THOMAS CARLYLE AND EDINBURGH
1809-1834

by

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This study concerns itself with the early life of Thomas Carlyle. Specifically, it concerns itself with the years he spent in Scotland, from his birth in 1795 to his departure for Chelsea in 1834, soon to be followed by his rise to fame with the publication of The French Revolution in 1837. This period may be divided as follows:

1795-1809 childhood in Ecclefechan
1809-1814 university education in Edinburgh
1814-1818 schoolteaching
1818-1824 minor literary life and some study
1824-1825 first visit to London
1825-1826 return to Dumfriesshire
1826-1828 marriage to Jane Welsh and residence in Edinburgh
1828-1834 life in Craigenputtoch
1831-1832 second visit to London. Sartor Resartus written
1833 visit to Edinburgh
May 1834 final removal to London.

Three main periods fall under especial notice in these pages, as being extremely important to the intellectual history of Carlyle, yet insufficiently studied by biographers. The first of these is the childhood period in Ecclefechan, the second the long span of student years in Edinburgh, the third the Craigenputtoch years.
This is not to say that these years are unstudied; a wealth of material exists for the student of Carlyle's early life. This study concerns itself particularly with the Scottish background to Carlyle's ideas and experience. To take this attitude is not to deny at all the importance of the German ideas in Carlyle's thought, to overlook the enormous output of material already available on this precise examination. Professor Harrold has shown (in *Carlyle and German Thought*) how extensive was Carlyle's borrowing from German sources in order to reconstruct his life-philosophy, and more recently Professor Tennyson has applied the same examination to *Sartor Resartus*, Professor LaValley to several of the early works, and M. Jacques Cabau to the essays and to *Wotton* to *. Reinfred*. This essay does not set out to contradict the findings of these scholars, but sets itself to examine the existing framework of ideas in Carlyle's mind, drawn from the experience of his early life, and to identify the effect of new ideas which reached him from Scotland, as well as from his reading of foreign authors, and his contacts elsewhere.

In order to do this, it is assumed that the reader is familiar with Carlyle's biography to 1834, as written of by Froude, Wilson and Masson (in *Edinburgh Sketches and Memories*). The Reminiscences, too, are extensively used, as an invaluable document of great frankness in which Carlyle (especially in the early *Reminiscences* of his father)
reveals the stress between his early years in Ecclefechan, and the experience he found in Edinburgh and London.

The material which this study brings to bear on the examination of Carlyle's life and experience is threefold. One is Carlyle's own writings and the reportage of his words, often less familiar to readers, incorporated in volumes of autobiography and anecdote by those who met him and were enthralled by his powers of conversation, or sometimes of monologue. Their instinctive reaction was to preserve on paper what they had heard, often to the profit of the biographer. The second is Carlyle's correspondence, enormous in volume (some 9000 letters, half of them unpublished, are presently being prepared for publication at Duke and Edinburgh Universities) and affording great help to an understanding of his early thought. The relevant letters are used alongside remarks from Carlyle's journal, and his reaction to the life of him by Althaus. Thirdly there are illuminating secondary works; here stress is laid on books not normally associated with Carlyle, works throwing light on conditions in Ecclefechan, on the precise nature of the Burgher Seceder community in which he was raised, on the conditions of his university education, on his changing attitudes towards London, Edinburgh, England, Scotland.

The purpose of this examination of the early period of Carlyle's life is thus to add to existing knowledge an extra dimension of understanding, relating existing ideas and research to a separate framework of ideas traceable to
Scotland. The influence of Goethe and the Germans, the importance of following the spiritual development of Wotton Reinfred and Sartor Resartus are unquestioned: what is suggested is that the Scottish background may help throw light on some of Carlyle's ideas, or their development, and that a more precise knowledge of these years will illuminate crucial actions and decisions, above all the decision to leave Scotland and settle in London. This, far from being a rejection of his early life, is the conclusion of his thought-processes up to that time.

The examination is organised in five sections. In the first, the Ecclefechan community, the church life, and Carlyle's very early education are described, in the second, the university years in Edinburgh. In the third, the growing doubt and unbelief in Carlyle's mind is explored, and an attempt made to account for the "Everlasting No" of Sartor Resartus. In the fourth, the development of early ideas by 1834 is followed out, and in the fifth and final chapter an attempt is made to relate these final ideas to the earlier environment in which they were first created.

Chief among many debts of gratitude are those to Professor John Butt, under whom this study was begun; to Geoffrey Carnall, who supervised its completion; and to the Scottish Education Department who, by the award of a Major Scottish Studentship, made it possible.
Conventions

In its conventions, this thesis follows the following rules. The edition of the Works is the Centenary one (London, 1896-1899), with the exception of:

Reminiscences: this refers to the Everyman edition, ed. W. Murdoch but reproducing Norton's texts, with the addition of "Christopher North" (London, 1934).


Critical and Miscellaneous Essays (CME): these are cited from the four-volume Chapman and Hall edition (London, 1857).

The letters quoted are referred to in the following manner:

(i) writer (identified by initials, e.g. TC = Thomas Carlyle) to recipient. Writers are:

TC = Thomas Carlyle
JAC = his brother John
JWC = Jane
MAC = his mother
JSM = John Stuart Mill
AC = his brother Alexander

(ii) date, e.g. "10 September 1831".

(iii) manuscript location: e.g. "NLS. 1764.3" code

NLS = National Library of Scotland
EUL = Edinburgh University Library
AHE = Arched House Ecclefechan
(iv) details of publication: e.g. "pub. Froude, III, 22".

code:

NEL = Early Letters ed. Norton
Froude I & II = Froude's Early Life.
Froude III & IV = Froude's Life in London
Marrs = Carlyle's Letters to brother Alexander
      ed. Marrs
GC = Correspondence with Goethe ed. Norton

where the letter, or the extract, is not known to have been published, the word "unpublished" appears.

Two Note Books: I have used these as a source of Carlyle's journal writings at this time. The Note Books form only a part of the journal, but the remainder is in private hands and not accessible to scholars (see my "James Barrett and Carlyle's Journal"). The copy I have used, however, bears Barrett's corrections to Norton's text from the manuscript: similarly the copy of Froude I used has Alexander Carlyle's marginalia, in some cases drawn from manuscripts now no longer available. Both are preserved in the National Library of Scotland.
CHAPTER ONE
Little is known of Ecclefechan in Carlyle's time, yet more can be discovered, and written about, than Carlyle's biographers have so far indicated. Carlyle lived there until he was fourteen, and for the next sixty years spent at least part of his vacations there. Its influence should not be ignored in the study of his early intellectual history.

The village stands now on the main routes of communication between Glasgow and the industrial heart of Scotland, and England. In Carlyle's time, to a lesser extent, it had the same importance, the first coaching-stop north of Carlisle (in England) on the Glasgow road. Daily coach services connected it with the South, and with both of the major Scottish cities. Ecclefechan was thus no Sleepy Hollow, but a thriving Scottish town with frequent contact with the great world. In Carlyle's early years its population was growing steadily, from 1198 just after Carlyle's birth, to 1640 in 1821.1 This growth of population arose partly from its good situation (travelling was much on the increase in the early nineteenth century), partly from its central position in the local agricultural world, which was reflected in very large and popular markets and fairs,2

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1 These figures come from the account in The New Statistical Account of Scotland (Edinburgh and London, 1845), dated March, 1834. The parish, Hoddam, is minutely described there.

