from flying out into exasperation." The decision to strike out for London once made, plans to leave Craigenputtoch matured apace.] "The ships were burnt," two busy months being spent in burning them—disposing of old books, old bedsteads, kitchen things, all the rubbish of the establishment. The cows and poultry were sold. Mrs. Carlyle's pony was sent to Scotsbrig. Friends in London were busy looking out for houses.
Carlyle, unable to work in the confusion, grew unbearable, naturally enough, to himself and everyone, and finally, at the beginning of May, rushed off alone, believing that house letting in London was conducted on the same rule as in Edinburgh, and that unless he could secure a home for himself at Whitsuntide he would have to wait till the year had gone round. In this hurried fashion he took his own departure, leaving his wife to pack what they did not intend to part with, and to follow at her leisure when the new habitation had been decided on. Mill had sent his warmest congratulations when he learnt that the final resolution had been taken. Carlyle settled himself while house hunting at his old lodgings in Ampton Street.

Thus the six years' imprisonment on the Dumfriesshire moors came to an end. To Carlyle himself they had been years of inestimable value. If we compare the essay on Jean Paul, which he wrote at Comely Bank, with "The Diamond Necklace," his last work at Craigenputtoch, we see the leap from promise to fulfilment, from the immature energy of youth to the full intellectual strength of completed manhood. The solitude had compelled him to digest his thoughts. In Sartor he had relieved his soul of its perilous secretions by throwing out of himself his personal sufferings and physical and spiritual experience. He had read omnivorously far and wide. His memory was a magazine of facts gathered over the whole surface of European literature and history. The multiplied allusions in every page of his later essays, so easy, so unlaboured, reveal the wealth which he had accumulated, and the fulness of his command over his possessions. His religious faith had gained solidity. His confidence in the soundness of his own convictions was no longer clouded with the shadow of a doubt. The French Revolution, the most powerful of all his works, and the only one which has the character of a work of art, was the production of the mind which he brought with him from Craigenputtoch, undisturbed by the contradictions and excitements of London society and London triumphs. He had been tried in the furnace. Poverty, mortification, and disappointment had done their work upon him, and he had risen above them elevated, purified, and strengthened. Even the arrogance and self-assertion which Lord Jeffrey sup-
posed to have been developed in him by living away from conflict with other minds, had been rather tamed than encouraged by his lonely meditations. It was rather collision with those who differed with him which fostered his imperiousness; for Carlyle rarely met with an antagonist whom he could not overbear with the torrent of his metaphors, whilst to himself his note-books show that he read many a lecture on humility.

He had laid in, too, on the moors a stock of robust health. Lamentations over indigestion and want of sleep are almost totally absent from the letters written from Craigenputtoch. The simple, natural life, the wholesome air, the daily rides or drives, the pure food—milk, cream, eggs, oatmeal, the best of their kind—had restored completely the functions of a stomach never, perhaps, so far wrong as he had imagined. Carlyle had ceased to complain on this head, and in a person so extremely vocal when anything was amiss with him, silence is the best evidence that there was nothing to complain of. On the moors, as at Mainhill, at Edinburgh, or in London afterwards, he was always impatient, moody, irritable, violent. These humours were in his nature, and could no more be separated from them than his body could leap off its shadow. But, intolerable as he had found Craigenputtoch in the later years of his residence there, he looked back to it afterwards as the happiest and wholesomest home that he had ever known. He could do fully twice as much work there, he said, as he could ever do afterwards in London; and many a time, when sick of fame and clatter and interruption, he longed to return to it.