2 These are vividly recalled by Carlyle in Stephen Corrie, an unpublished fragment of a novel preserved in the Carlyle Museum, Chelsea.
and partly from the fact, not generally appreciated, that Ecclefechan was an industrial town. Though set in a predominantly agricultural area (5143 acres of the parish were cultivated out of the total of 5727) it derived most of its income from "the manufacture of gingham", and later of straw hats, an industry enterprisingly begun as a local cottage industry, fostered by Carlyle's interest and forwarded by his commendation of it to the Highland Society of Edinburgh, and eventually an important part of the local economy. Weaving, however, in one form or another, maintained many people, and there were 108 families in the parish engaged in "trade or manufacture" against only 71 in agriculture. The Caiyle family were part of this majority, Carlyle's father being a successful stonemason at the time of Carlyle's birth. With his brothers he had a building trade well-known and respected in the area. His income supported a numerous family and although not large by any standards (he never earned more than £100 in a year) was a very respectable one, enabling him in middle-age to leave the mason's trade and set up as farmer, an ambition

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3 Statistical Account, 294.

4 Miss A. Christianson has discovered a letter from Carlyle to the Highland Society, November 1827, bringing the industry to their attention. Essays and Transactions of the Highland Society VII (1829), 290-291.

5 Statistical Account, 293.

6 Reminiscences, 31.
which unfortunately he fulfilled just as circumstances were reducing the profitability of tenant farming to a low ebb. For many years the Carlyle family at their successive farms of Mainhill, Hoddam Hill and Scotsbrig knew real poverty, and much difficulty in finding money for the rent of the farm. This misfortune they shared, however, with others in the area. The Carlyle family was a well-established and respected one, the father always self-employed, and able to send his eldest son to school and university without apparent difficulty. Above all, the family retained its independence. Carlyle thus came from a family which knew conditions both in industry and in agriculture, and this fact may have helped explain his interest (and concern) in the plight of the industrial poor, which was acute as early as his student days.

Two very important areas of enquiry, little studied, present themselves to any student of Carlyle's early Ecclefechan years. One is the question of Carlyle's schooling, and the friends from the area he knew at school and at University. The other is the question of Carlyle's religious life at home.

To begin with Carlyle's schooling, several documents exist to throw some light on a little-known period of his life. Best-known are the Reminiscences of James Carlyle, written some thirty years earlier than the other Reminiscences. James Carlyle made a very deep impression on his son, and the agony of heart Carlyle felt when his father died early in 1832 (Carlyle was in London, and unable to attend the
funeral) is reflected in his letters home at this time, and in the quality of the prose of the Reminiscences now known as "James Carlyle", and incorporated in the main text of the published Reminiscences. The prose is rapid, jerking, uneven, obviously written under the influence of deep passion; the narration is unusually frank, unmannered by the studied grief which mars the frankness of much of the later autobiographical writing. Obviously the friendship of his father (and later his respect) meant a lot to Carlyle. It is to his father that he credits his first formal education, in arithmetic. His memory suggests this took place in 1800. Reading and writing, on the other hand, are things he could not remember being taught, and his recollections of them are vague and at second-hand. His arithmetical skills were such that by the age of 10 he was claimed to be a better counter than his uncle, a stonemason and businessman. Since Carlyle was soon to be supporting

7Reminiscences, 29.

8He repeats the statement that he was taught by his mother in his manuscript notes to Althaus; however he told William Allingham that "I could not be taught to write at school; the master gave it up in despair. I taught myself afterwards." (W. Allingham, A Diary ed. Allingham and Radford [London, 1907], 216.) This statement is of doubtful authenticity; his early hand is very similar in every respect to those who were writing to him, and can therefore be assumed to have been taught him (though he had forgotten the circumstance) by a writing master of the same area. The statement about his mother in the Reminiscences, indeed, is ambiguously worded. She may have taught him to read, but we know she wrote only with extreme difficulty, although she read her son's books with care.
himself by tutoring in mathematics, and translating papers on the subject, his early mastery of arithmetic assumes some importance in his biography. However, the major part of Carlyle's early schooling is traced in his notes to the early life of him by Althaus, published in Leipzig in 1866. The Statistical Account of Ecclefechan notes that by the 1830's, the parish school was decayed; the ridiculously low salary of the master may have been a factor in this. "The parish school-house is large and most commodious in every respect, and yet those parents who can afford it almost universally prefer sending their children to the other schools, where the fees are larger." Carlyle's education began by following this classical pattern. His first education was at a private school run by "Tom Donaldson", a poor student teaching to raise money for his fees at college. This was standard practice — Carlyle's future college friend Thomas Murray was shortly to be conducting such a school near neighbouring Girthon. Murray, an orphan, felt that he would prefer to earn a subsistence this way, leading as it did to "self-reliance, combined with integrity and perseverance, ... independent of all patronage." This

9The article, and Carlyle's notes to it, are preserved: MS:NLS 1799 & 1800. It has been used by biographers, e.g. Froude, and in the introduction to Marrs' edition of the letters of Alexander and Thomas Carlyle.

1Statistical Account, 296. The schoolmaster's annual income even by the 1830's did not reach £50.

2T. Murray, Autobiographical Notes ed. J.A. Fairley (Dumfries, 1911), 14. The school was in existence from 1807–1810.
mood is one which is to be found reflected in Carlyle from his very earliest writings. Tom Donaldson made little impression on Carlyle; probably it was he who performed the forgotten task of teaching him reading and writing. Presumably he then gave up the school to devote himself to more advanced study; at any rate Carlyle proceeded to the parish school. One may surmise that Donaldson's was the only private school, and in the absence of it, the parish school the only resource. There the teacher was "Sandy Beattie", and it was he who taught Carlyle "English" by the age of 7, and encouraged his parents to allow him to proceed to the study of Latin. This may have been the point at which Carlyle was destined for a further education at Annan. Reported "complete in English", he must "go into Latin" or waste his time. This step taken, the further step to Annan Academy in due course was the natural consequence. It was not easy, however, for the parish school's reputation for incompetence was only too well grounded. "Latin accordingly: with what enthusiasm! But the poor School-master did not himself know Latin; I gradually got altogether swamped and bewildered under him." Then the

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3 The building still stands, and local tradition confirms it as "Carlyle's school".

4 This is no isolated case, but is supported by the circumstance that Carlyle's first substantial teaching appointment, at Kirkcaldy, was a direct result of the Town Council's desire to appoint a substitute for the aged and incompetent teacher; private schools had sprung up in the Burgh in competition. One was Edward Irving's.
Burgher Secession Minister, John Johnstone, rescued him, and both he and his son (later to be a respected minister in the Presbyterian Church of New Jersey) taught Carlyle Latin. This is a mark of the respect in which the Carlyles must have been held; Johnstone was a highly educated man (he alone in the district spoke Hebrew) and he still spent time in teaching Carlyle the basics of the Latin tongue, with his son's help. In 1834 Carlyle was to recall vividly "how the first grounds of the Latin tongue began to dawn on me" under the care of Johnstone junior. Johnstone senior was a remarkable man; then elderly, he had had a distinguished career as parish minister of Hoddam Burgher Seceders and turned down opportunities of greater advancement. Carlyle regarded him as "the venerablest and most venerated Clerical Person I have ever seen", and in his mind Johnstone formed

5 Confirmed by Carlyle who described Johnstone as "an excellent clergyman - taught me Latin!" Carlyle's pencil note to J. Paterson, Contemporaries of Burns and the more recent Poets of Ayrshire (n.p., 1840), 79.

6 Carlyle's note, later in Althaus.

7 Carlyle recalled to Ruskin his joy in being taught Latin. See Praeterita in Ruskin's Works (ed. London, 1907), II, 351.


9 They paid him the tribute of a handsome and expensive memorial in Hoddam graveyard.

1 TC-David Hope, 19 December 1834. Details supra.
a semi-ideal of the Christian minister. He was, in memory, "more priestlike in his humble simplicity than Archbishops to me; and more honoured too, for I have seen the Cuddylane Population (most brutal of the creatures of God) suspend their quarrelling and cursing till he had passed thro' them, and touch their hat reverently to him".\(^2\) Johnstone's personality may have spurred Carlyle to early study of Latin, and his gifts of scholarship\(^3\) may have helped his steady progress. Certainly Johnstone was quite admired by Carlyle in youth, and (as suggested) Johnstone's patronage of the youthful Carlyle suggests the extent to which Carlyle's parents were respected members of the Burgher community.\(^4\) Latin did not trouble Carlyle at University, and he managed to earn his living by tutoring for a period. "To the end of his life", David Masson tells us of Carlyle, "he was a fair Latinist."\(^5\)

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\(^2\)TC—David Hope, 19 December 1834. Details on previous page. "Cuddylane" I have not traced to Dumfries; it may have been one of the villainous side-closes in Ecclefechan (such as "Parliament Close") now demolished or uninhabited.

\(^3\)Johnstone had tutored the man who was to be Professor of the Secession College of Divinity at Selkirk, and could have had the chair.

\(^4\)Johnstone was (according to Carlyle's notes to Althaus) Carlyle's "Father & mother's Minister (Burgher), both of whom he esteemed." Moncure Conway (Thomas Carlyle [London, 1881], 18) suggests that Carlyle's father was an elder of the Burgher congregation. For details of Johnstone's life and career I am indebted to an extremely rare pamphlet, A. Steele, The Story of A Hundred and Fifty Years (Annan, [1910]). This is a history of Ecclefechan between 1760 and 1910. Sandy Beattie was (Carlyle noted) to become a Burgher Minister. So his influence may have counted in securing Johnstone's help.

Up to this point Carlyle's education had been purely local, by small school and personal contact. In 1806 he entered the Academy in nearby Annan, where as is well-known he was miserable (being bullied by the other boys, and forbidden by his mother to retaliate) but where his studies continued to good effect. Edward Irving had earlier been a member of the same school, after passing through a private school which had educated him excellently. The private school had been that of Adam Hope, a pious and rigid teacher who influenced both Carlyle and Irving, and who is described in Carlyle's *Reminiscences*. Hope closed his school in Annan in 1804 and joined the staff of Annan Academy as English Master, and there taught both boys successively.  

Annan Academy was a respectable school, its headmaster (Dalgleish by name) an excellent scholar in the classics. Yet it is interesting to see in Carlyle's account in *Reminiscences* that only two masters are mentioned, neither of them the distinguished rector. One is Morley the mathematics teacher ("whom I loved much, and who taught me well"), the other is Adam Hope the English master.  

This suggests that Carlyle valued this period at senior school more for mathematical and literary studies than for the established language studies. This hypothesis could be

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6. These details come from F. Miller, "Edward Irving and Annan", in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* IV (1932), 87-92.

supported by the fact of his having esteemed the teachers of English and mathematics as individuals, and therefore studied well for them (a pattern he repeated in university) or perhaps by the fact that his Latin was competent already, thanks to his excellent teacher in Johnstone, and he was able to explore the new subjects opened to him. Certainly these Annan years are much more positive than many biographers have suggested. The new love of mathematics is reflected in Carlyle's sudden awakening to his full powers at university when he made contact with Professor Leslie's mathematics classes, after an undistinguished first year of classics lectures. At university, too, his literary interests were enormous, and this could be traced to Adam Hope's influence in Annan. Hope was of the same religious sect as the Carlyles, and worshipped weekly in Ecclefechan, so Carlyle may have made Hope's acquaintance at this period and been stimulated to the early study of literature. This theory would be supported by the fact that Carlyle made very full use of the local borrowing library in Annan, and is remembered as an assiduous reader, particularly of Smollett.8

The standard curriculum would be followed, to prepare the boys for the Arts course at university: French,9

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8. This was noted by David Alec Wilson in Carlyle Till Marriage (London, 1923), 66. "My first favourite books had been Hudibras and Tristram Shandy." (Althaus).

9. This can be proved; his primer is preserved in Chelsea, signed and dated. It was published in Edinburgh in 1806, some indication that Annan Academy used modern texts, as Carlyle would have been studying from it only a year or two later.
the Greek alphabet, Latin, \(^1\) geometry, algebra, arithmetic.\(^2\)
The intention of this education was to present school-children of fourteen or fifteen for entrance to the Scottish University curriculum, which pre-supposed a slight acquaintance with the classics and mathematics, subjects which were studied in detail before proceeding to what was considered the crown of a university education, the study of philosophy. Carlyle therefore in Annan underwent the standard preparation of students of his age and position. Already he was supported financially by his father (generously), and benefiting from his youth in Ecclefechan. The accident of birth had placed him in a family which could support him (when others had to teach, and survive on starvation budgets), and in a town where trade and transport brought frequent news and travellers from the greater centres, to stimulate enthusiasm and ambition for education and advancement. The accident of birth had also put Carlyle in a family of more than ordinary ability. Carlyle's father was more than a strong-minded pious stonemason, he was widely respected locally for his learning and his powers of speech. Local report spoke of him as "... a good scholar: he could do his ain business well; and was looked up to as a knowing bodie. He had old-fashioned words, like nobody else. He

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\(^1\) Not poetic technique: "quantity was left a frightful chaos." This is interesting in view of Carlyle's later ignorance of (and lack of interest in) metrics.

\(^2\) Althaus.
read muckle; he was a great talker ..."³ Farm-servants who worked for the Carlyles and lodged with them learned to respect their powers of self-expression, and to fear their wrath.⁴

Carlyle added to this local report, and it is plain that he himself valued his Ecclefechan experience highly. Apart from the religious background it gave him, his life in the Carlyle household in Ecclefechan had immense repercussion on his style, his reading, and his attitude to literature. Critics (notably Shine, Harrold and Wellek) have noted how far Carlyle's later ideas, ostensibly drawn from German thought, are closely allied to earlier ideas and belief from Ecclefechan and its influence on Carlyle. His early education, and the influence of his family, were pervasive in their effect throughout his life.

Certainly there were restrictive elements in Carlyle's home. His father may have been well-read, but it was in a selective way. "My Father's Education was altogether of the worst and most limited. I believe he was never more than three months at any school ... A solid knowledge of Arithmetic, a fine antique Handwriting; these, with other limited practical etceteras, were all the things he ever

³Account quoted from F. Martin's early biographical article in the first (and only) issue of the Biographical Magazine published under his editorship in 1877.

heard mentioned as excellent: he had no room to strive for more."5 James Carlyle, although literate and doubtless able to look after his business affairs, was not likely to communicate much knowledge of literature to his son.