To Mrs. Carlyle Craigenputtoch had been a less salutary home. She might have borne the climate, and even benefited by it, if the other conditions had been less ungenial. But her life there, to begin with, had been a life of menial drudgery, unsolaced (for she could have endured and even enjoyed mere hardship) by more than an occasional word of encouragement or sympathy or compassion from her husband. To him it seemed perfectly natural that what his mother did at Scotsbrig his wife should do for him. Every household duty fell upon her, either directly, or in supplying the shortcomings of a Scotch maid-of-all-work. She had to cook, to sew, to scour, to clean; to gallop down alone to
Dumfries if anything was wanted; to keep the house, and even on occasions to milk the cows. Miss Jewsbury has preserved many anecdotes of the Craigenputtoch life, showing how hard a time her friend had of it there.\textsuperscript{10} Carlyle, though disposed at first to dismiss these memories as legends, yet admitted on reflection that for all there was a certain foundation. The errors, if any, can be no more than the slight alterations of form which stories naturally receive in repetition. A lady brought up in luxury has been educated into physical unfitness for so sharp a discipline. Mrs. Carlyle’s bodily health never recovered from the strain of those six years. The trial to her mind and to her nervous system was still more severe. Nature had given her, along with a powerful understanding, a disposition singularly bright and buoyant. The Irving disappointment had been a blow to her; but wounds which do not kill are cured. They leave a scar, but the pain ceases. It was long over, and if Carlyle had been a real companion to her, she would have been as happy with him as wives usually are. But he was not a companion at all. When he was busy she rarely so much as saw him, save, as he himself pathetically tells, when she would steal into his dressing-room in the morning when he was shaving, to secure that little of his society. The loneliness of Craigenputtoch was dreadful to her. Her hard work, perhaps, had so far something of a blessing in it, that it was a relief from the intolerable pressure. For months together, especially after Alick Carlyle had gone, they never saw the face of guest or passing stranger. So still the moors were, that she could hear the sheep nibbling the grass a quarter of a mile off. For the many weeks when the snow was on the ground she could not stir beyond the garden, or even beyond her door. She had no great thoughts, as Carlyle had, to occupy her with the administration of the universe. He had deranged the faith in which she had been brought up, but he had not inoculated her with his own; and a dull gloom, sinking at last almost to apathy, fell upon her spirits. She fought against it, like a brave woman as she was.

Carlyle himself recognised occasionally that she was not happy. Intentionally unkind it was not in his nature to be. After his mother, he loved his wife better than anyone in the world. He was only occupied, unperceiving, negligent;
and when he *did* see that anything was wrong with her, he was at once the tenderest of husbands.

Those who have studied Carlyle's writings as they ought to be studied, know that shrewd practical sense underlies always his metaphorical extravagances. In matters of business he was the most prudent of men. He had left his wife at Craigenputtoch to pack up, and had plunged, himself, into the whirlpool of househunting. He very soon discovered that there was no hurry, and that he was not the best judge in such matters. He understood—the second best form of wisdom—that he did not understand, and forbore to come to any resolution till Mrs. Carlyle could join him.

Carlyle had not been idle—had walked, as he said, till his feet were lamed under him. He had searched in Brompton, in Kensington, about the Regent's Park. He had seen many houses more or less desirable, more or less objectionable. For himself he inclined on the whole to one which Leigh Hunt had found for him near the river in Chelsea. Leigh Hunt lived with his singular family at No. 4 Upper Cheyne Row. About sixty yards off, about the middle of Great Cheyne Row, which runs at right angles to the other, there was a house which fixed his attention. Twice he went over it. "It is notable," he said, "how at every new visit, your opinion gets a little hitch the *contrary* way from its former tendency; imagination has outgone the reality. I nevertheless still feel a great liking for this excellent old House. . . . Chelsea is unfashionable; it was once the resort of the Court and great, however; hence numerous old houses in it, at once cheap and excellent."11

A third inspection produced a fuller description—description of the place as it was fifty years ago, and not wholly incorrect of its present condition; for Cheyne Row has changed less than most other streets in London. The Embankment had yet forty years to wait.

The street . . . runs down upon the River, which I suppose you might see, by stretching out your neck from our front windows, at a distance of 50 yards on the left. We are called "Cheyne Row" proper (pronounced, *Chainie Row*), and are a "genteel neighbourhood," two old Ladies on one side, unknown character on the other but with "pianos." . . . Backwards, a Garden (the size of our back one at Comely Bank) with trees &c, in bad culture;
beyond this green hayfields and tree-avenues (once a Bishop's pleasure-grounds) an unpicturesque, yet rather cheerful outlook. The House itself is eminent, antique; wainscotted to the very ceiling, and has been all new-painted and repaired; broadish stair, with massive balustrade (in the old style) corniced and as thick as one's thigh; floors firm as a rock, wood of them here and there worm-eaten, yet capable of cleanness, and still with thrice the strength of a modern floor. And then as to room, Goody! . . . Three stories besides the sunk story; in every one of them three apartments in depth (something like 40 feet in all). . . . Rent £35! . . . Chelsea is a singular, heterogeneous kind of spot; very dirty and confused in some places, quite beautiful in others; abounding with antiquities and the traces of great men: Sir T. More, Steele, Smollett, &c &c. Our Row (which for the last three doors or so is a street, and none of the noblest) runs out upon a beautiful “Parade” (perhaps they call it) running along the shore of the River; shops &c, a broad highway, with huge shady trees; boats lying moored, and a smell of shipping and tar; Battersea Bridge (of wood) a few yards off; the broad River, with white-trowsered, white-shirted Cockneys dashing by like arrows in their long Canoes of Boats; beyond, the green beautiful knolls of Surrey with their villages: on the whole a most artificial, green-painted, yet lively, fresh, almost opera-looking business, such as you can fancy. . . . Finally, Chelsea abounds more than any place in Omnibii . . . , and they take you to Coventry-street (within a mile of this) for six-pence. Revolve all this in thy fancy and judgement, my child; and see what thou canst make of it. 12

Carlyle was not long left alone. Mrs. Carlyle arrived—she came by Annan steamer and the coach from Liverpool at the beginning of June; old Mrs. Carlyle, standing with a crowd on the Annan pier, waving her handkerchief as the vessel moved away. Carlyle, as he returned from his walk to his lodgings in Ampton Street, was received by the chirping of little Chico, the canary bird; his wife resting after her journey in bed. They had been fortunate in securing a remarkable woman, who was more a friend and a companion than a servant, to help them through their first difficulties—Bessy Barnet, the daughter of Mr. Badams’s housekeeper at Birmingham, whom Carlyle had known there as a child. Badams was now dead, and this Bessy, who had remained with him to the last, now attached herself to Carlyle for the sake of her late master. The Chelsea house was seen by Mrs. Carlyle, and after some hesitation was approved; and three days after they had taken possession of their future home, and Pickford’s vans were at the door unloading the furniture from Craigenputtoch.
5 Chymne Row (renumbered 24 in the 1870s). The Carlyles went to London in 1834 and lived in the same house for the rest of their lives. The attic soundproof room is visible. (Postcard photograph, courtesy of the National Trust.)
The auspices under which the new life began were altogether favourable. The weather was fine; the cherries were ripening on a tree in the garden. Carlyle got his garden tools to work and repaired the borders, and set in slips of jessamine and gooseberry bushes brought from Scotland. To his mother, who was curious about the minutest details, he reported:

We lie safe down in a little bend of the river, away from all the great roads; have air and quiet hardly inferior to Craigenputtoch, an outlook from the back windows into mere leafy regions, with here and there a red high-peaked old roof looking thro'; and see nothing of London, except by day the summits of St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey, and by night the gleam of the great Babylon affronting the peaceful skies.¹³

The French Revolution had been finally decided on as the subject for the next book, and was to be set about immediately; Fraser having offered, not indeed to give money for it, but to do what neither he nor any other publisher would venture for Sartor—take the risk of printing it. Mill furnished volumes on the subject in "barrowfuls." Leigh Hunt was a pleasant immediate neighbour, and an increasing circle of Radical notabilities began to court Carlyle's society. There was money enough to last for a year at least. In a year he hoped that his book might be finished; that he might then give lectures; that either then or before some editorship might fall to him—the editorship, perhaps (for it is evident that he hoped for it) of Mill's and Molesworth's new Radical Review.¹⁴ Thus at the outset he was—for him—tolerably cheerful.

The first letters from London would seem to indicate that Carlyle was tolerably "hefted" to his new home and condition; but the desponding mood was never long absent. Happy those to whom nature has given good animal spirits. There is no fairy gift equal to this for helping a man to fight his way, and animal spirits Carlyle never had. He had the keenest sense of the ridiculous; but humour and sadness are inseparable properties of the same nature; his constitutional unhopefulness soon returned upon him, and was taking deeper hold than he cared to let others see. The good effects of this change wore off in a few weeks: the old enemy was in possession again, and the entries in
his diary were more desponding than even at Craigenputtoch.

How to keep living was the problem. The French Revolution, Carlyle thought at this time, must be a mere sketch; finished and sold by the following spring if he was to escape entire bankruptcy. He had hoped more than he knew for the editorship of the new Review. It had been given to [W. J.] Fox, "as the safer man."