"Poetry, Fiction in general, he had universally seen treated as not only idle, but false and criminal. This was the spiritual element he lived in, almost to old age."6 The ultra-strict interpretation of religious duty is one which, Carlyle implies from the wording of the sentence quoted, is no longer so completely in vogue, and his father's attitude thus appears antiquated. His father's attitude was rigidly enforced: Moncure Conway recalls Carlyle's statement that James Carlyle "... could not tolerate anything fictitious in books, and sternly forbade us to spend our time over the 'Arabian Nights' — 'those downright lies,' he called them."7 When Carlyle sent his mother a copy of his newly-published Specimens of German Romance in 1827, he added in his covering letter, "I have inscribed [it] to my Father, tho' I know that he will not read a line of it."8 His father had the chance to meet and talk to Robert Burns, the poet, but did not take advantage of it. "Burns had

5Reminiscences, 9.
6Reminiscences, 9.
7M. Conway, Thomas Carlyle, 27.
8TC-MAC 2 Jan 1827, MS:NLS 519.48 pub. Froude I, 378.
come into [Ecclefechan] on some Excise business, and the people went to the doors to take a look at him -- for Burns was greatly regarded. My Father went to the door too from curiosity ... and after looking at him for a minute or two went back into the house and to his business and thought no more about him. He never read his Poems, and felt no concern or interest about them or their Author." 9 In drama the ban was the same: although Carlyle's youthful imagination was fired most acutely by Shakespeare, his early acquaintance with the theatre was not in any way through his family, but through the strolling players of the Ecclefechan fairs (also recalled in Stephen Corrie) and in the temporary theatre in Annan which first introduced him to the Tempest. 1 The early experience of Carlyle in his Ecclefechan home, then, was one which restricted his artistic development, cutting him off as it did from theatre, fiction and poetry. When he read voraciously at Annan, including Smollett, it was in direct contradiction to parental command, and so must have been done surreptitiously. Later critics were to notice the weakness of certain parts of Carlyle's artistic talents; his Critical and Miscellaneous Essays certainly are weak on the technique of literature, concentrating as they

9 Robert Herdman, the Scottish artist, recalling conversation with Carlyle while the latter was sitting for the portrait now in the National Portrait Gallery of Scotland. This manuscript I edited and published as "Portrait of Carlyle" in the Weekend Scotsman, 12 August 1967, page three.

1 W. Allingham, A Diary, 247.
do almost entirely on ideas. William Allingham, not the man most critical of Carlyle, could not forbear from remarking on Carlyle's "ignorance of the technique of Poetry -- i.e. the form and body of it ... astonishing, and by me inexplicable." This is the considered verdict of a man who knew Carlyle many years, and loved him only just this side idolatory. Even a two-hours' conversation was enough to bring home to Margaret Fuller the same point. After meeting him in 1846 and hearing him harangue for two hours on poetry, she summed up the experience as "one eloquent proclamation of the defects of his own mind." In summary, the early life of Carlyle in Ecclefechan may have impoverished his early artistic experience by cutting him off from certain areas of literature until he reached independence. It would be easy to exaggerate this: after all, Carlyle was only 10 when he left home to study at Annan as a boarder, with freedom to read what he wanted, so the impoverishment lay not in the absence of reading material. Rather it may have lain in an attitude of mind on the part of persons he loved and respected, which was to be reflected in his own mature criticism.

2 W. Allingham, A Diary, 211.
3 Quoted from the introduction to T. Carlyle, On the Choice of Books (second edition, London [1866]), 73.
4 The third section of Professor Shine's Carlyle's Fusion of History, Poetry and Religion by 1834 is devoted to this point.
If living in Ecclefechan took away from his early development, it also contributed to it. The Reminiscences of James Carlyle dwell at great length on his innate abilities which go far to counterbalance the limited religious position which (by implication) he inherited from previous generations, and which was dying. Surroundings and opinion might impose a set of values on him, values with which Carlyle could not completely agree, yet his inborn strength of character is repeatedly stressed. "He was a man of perhaps the very largest natural endowment it has ever been my lot to converse with."\(^5\) "... He was a man of open sense: wonderfully so."\(^6\) "The more I reflect on it, the more must I admire how completely Nature had taught him; how completely he was devoted to his work ..."\(^7\) "Never, of all the men I have seen, has one come personally in my way in whom the Endowment from Nature and the Arena from Fortune were so utterly out of proportion."\(^8\) The endowment was seen mostly in his style of speech. "... None of us will ever forget that bold glowing style of his, flowing free from the untutored Soul; full of metaphors (though he knew not what a metaphor was), with all manner of potent words (which he appropriated and applied with a

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\(^5\) Reminiscences, 3.

\(^6\) op.cit., 5.

\(^7\) op.cit., 8.

\(^8\) op.cit., 9.
surprising accuracy, you often could not guess whence); brief, energetic; and which I should say conveyed the most perfect picture, definite, clear not in ambitious colours but in full white sunlight, of all the dialects I have ever listened to." This, though written under stress of bereavement, is no exaggeration; James Carlyle's style was famous throughout the district, particularly his gift of nicknames, which once coined stuck to their victim for years.

This picture of James Carlyle assumes importance when Thomas Carlyle's own mature style, conversation is considered. Visitors were continually impressed by the small extent to which fame and residence and London had touched Carlyle's essential Scottishness, and Alexander Smith, writing in The Argosy in May, 1866, gives a description of Carlyle which could almost be that of James Carlyle, sixty years earlier. "His face had not yet lost the country bronze which he brought up with him from Dumfriesshire ... His long residence in London had not touched his Annandale look, nor had it — as we soon learned — touched his Annandale accent." William Robertson Nicoll was even more explicit; "Had I seen him by the fireside of a Scotch farm, I should have taken him for a remarkably intelligent farmer, the grandfather of the family." In speech, as in appearance, Carlyle clung to

9 *op.cit.*, 3.


the norm of his Ecclefechan home. An early biographer wrote of him as "... very homely, the air so rustic and peasant-like, not to say uncouth ... Carlyle was a thorough Scot ... Those who enjoyed the privilege of visiting Carlyle, especially if they were fellow-countrymen, can testify how vivid were his reminiscences of his early days at Ecclefechan and Annan, and how he liked nothing better than to hear of the old companions of his boyhood." 3 Carlyle's own spoken speech is famous throughout Victorian literature for its vividness, its power, its ability in description which enthralled visitors to Cheyne Row. Vivid, picturesque, metaphorical, it was as his father's had been. One hearer described Carlyle's speech as "... never for an instant commonplace. The whole diction was always original and intensely vivid, and it was more saturated and interlaced with metaphor than any other conversation I have ever heard." 4 The description tallies closely with Carlyle's own description of his father. Another account of Carlyle reinforces this, stressing the impressive way in which Carlyle spoke of matters religious, using a trick which surely must have been picked up from James Carlyle. "On religious matters his language had a sublimity and an air of inspiration which always reminded me (and many others) of what a Hebrew prophet

3 W.H. Wylie, Thomas Carlyle, the Man and his Books (London, 1881), 322, 340, 341.

must have been; and sometimes when very earnest he had a strangely solemn way of turning and looking full in the hearer's face for a second before speaking, which added extraordinarily to the impressiveness of what he said.\(^5\)

Unquestionably Carlyle owed this style of speech (and written language, above all in the descriptive passages of The French Revolution) to his early experience at home and in Ecclefechan. One source which no doubt added to his powers was his friendship with Edward Irving, of Annan, who had had a childhood very similar to Carlyle's and known the same people, read the same literature, enjoyed the same education, worshipped in the same Church. The two enjoyed interminable conversation in Kirkcaldy when both were teachers there together, and "such colloquies and rich rovings about, in bright scenes, in talk or in silence, I have never had since."\(^6\)

Irving developed a "Miltonic or Old-English Puritan style"\(^7\) which impressed Carlyle greatly. "We enjoyed the broad potency of his delineations, exhortations and free flowing eloquencies, which had all a manly and original turn."\(^8\)

Later, Carlyle admitted, "I suppose, I owe something of my own poor affectations" of style to Irving's example.\(^9\) In