No doubt it was hard to bear. By Mill, if by no one else, Carlyle thought that he was recognised and appreciated; and Mill had preferred Fox to him. The Review fared as Carlyle expected: lived its short day as long as Molesworth’s money held out, and then withered. Perhaps, as he said, "With him it had not been so." Yet no one who knows how such things are managed could blame Mill. To the bookselling world Carlyle’s name, since the appearance of Sartor Resartus in Fraser’s, had become an abomination, and so far was Mill from really altering his own estimate of Carlyle that he offered to publish "The Diamond Necklace" as a book "at his own expense... that he might have the pleasure and profit of reviewing it!"15 Carlyle at bottom understood that it could not have been otherwise, and that essentially it was better for him as it was. Through his own thrift and his wife’s skill, the extremity of poverty never really came, and his time and faculties were left unencumbered for his own work. Even of Fox himself, whom he met at a dinner-party, he could speak kindly; not unappreciatively. The cloud lifted now and then, oftener probably than his diary would lead one to suppose. Carlyle’s sense of the ridiculous—stronger than that of any contemporary man—was the complement to his dejection. In his better moments he could see and enjoy the brighter side of his position.

So passed on the first summer of Carlyle’s life in London. "The weather," he says, "was very hot; defying it (in hard almost brimless hat, which was obligato in that time of slavery) did sometimes throw me into colic." In the British Museum lay concealed somewhere a "collection of French Pamphlets" on the Revolution, "the completest of its sort in the world," which, after six weeks’ wrestle with officiality, he was obliged to find "inaccessible"16
to him. Idle obstruction will put the most enduring of men now and then out of patience, and Carlyle was not enduring in such matters; but his wife was able on the first of September to send to Scotsbrig a very tolerable picture of his condition. Carlyle's letter under the same cover communicates that the writing of *The French Revolution* was actually begun.

John Carlyle meanwhile was prospering with Lady Clare, and was in a position to return to his brother the generosity of earlier days. It was perfectly true, as Carlyle had said, that what any one of the family possessed the others were free to share with him. In September John sent home £130 for his mother. The expected provision barrels from Scotsbrig were long in arriving, and Carlyle had to quicken the family movements in the end of October by a representation of the state of things to which he and his wife were reduced.

For the rest, life went on without much variety. Bessy Barnet left Cheyne Row after two months, being obliged to return to her mother, and they had to find another servant among the London maids of all work. Carlyle crushed down his dispiritment; found at any rate that "nothing like the deep sulkiness of Craigenputtoch" troubled him in London. "I see always that I am in the right workshop, had I but got acquainted with the tools properly."¹⁷ "Teufelsdröckh," circulating in a stitched-up form made out of the sheets of *Fraser's*, was being read, a few persons really admiring it; the generality turning up their eyes in speechless amazement. Irving had departed, having gone to Scotland, where he was reported as lying ill at Glasgow, and, to Carlyle's very deep distress, likely to die.

Among minor adventures, Carlyle was present at the burning of the Houses of Parliament. "The crowd," he says, "was quiet, rather [gratified] than otherwise; whew'd and whistled when the breeze came as if to encourage it: 'there's a flare-up . . . for the House O' Lords!'—'A judgement for the Poor-Law Bill!'—'There go their hacts' (acts)!—such exclamations seemed to be the prevailing ones. A man sorry I did not anywhere see."¹⁸ "About a month before this date [21 November 1834]," Carlyle wrote years later,
Edward Irving rode to the door one evening, came in and staid with us some 20 minutes; the one call we ever had of him here,—his farewell call before setting out to ride towards Glasgow, as the Doctors, helpless otherwise, had ordered. He was very friendly, calm and affectionate; chivalrously courteous to Her (as I remember), "Ah, yes," looking round the room, "you are like an Eve, make every place you live in beautiful!" He was not sad in manner; but was at heart, as you could notice, serious, even solemn. Darkness at hand, & the weather damp, he could not loiter. I saw him mount at the door; watched till he turned the first corner (close by the Rector's garden-door),—and had vanished from us for altogether. He died at Glasgow before the end of December coming.¹⁹

Irving was dead, and with it closed the last chapter of Jane Welsh's early romance. Much might be said of the effect of it both on Irving and on her. The characters of neither of them escaped unscathed by the passionate love which had once existed between them. But all that is gone, and concerns the world no longer. I will add only an affectionately sorrowful letter which Carlyle wrote at the time to his mother when the news from Glasgow came.

Poor Edward Irving, as you have heard, has ended his pilgrimage. I had been expecting that issue; but not so soon; the news of his death, which Fraser the Bookseller (once a hearer of his) communicated quite on a sudden, struck me deeply; and the wae feeling of what it has all been, and what it has all ended in, kept increasing with me for the next ten days. . . . I am very sad about him: ten years ago (when I was first here), what a rushing and running; his house never empty of idle or half-earnest wondering people with their carriages and equipments: and now,—alas, it is all gone, marched on like a deceitful vision, and all is emptiness, desertion, and his place knows him no more! He was a good man too; that I do heartily believe: his faults we may hope were abundantly expiated in this life; and now his memory, as that of the just ought, shall be hallowed with us. One thing with another, I have not found another such man. I shall never forget these last times I saw him: I longed much to help him, to deliver him; but could not do it. My poor first Friend, my first and best! —Bookseller Fraser applied to me to write a word about him; which I did.²⁰

Tenderly, beautifully, Carlyle could feel for his friend. No more touching "funeral oration" was ever uttered over a lost companion than in the brief paper of which here he spoke;²¹ and his heart at the time was heavy for himself also. He had almost lost hope. At no past period of his life
does the Journal show more despondency than in this autumn and winter. He might repeat his mother's words to himself, "tine heart, tine a' [break heart, break all]." But the heart was near "tined" for all that.

[1 January] 1835. Twelve o'clock has just struck; the last hour of 1834, the first of a new year. Bells ringing (to me dolefully); a wet wind blustering; my wife in bed (very unhappily ill of a foot which a puddle of a maid scalded three weeks ago); I, after a day of fruitless toil, reading and re-reading about that Versailles "6th of October" still. It is long since I have written anything here. The future looks too black round me, the present too doleful, unfriendly. I am too sick at heart (wearied, wasted in body) to complain—even to myself. My first friend Edward Irving is dead; above three weeks ago. I am friendless here; or as good as that.\(^22\)

With these words I close the story of Carlyle's apprenticeship. His training was over. He was now a master in his craft, on the eve, though he did not know it, of universal recognition as an original and extraordinary man. Henceforward his life was in his works. The outward incidents of it will be related in his wife's letters and in his own explanatory notes.\(^23\) My part has been to follow him from the peasant's home in which he was born and nurtured to the steps of the great position which he was afterwards to occupy; to describe his trials and his struggles, and the effect of them upon his mind and disposition. But no one, especially no one of so rugged and angular a character, sees the lights and shadows precisely as others see them. When a man of letters has exercised an influence so vast over successive generations of thinkers, the world has a right to know the minutest particulars of his life; and the sovereigns of literature can no more escape from the fierce light which beats upon a throne, than the kings and ministers who have ruled the destinies of states and empires. Carlyle had no such high estimate of his own consequence. His poor fortunes he considered to be of moment to no one but himself; but he knew that the world would demand an account of him, and with characteristic unreserve he placed his journals and his correspondence in my hands with no instructions save that I should tell the truth about him, and if shadows there were, that least of all should I conceal them.
If in this part of my duty I have erred at all, I have erred in excess, not in defect. It is the nature of men to dwell on the faults of those who stand above them. They are comforted by perceiving that the person whom they have heard so much admired was but of common clay after all. The life of no man, authentically told, will ever be found free from fault. Carlyle has been seen in these volumes fighting for thirty-nine years—fighting with poverty, with dyspepsia, with intellectual temptations, with neglect or obstruction from his fellow mortals. Their ways were not his ways. His attitude was not different only from their attitude, but was a condemnation of it, and it was not to be expected that they would look kindly on him. His existence hitherto had been a prolonged battle; a man does not carry himself in such conflicts so wisely and warily that he can come out of them unscathed; and Carlyle carried scars from his wounds both on his mind and on his temper. He had stood aloof from parties; he had fought his way alone. He was fierce and uncompromising. To those who saw but the outside of him he appeared scornful, imperious, and arrogant. He was stern in his judgement of others. The sins of passion he could pardon, but the sins of insincerity, or half-sincerity, he could never pardon. He would not condescend to the conventional politenesses which remove the friction between man and man. He called things by their right names, and in a dialect edged with sarcasm. Thus he was often harsh when he ought to have been merciful; he was contemptuous where he had no right to despise; and in his estimate of motives and actions was often unjust and mistaken. He, too, who was so severe with others had weaknesses of his own of which he was unconscious in the excess of his self-confidence. He was proud—one may say savagely proud. It was a noble determination in him that he would depend upon himself alone; but he would not only accept no obligation, but he resented the offer of help to himself or to anyone belonging to him as if it had been an insult. He never wholly pardoned Jeffrey for having made his brother's fortune. His temper had been ungovernable from his childhood; he had the irritability of a dyspeptic man of genius; and when the Devil, as he called it, had possession of him, those whose comfort he ought most to have studied were the most exposed to the storm: he who preached so
wisely "Do the Duty which lies nearest thee," forgot his own instructions, and made no adequate effort to cast the Devil out. Nay, more: there broke upon him in his late years, like a flash of lightning from heaven, the terrible revelation that he had sacrificed his wife's health and happiness in his absorption in his work; that he had been oblivious of his most obvious obligations, and had been negligent, inconsiderate, and selfish. The fault was grave and the remorse agonising. For many years after she had left him, when we passed the spot in our walks where she was last seen alive, he would bare his grey head in the wind and rain—his features wrung with unavailing sorrow. Let all this be acknowledged; and let those who know themselves to be without either these sins, or others as bad as these, freely cast stones at Carlyle.