\(^5\) op.cit., 94.
\(^6\) Reminiscences, 187.
\(^7\) op.cit., 195.
\(^8\) op.cit., 194. His father's, too, were "manly".
\(^9\) op.cit., 195.
the early period at Ecclefechan there is thus a major influence on Carlyle in speech and style. He left one explicit comment on this matter. "Edward Irving and his admiration of the Old Puritans & Elizabethans ... played a much more important part than Jean Paul [Richter] on my poor "style"; and the most important part by far was that of Nature, you would perhaps say, had you ever heard my Father speak, or very often heard my Mother and her inborn melodies of heart and of voice!"¹

Ecclefechan left a profound mark on Carlyle's early literary experience, and sent him to Edinburgh to study at University with a sound basic education, a rapidly expanding knowledge of literature, and a style which impressed people immediately, even when they were repelled by his youthful gaucherie and inexperience. The earliest description of Carlyle to survive is one dating from the autumn of 1810, when he had been only one session at University, and thus was essentially what Ecclefechan had made him. Thomas Murray recorded that at this stage Carlyle "... was distinguished ... by the same peculiarities that still mark his character [in 1849] -- sarcasm, irony, extravagance of sentiment, and a strong tendency to undervalue others, combined, however, with great kindness of heart and great simplicity of manner."² One can understand these traits

¹Carlyle's notes to Althaus.

²T. Murray, Autobiographical Notes, 15.
in a young man from a small town, obviously gifted, to some extent self-educated by strenuous reading, insecure of his position, living among student contemporaries for most of the year. Carlyle family features recur, sarcasm and irony and a feeling of exaggeration, a fault which Carlyle admits to in the Reminiscences. Speaking of his father he admitted that "... he exaggerated (which tendency I also inherit); yet only in description and for the sake chiefly of humorous effect". The intention was not malicious; Carlyle's student friends nicknamed him "Dean" and "Jonathan" for his Swiftian powers of irony and exaggeration, yet they obviously esteemed him highly and regarded him with affection.

Thomas Murray's description continues to support this. "With this gifted and ingenious person I lived on terms of affection so long as he remained in Scotland." Their correspondence is open and valuable for the comprehension of Carlyle's early life. Yet Murray did not let his affection blind him to the faults of the provincial in Carlyle, coming as he did from a remote village. "His provincial intonation was then very remarkable, and it still remains so; his speech was copious and bizarre". Carlyle's Ecclefechan experience gave him a sound education and a fine command of language. It was his wider experience, at

3Reminiscences, 4.

4T. Murray, Autobiographical Notes, 15.

5ibid.
University and later, which gave him command over the resources which were put at his disposal at this early period.

So far the available information has been drawn together on Carlyle's early years, and some inference made on its nature and results. This, however, is merely Carlyle's secular education. With the religious background to Carlyle's early life we enter on a virtually unstudied facet of his character, and one which this study will argue has a very great influence on him. The biographical information usually given is that Carlyle's parents were strict "Burgher Seceders", that Carlyle worshipped in the Ecclefechan church, that he broke with that sect on losing his religious faith around 1819; so much is known from the Reminiscences. Criticism, also, will refer to Carlyle's powerful inherited Calvinism, although rarely has there been any attempt to do more than label Carlyle's religious conveniently in this way. It is necessary first to describe the nature of the Burgher Seceder church to which all the Carlyles belonged, then to assess its possible influence on Carlyle.

6 The honourable exception is C.F. Harrold's article on "The Nature of Carlyle's Calvinism" in Studies in Philology XXXIII, 3 (July, 1936), 475-486. Professor Harrold isolates usefully some facets of Calvinistic belief in Carlyle, though without thoroughly relating it to his Scottish background.
The eighteenth century had seen a lamentable lack of unity in the Church in Scotland. In the late 1730's, internal dissention in the established Church had led to the original "Secession" church, and in 1752–1753 the "Relief" Church, too, formed an offshoot from the established church. In both cases the cause was a desire for freedom, and a distaste for the methods of government of the established church. In 1747 the Secession Church, to which Carlyle was to belong, was itself split by a quarrel over the "Burgess Oath", required to be sworn to by citizens of the burghs of Glasgow, Perth and Edinburgh. The oath was, "Here I protest before God and your lordships, that I profess and allow with my heart, the true religion professed within this realm, and authorised by the laws thereof; I shall abide thereat, and defend the same to my life's end; renouncing the Roman religion called papistry." That part of the Secession Church which considered this oath an infringement on the individual's liberty of worship separated from the remainder to form the "Antiburgher"; the remainder (and less extreme body) were the "Burgher" church to which the Carlyle family belonged. The separate churches were themselves to be split into "Old Light" and "New Light"

7 The oath is quoted (with "called" on the last line corrected to "called") from D. Scott, Annals and Statistics of the Original Secession Church (Edinburgh, [1886]), 36; another discussion of it can be found in D. M. Forrester, "Adam Gib, the Anti-Burgher", Records of the Scottish Church History Society VII (1941), 141–169; especially 152.
bodies, again over the question of religious liberty and freedom to worship; over the eighteenth century a gradual process of reconciliation took place till in 1820 the various bodies united into the "United Seccession Church", and this in turn united in 1847 with the Relief Church to form the "United Presbyterian Church". Research suggests that the Ecclefechan congregation belonged to the Burgher Seccession church, and to the New Light branch of that church, (in both cases the less extreme choice) "disowning all compulsory measures in religion". In 1799 just before Carlyle's first contact with them, they had dis-associated themselves from the "Old Light" Burghers and formed their own presbytery, and shortly afterwards their own Divinity Hall for the instruction of ministers.

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8 These facts and dates are compiled from D. Scott, Annals and Statistics of the Original Seccession Church, A. Thomson, Historical Sketch of the Origin of the Seccession Church (Edinburgh and London, 1848) and G. Struthers, The History of the Relief Church (Edinburgh and London, 1848). The Ecclefechan congregation, being an old-established one, would have been little affected by the doctrinal differences of this century, and indeed less affected than many by the "New Light" controversy at the end of the 1790's.

9 The inference is from D. Scott's Annals and Statistics: on pp. 41ff. Scott traces the rise of the Old Light and New Light congregations, and the possible acrimony between them: this suggests that congregations would be likely to be on one side of the question or the other, and not in a neutral position. In his Chapter VIII Scott then proceeds to list the Old Light Seccession charges, and Hoddom or Ecclefechan (alternative names: the Established parish was Hoddan, the secession charge Ecclefechan, though they covered the same territory) are both missing. The conclusion thus points to the Carlyles being New Light Burghers.