But there is the other side of the account. In the weightier matters of the law Carlyle's life had been without speck or flaw. From his earliest years, in the home at Ecclefechan, at school, at college, in every incident or recorded aspect of him, we see invariably the same purity, the same innocence of heart, and uprightness and integrity of action. As a child, as a boy, as a man, he had been true in word and honest and just in deed. There is no trace, not the slightest, of levity or folly. He sought his friends among the worthiest of his fellow-students, and to those friends he was from the first a special object of respect and admiration. His letters, even in early youth, were so remarkable that they were preserved as treasures by his correspondents. In the thousands which I have read, either written to Carlyle or written by him, I have found no sentence of his own which he could have wished unwritten, or, through all those trying years of incipient manhood, a single action alluded to by others which those most jealous of his memory need regret to read, or his biographer need desire to conceal. Which of us would not shiver at the thought if his own life were to be exposed to the same dreadful ordeal, and his own letters, or the letters of others written about him, were searched through for the sins of his youth? These, it may be said, are but negative virtues. But his positive qualities were scarcely less beautiful. Nowhere is a man known better than in his own family. No disguise is
possible there; and he whom father and mother, brother and sister love, we may be sure has deserved to be loved.

Among the many remarkable characteristics of the Carlyle household, whether at Mainhill or Scotsbrig, was the passionate affection which existed among them and the special love which they all felt for "Tom." Well might Jeffrey say that Carlyle would not have known poverty if he had not been himself a giver. His own habits were Spartan in their simplicity, and from the moment when he began to earn his small salary as an usher at Annan, the savings of his thrift were spent in presents to his father and mother and in helping to educate his brother. I too can bear witness that the same generous disposition remained with him to the end. In his later years he had an abundant income, but he never added to his own comforts or luxuries. His name was not seen on charity lists, but he gave away every year perhaps half what he received. I was myself in some instances employed by him to examine into the circumstances of persons who had applied to him for help. The stern censor was in these instances the kindest of Samaritans. It was enough if a man or woman was miserable. He did not look too curiously into the causes of it. I was astonished at the profuseness with which he often gave to persons little worthy of his liberality.

Nor was there even in those more trying cases where men were prospering beyond their merits any malice or permanent ill-will. He was constitutionally atrabilious and scornful; but the bitterness with which he would speak of such persons was on the surface merely. "Poor devil," he would say of some successful political Philistine, "after all, if we looked into the history of him, we should find how it all came about." He was always sad: often gloomy in the extreme. Men of genius rarely take cheerful views of life. They see too clearly. Dante and Isaiah were not probably exhilarating companions; but Carlyle, when unpossessed and in his natural humour, was gentle, forbearing, and generous.