1 Quoted from D. Scott, 41. It is worth speculating that James Carlyle is represented in the Reminiscences as exceptionally independent in religious matters, and this supports the suggestion that this was his Church.
The characteristics of the Secession Church have been described as three: the growth of the evangelical and missionary spirit, the aggressive attitude to the Established Church, and the rapid growth of congregations in Scotland. In 1747, at the time of separation over the Burgess Oath, there had been 32 congregations; by 1820, when the Church was re-united, there were 262. The Seceders were thus a notable and growing force in Scottish religious life. The Ecclefechan congregation grew with the same energy as its parent church. In March, 1738, when the people of Annandale petitioned the original "Associate Synod" of the Secession Church for a minister, there was a great demand for preaching of this Church. When Erskine preached near Ecclefechan in July, 1738, 10000 people gathered to hear him, an exhibition of religious enthusiasm which was not seen again no doubt till Irving came to preach in the 1820's at the height of his fame. By 1744, at all events, the congregation had a minister, and by 1746 a church. This was built in Lockerbie, to the chagrin of those members in Ecclefechan, who wished to worship locally, and when in 1747 the split in the Secession Church came (and Murray, the minister of Lockerbie, chose the Antiburgher side) the Burghers were content to leave and form a congregation of their own in Ecclefechan village. Thus the church of Carlyle's youth arose. By 1760 it was established as a separate congregation,

2 A. Thomson, Historical Sketch, 151-152.
and the immediate wish was for a preacher. The result, in 1761, was the call to John Johnstone (of West Linton), who was minister of the Secession Church in Ecclefechan for 52 years and who, of course, was Carlyle's early tutor in classical languages. Only 48 signatories appear to the call in 1761, yet one of the elders is a Carlyle, as are three of the other signatories. By 1766 they were established in a meeting-house, and accommodation provided for 600, so the congregation must have been a vigorous one. People came to worship for many miles around, including Edward Irving and Adam Hope from Annan; so popular was the congregation that in 1805 separate offshoots were formed in Annan (59 members) and also four other parishes. 3 This, then, is the congregation in which Carlyle learned his first religious principles, and to which he returned in memory. Carlyle's respect for the Burgher Seceders is unquestionable. "Rude, rustic, bare, no Temple in the world was more so; -- but there were sacred lambencies, tongues of authentic flame from Heaven, which kindled what was best in one, what has not yet gone out." 4

What people were the Burgher Seceders? Carlyle himself provides a good starting-point. He notes that

3 This information comes from A. Steele, The Story of One Hundred and Fifty Years. The call is preserved in the vestry of Hoddam Church (formerly Hoddam Free Church) which succeeded to the Secession Congregations of Ecclefechan after the Disruption. Carlyle (and his parents) are buried in its churchyard.

4 Reminiscences, 179.
Annandale provided an unusual background to secession:

"Annandale was not an irreligious country, -- though Annan itself (owing to a Drunken Clergyman, and the logical habits they cultivated) was more given to sceptical free-thinking than other places; -- the greatly prevailing fashion was, a decent form of devoutness, and pious theoretically anxious regard for things Sacred." In these circumstances secession became more than just a doctrinal matter, it was often the only way to attend a living form of worship. However, he found local prejudice against him. Carlyle notes that "It was ungenteel for him [the worshipper] to attend the Meeting-house", a social fact which he found did not hold true elsewhere. Irving had the courage of his convictions to attend worship in Ecclefechan, six miles away, at the meeting-house, despite this social pressure, and disapproval from his family. It was this sort of courage and individuality which marked the Burghers. "Indeed", remarks Scott in his Annals and Statistics, "strong individuality is a feature that might be expected in those who, though but a small minority in the Christian community, believed the cause of God was in their hands." Devoted to their freedom of

5 Carlyle was sensitive to local atheism: of Middlebie he reported that several workmen are "notable deists -- nay several aspire to the sublime heights of Atheism!" His scorn of them is obvious from the letter. TC-Robert Mitchell 14 June 1815: MS:AHE pub. NEL I, 44-49.

6 Reminiscences, 176.

7 D. Scott, op.cit., 591.
worship, they pursued freedom in every form. In Ecclefechan itself they had obviously achieved their purpose, at least in public, for they could uphold their principles without censure. The assistant minister of the established church in Hoddam noted respectfully that "This is one of the oldest dissenting congregations in the south of Scotland, and some of its members are very respectable in their station, and easy in their circumstances." James Carlyle, financially independent, fits this pattern; his religion was an expression of the freedom which he valued. Even Carlyle, in an unguarded moment, expressed an opinion about religion which fits amazingly with the Seceder theories described. Every man’s object, he opined, is "to find a footing where he shall be able to snap his fingers in the face of men and devils."9

One effect of this independent nature of the people was to foster a very democratic church, sensitive to the wishes of its members. The members were thus led to express these opinions and wishes, and to formulate them more forcefully. One historian said that "... in attending to their own interests [the Seceders] have acquired that habit of exercising individual judgment, which stands closely connected with the continuance of ecclesiastical and civil

8 Statistical Account, 295.

In the case of the Burghers, this led to theological conservativeness. "Strictly orthodox, and specially called forth, as they conceived, to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, they could hardly bear a deviation from the accustomed expressions which were wont to be used by sound divines in treating of certain doctrines." This certainly held true of the Ecclefechan congregation; when paraphrases of scripture were introduced into the form of worship, to add variety to the metrical psalms which formed the only sung worship, there was intense opposition. The Seceder form of worship was held sacred, and Thomas Somerville recorded that earlier in the eighteenth century the Seceders had "held it sinful in any individual who professed to be a member of their community ever on any occasion to attend public worship in any of the parish churches" — on pain of expulsion. Carlyle's father was of this stamp, much given to reading traditional theology. Carlyle described him as grimly religious

1 A. Thomson, Historical Sketch, 164.

2 Quoted from an unpublished notebook of Dr. John Mitchell of Glasgow, in D. Scott, Annals and Statistics, 16.

3 This is detailed in Alexander Carlyle-TC, 25 Mar 1819 MS: NLS: 1763.28 unpub. Carlyle replied that paraphrases would inevitably "come in", as they did. Marrs, Letters, 27. (29 March 1819) Further information on the use of paraphrases in Secession worship at this time is contained in the Dumfries and Galloway Notes and Queries, 254 (14 October 1911), note 211.

4 T. Somerville, My Own Life and Times 1741-1814 (Edinburgh, 1861), 375-376.
"... Old John Owen, of the seventeenth century, was his favourite author." This is confirmed in one of the last descriptions he gave of his father, as "A serious man who gave his spare time to reading John Owen and other religious writers of that order." One surviving Burgher sermon illustrates very well that the doctrine of the Seceders is conservative. Dr. John Brown, later to be the highly popular minister of Broughton Place church, Edinburgh, preached in 1818 on religion, emphasising that "man is not only destitute of true religion, but he is under the influence of irreligion". From this state he must struggle with difficulty, for "Man is a depraved being. His depravity consists in a wrong mode of feeling and acting in reference to God". The cure, claims Brown, lies in Faith, for "Faith is not only the necessary, but the effectual, means of true religion." The Bible, he claims finally, is the only source of wisdom. This is fairly close to orthodox Church of Scotland doctrine of the time, and indeed it bears out an acute remark by Carlyle in the Reminiscence of Irving. After mentioning the social snobbery operating against the Secession church, Carlyle goes on, "For the rest, all Dissent in Scotland is merely a stricter adherence


6 I. Campbell, Portrait of Carlyle. Date, 1875.

7 The pamphlet, dated 1818, printed from the sermon, survives in New College Library. (Ac. /7.16)
to the National Kirk in all points; and the then Dissenterage is definable to moderns simply as a "Free Kirk making no noise". Obviously the statement is not bald truth, but exaggeration; yet Carlyle was aware that his early theological training was not too far removed from that of the orthodox Church of Scotland. He saw the Seceders as principally motivated by procedural and political motives to leave the orthodox Church, so as to concentrate on the preaching of the word. It "... was still," he continues, "in a strict matter, on the united voluntary principle, preaching to the people what of best and sacrest it could. Not that there was not something of rigour, of severity; a lean-minded controversial spirit among certain brethren ... but really, except on stated occasions ... there was little, almost no talk, especially no preaching at all about "patronage", or secular controversy; but all turned on the weightier and universal matters of the Law ...". The preaching was what gained Carlyle's admiration, and with it the character of ministers like Johnstone of Ecclefechan who devoted a lifetime to preaching the Gospel. "Very venerable are those old Seceder Clergy to me, now when I look back on them." He described them as "Evangelists in modern vesture, and Poor Scholars and Gentlemen of Christ".