If his character as a man was thus nobly upright, so he employed his time and his talents with the same high sense of responsibility—not to make himself great, or honoured, or admired, but as a trust committed to him for his Maker's purposes. "What can you say of Carlyle," said Mr. Rus-
kin to me, “but that he was born in the clouds and struck by the lightning?”—“struck by the lightning”—not meant for happiness, but for other ends; a stern fate which nevertheless in the modern world, as in the ancient, is the portion dealt out to some individuals on whom the heavens have been pleased to set their mark. Gifted as he knew himself to be with unusual abilities, he might have risen to distinction on any one of the beaten roads of life, and have won rank and wealth for himself. He glanced at the Church, he glanced at the Bar, but there was something working in him like the Δαιμόνιον [daimon] of Socrates, which warned him off with an imperious admonition, and insisted on being obeyed. Men who fancy that they have a “mission” in this world are usually intoxicated by vanity, and their ambition is in the inverse ratio of their strength to give effect to it. But in Carlyle the sense of having a mission was the growth of the actual presence in him of the necessary powers. Certain associations, certain aspects of human life and duty, had forced themselves upon him as truths of immeasurable consequence which the world was forgetting. He was a vates, a seer. He perceived things which others did not see, and which it was his business to force them to see. He regarded himself as being charged actually and really with a message which he was to deliver to mankind, and, like other prophets, he was “straitened” till his work was accomplished. A Goethe could speak in verse, and charm the world into listening to him by the melody of his voice. The deep undertones of Carlyle’s music could not modulate themselves under rhyme and metre. For the new matter which he had to utter he had to create a new form corresponding to it. He had no pulpit from which to preach, and through literature alone had he any access to the world which he was to address. Even “a man of letters” must live while he writes, and Carlyle had imposed conditions upon himself which might make the very keeping himself alive impossible; for his function was sacred to him, and he had laid down as a fixed rule that he would never write merely to please, never for money, that he would never write anything save when specially moved to write by an impulse from within; above all, never to set down a sentence which he did not in his heart believe to be true,
and to spare no labour till his work to the last fibre was as good as he could possibly make it.

These were rare qualities in a modern writer whose bread depended on his pen, and such as might well compensate for worse faults than spleen and hasty temper. He had not starved, but he had come within measurable distance of starvation. Nature is a sharp schoolmistress, and when she is training a man of genius for a great moral purpose, she takes care by "the constitution of things" that he shall not escape discipline. More than once better hopes had appeared to be dawning. But the sky had again clouded, and at the time of the removal to London the prospect was all but hopeless. No man is bound to fight for ever against proved impossibilities. The French Revolution was to be the last effort. If this failed Carlyle had resolved to give up the game, abandon literature, buy spade and rifle and make for the backwoods of America. "You are not fit for that either, my fine fellow,," he had sorrowfully to say to himself. Still he meant to try. America might prove a kinder friend to him than England had been, in some form or other. Worse it could not prove.

For two years the writing of that book occupied him. The material grew on his hands, and the first volume, for the cause mentioned in the Reminiscences, had to be written a second time. All the mornings he was at his desk; in the afternoons he took his solitary walks in Hyde Park, seeing the brilliant equipages and the knights and dames of fashion prancing gaily along the Row. He did not envy them. He would not have changed existences with the brightest of these fortune's favourites if the wealth of England had been poured into the scale. But he did think that his own lot was hard, so willing was he to do anything for an honest living, yet with every door closed against him. "Not one of you," he said to himself as he looked at them, "could do what I am doing, and it concerns you too, if you did but know it."

They did not know it and they have not known it. Fifty years have passed since Carlyle was writing The French Revolution. The children of fashion still canter under the elms of the Park, as their fathers and mothers were cantering then, and no sounds of danger have yet been audible
to flutter the Mayfair dove-cotes. "They call me a great man now," Carlyle said to me a few days before he died, "but not one believes what I have told them." But if they did not believe the prophet, they could worship the new star which was about to rise. The Annandale peasant boy was to be the wonder of the London world. He had wrought himself into a personality which all were to be compelled to admire, and in whom a few recognised, like Goethe, the advent of a new moral force the effects of which it was impossible to predict.