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8 Reminiscences, 176-177. The "Free Kirk" referred to here is the Free Church of Scotland, formed at the Disruption of 1843. The passage dates from 1867.

9 Reminiscences, 177.
in sharp contrast to the clergy who preached by the time he wrote the Reminiscences. It is assumed Carlyle was exposed to their preaching at an early age, before departing for university in 1809. One piece of evidence suggests that he attended sermon long before that, at the age of nine or ten. An annotation to a book he read in old age refers to James Fisher, the blind poet of Dumfriesshire. "He lived in Annan, about 1804; & had died, or gone quite across to England (died, I rather think), before 1806. I remember well once sitting beside him in the Ecclefechan meeting-house through a sermon, and gazing with terror & fascination at his hideously protrusive blind eyes, or the one of them next me. Poor old soul, he was listening so seriously." The inference of the passage, from the date 1804 quoted with confidence at the beginning of the paragraph (rather than the tentative 1806), is that Carlyle sat through sermon at the age of nine or ten.

It is established, then, that the Church from which Carlyle drew his early inspiration was one quite severe, yet not over-rigid, or generally conservative in theological doctrine, laying emphasis on religious duty and emphasising man's submission to God, his fallen state, the necessity for faith and for adherence to the Church as the preaching instrument of good in society. The New Light Burgher

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1 Reminiscences, 177.

2 Carlyle's pencil note to J. Paterson, Contemporaries of Burns, 141.
seceders were not ultra, but relatively willing to tolerate eccentricity and to allow for individual characters going their own way. They were, in fact, remarkably close to Established Church doctrine. The General Assembly of 1836, for instance, promulgated an Act requiring preachers to touch on the following doctrines in their pulps: "truth, necessity, and excellency of supernatural revelation" which is consistent with the Burgher insistence on the use of the Bible, "the supreme Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost" which was ever-present in Carlyle's mind as a doctrine which he must have inherited from his Burgher background, and "our sinful and lost estate by nature, the necessity of supernatural grace" which tallies with Dr. Brown's Burgher sermon. These are the instructions of the Established Church; they tally closely with what has been established of Burgher practice.

Yet the Burghers found it necessary to maintain their existence as a separate entity. This was certainly due in part to their position in the opposition between "Evangelical" and "Moderate" in the Church in Scotland at this time. The "Moderate" clergy, a powerful force in literary Edinburgh, had established a position whereby they sacrificed some of the rigour of their theological belief in order to play a fuller part in the society of their time. A classical case is that of the staging of Home's Douglas in Edinburgh.

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3 Reminiscences, 177.
The moderate clergy were Home's friends, indeed helped to rehearse and stage the play, whereas their more extreme brethren combined to force Home to resign from the ministry for the enormity of his offence. A recent historian quotes John Mitchell's *Memories of Ayrshire*, which describe the position of the moderates in society. "Declining the active and energetic discharge of the duties of their spiritual and evangelical functions, [italics mine] too many of the pledged servants of the Lord betook themselves to literary study, or the culture of their glebes, perhaps farms, or to other secular concerns. They cultivated connection with the upper classes of society in their parishes, declining intercourse with those of low degree to whom the Gospel is preached ...". The strenuously democratic Secession church would have had no time for this attempt by the ministers to side with the "heritors", an infinitely delicate social position which Galt explores subtly in his *Annals of the Parish*. Specifically the moderate clergy are accused of the neglect of their evangelical function. The extreme criticism is put by Struthers who talks of the Moderates of the Church of England, supremely neglectful of their evangelical responsibility; the ministers

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4 John Mitchell, "Memories of Ayrshire", Miscellany of the Scottish History Society VI (1939), 302, quoted from T.C. Smout, *A History of the Scottish People 1360-1830* (London, 1969), 238. The same author defines the other side of the question (p. 508); for such clergy in Edinburgh "... the warm sociability of the eighteenth-century town must have formed the ideal environment for the cross-fertilisation of minds."
"preached little, and what they read on Sabbath from a velvet cushion was clothed in soft and sweet Arminian terms, while they themselves rolled in wealth and dwelt in palaces." Less guilty though still hostily treated, were the establishment figures of the Scottish Church. "Its leading men, who were called 'Moderates,' because of their moderation as to doctrine and discipline, were openly hostile to the doctrines of grace," writes Struthers. He proceeds to a detailed indictment.

The Gospel was spoken of simply as a kind of remedial dispensation to mitigate the severity of the moral law, to afford help for the sincere performance of good works, and to place motives of recompence before the mind for the cultivation of virtue. The pungency of sin, the doctrine of salvation by grace, and joy in the atonement, were thrown into the shade. Honesty and friendship, temperance and charity, as enforced by the sages of Greece and Rome, were the themes on which they were wont to expatiate in polished language and well-turned sentences. To be orthodox was to be without learning and taste! Justification, adoption, and sanctification were rude scholastic terms. Learned allusions, and flights of fancy clothed in a kind of half poetic dress, occupied the place of simple, grave, scriptural, and experimental preaching such as Scotland in her best days had been accustomed to hear ...

The indictment continues to condemn those of the younger clergy who lay aside the plainness of their forebears to become men of fashion, who preach with "the graceful ease of a gentleman", for the benefit of those few of the "heritors" who come to listen to his "essay of thirty

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6 *op.cit.*, 188. The succeeding quotations are taken from pp. 188-189.
minutes." "Religion", Struthers concludes, "was no longer a thing of deep earnestness." Although Carlyle would not have expressed himself in such extreme terms, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that his sympathies lie with the evangelical point of view rather than the moderate. Carlyle mentioned in a letter to Mill one of his reasons for admiring the Church in Scotland, and they tally remarkably with the Evangelical point of view put by Struthers. "The History of the Scotch Presbyterian Church", wrote Carlyle, "is noteworthy for this reason, that above all Protestant Churches it for some time was a real Church; had brought home in authentic symbols, to the bosoms of the lowest, that summary and concentration of whatever is highest in the Ideas of Man; the Idea unutterable in words; and opened thereby (in scientific strictness, it may be said) a free communication between Earth and the Heaven whence Earth has its being."\(^7\) The implication here is clear: the Evangelical church, as Carlyle knew it, took life seriously and preached to everyone alike the necessity of doing so. His praise of Johnstone, indeed his praise of his father, sums up this quality, which obviously earned his total respect. The Evangelical Church, by taking its responsibility to spread the Evangel seriously, provided a stable point in the world in which change and unbelief threatened the stability of

previous generations. One writer of the Secession Church has written of their early days that "These were days when the mordant acid of Deistic critical unbelief or 18th Century Illuminism was eating into the substance of religious thought and life in wide circles of the nation. The thinking of the unevangelical School fell under the blight. The Evangelicals, both in the State Church and in the Secession felt the impact of the newest fashionable modes in the real of faith and thought. But instead of welcoming or yielding to them they swept them aside as so many mere flimsy guesses or cobweb speculations and pursued the even tenor of their believing way in the conviction of the trustworthiness of the historic Christian tradition."\(^8\) This comes close to what has been shown (particularly by C.F. Harrold in *Carlyle and German Thought*) to be Carlyle's method of investigation and thought in dealing with the questions which corroded his belief and caused him anguish of soul. It was no simple sweeping aside on Carlyle's part, but a painful re-engagement with earlier belief, using German doctrine as a slowly acquired aid to faith. Yet the co-incidence of Evangelical practice and Carlyle's own history is remarkable. Remarkable, too, is the existence in the *Reminiscences* of a passage in which Carlyle appears himself to put his career in the tradition of the evangelical Burghers who first

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\(^8\) J. MacLeod, "Theology in the Early Days of the Secession Church", *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* VIII (1944), 1-15; quotation from p. 15.
educated him in Christian belief. It follows on Carlyle's respectful description of the preaching of the Burghers he had known, and above all of the ministers. "Men so like what one might call antique 'Evangelists in modern vesture, and Poor Scholars and Gentlemen of Christ,' I have nowhere met with in Monasteries or Churches, among Protestant or Papal Clergy, in any country of the world.—All this is altered utterly at present, I grieve to say; and gone to as good as nothing or worse. It began to alter just about that period [Carlyle's schooldays] ... and has gone on with increasing velocity ever since. Irving and I were probably among the last products it delivered before gliding off, and then rushing off, into self-consciousness, arrogancy, insincerity, jangle and vulgarity, which I fear are now very much the definition of it."  

Carlyle himself, then, accepts that he is a product of the Burgher environment in Ecclefechan, sent out into the world at the last moment of the old-fashioned but admirable Church. He claims for both Edward Irving and himself the privilege of being the fine flower of this tradition which has been described, and it is now necessary to examine his career in the light of this claim.

9 Reminiscences, 177.
CHAPTER TWO
In November of 1809, Carlyle set out on foot from Ecclefechan for Edinburgh. For three years he had been a boarder at Annan Academy, but always he had been able to return from school (which he loathed) to his home for weekend holidays. This exposure to Edinburgh was the first real break from the close life to which he had been accustomed in Ecclefechan, a life influenced by the powerful characters of his parents and by the church which obviously dominated their lives.

The University was in a state of flux, as was the city. The Edinburgh which Carlyle saw in 1809 was slowly completing its outer aspect of "Athens of the North", the terraces of elegant middle-class housing marching down the slopes of the New Town towards Leith and the Firth of Forth. The main streets, Princes Street, George Street, were splendid with palaces and public buildings. Meanwhile, across the new North Bridge or the newer Earthen Mound, the long ridge of the Old Town stood, blackened, historic, fearfully insanitary, and rapidly becoming a slum area as the middle-classes and the few of the aristocracy who remained in Edinburgh moved out to more sanitary and more spacious premises, either to the South in George Square, or in increasing numbers to the New Town to the North. ¹ By 1809

¹ The best description of this process is A.J. Youngson's The Making of Classical Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1966), but a fascinating account of the social decline of the old town is in Lockhart's Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk. (Edinburgh, London and Glasgow, 1819).
the change in the city was very largely made, although extensions were continuous and sometimes spectacular. When in 1828 the Carlyles spent a few days with Francis Jeffrey in his town house in Moray Place, in the finest part of the New Town, the house was brand new. Yet Carlyle accepted the division of Edinburgh into two parts as a fait accompli; it is mentioned in his letters only casually, as a fact to which one is accustomed by daily observation and experience.

With the creation of a more spacious and aristocratic suburb to the North, the Old Town had suffered the loss of a close-knit literary society which had in the late eighteenth century been dazzling in quality. Edinburgh had then been described as "a hotbed of genius". Smollett in Humphry Clinker could speak of his tourists meeting "many authors of the first distinction" in Edinburgh, "such as the two Humes [John Home and David Hume], Robertson, Smith, Wallace, Blair, Ferguson, Wilkie."² Alexander Carlyle used his porters or "cadies" to assemble impromptu parties, and "a fine time it was when we could collect David Hume, Adam Smith, Adam Ferguson, Lord Elibank and Drs. Blair and Jardine, on an hour's warning."³ As a result, one tourist noted, "It is impossible at Edinburgh to be concealed or unknown."⁴

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⁴ E. Topham, Letters from Edinburgh Written in the Years 1774 and 1775 (London, 1776), 86.
The closeness thus engendered was used by the people of Edinburgh for the formation of clubs and societies which did much to contribute to the "golden age" of Edinburgh. The Speculative Society was "a throng of all that was distinguished in the country ... [who], what is more, frequented its meetings", criticising the papers on literary and philosophical subjects minutely. The Select Society was "more than a debating club; it aimed besides at doing something practical for the promotion of the arts, sciences, manufactures, and agriculture, in the land of its birth." Social meetings continued throughout the business day. Near the Cross in the High Street "... all the noblemen and gentlemen meet between twelve and two, when the musical bells are playing. It is a hundred to one but any gentleman in town may be seen there at noon." Henry Cockburn summed up the appeal of Edinburgh at the time of Carlyle's student days. "The society of Edinburgh was not that of a provincial town, and cannot be judged of by any


6 J. Rae, Life of Adam Smith, (London, 1895), 108.

7 op. cit., 112.

8 Noted in Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton's manuscript diary, in New College Library, Edinburgh.

such standard. It was metropolitan ... It is the seat of the supreme courts of justice, and of the annual convocation of the Church ... At the period I am referring to [1804], this combination of quiet with aristocracy, made it the resort, to a far greater extent than it is now, of the families of the gentry, who used to leave their country residences and enjoy the gaiety and the fashion which their presence tended to promote ... All our nobility had not then fled ... the old town was not quite deserted."¹

Not quite, perhaps, but rapidly it became so. By 1809 the old town, and the University area which adjoined it, were depressed areas, poor, shabby, busy by day (with the businessmen and lawyers whose affairs still brought them to the Old Town) but deserted and dangerous by night. In 1811 Charles Cowan, a student like Carlyle, encountered a disreputable crowd of hooligans on the street in the evening, "running after the people on the pavement, and striking them with their sticks and making a great noise."² In 1813 the streets in that area were "infested with hordes of mendicants ... at every hour of the day and in the most open, undisguised and obtrusive manner."³ Certainly Carlyle, who walked much alone, narrowly escaped a beating from footpads,

¹H. Cockburn, Life of Francis Jeffrey (Edinburgh, 1852), I, 156-157.
²Charles Cowan, Reminiscences ([n.p.], 1878), 23.
and saw two such executed publicly just off the High Street.
"Before that I had seen a man from Liddesdale, Armstrong by name, hanged for horse-stealing. He was a strong man, grimly silent. His body spun and twitched horribly. I saw it before my eyes in the dark and in daylight for weeks. At last I drew the horrible figure on paper as exactly as I could, and thenceforth it ceased to haunt me." Carlyle's Edinburgh was no gracious aristocratic city, then, but a University quartier in a decaying part of town, dangerous, socially depressed, far removed from the gracious terraces of the New Town of Edinburgh's golden age.

Carlyle's first contact with the city, his first prolonged absence from home, took place in the Old Town quarter, close by the University. He spent a total of five winters in poor lodgings, in a part of town which did not at this time contain the intellectual luminaries which distinguished Edinburgh's life. It contained the University, the High School, and the Law Courts, but little else. Carlyle, then, came to Edinburgh as a poor and undistinguished student, and found himself in a poor and undistinguished part

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4 W. Allingham, A Diary, 219-220. This may well have been John Armstrong, hanged in 1809 or 1810. See "Reminiscences of a Town Clerk" in The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club XIV (Edinburgh, 1925), 160.

5 Much of the Edinburgh Carlyle knew has been demolished, particularly the depressed areas he knew at this time. One photograph (so far as I know) survives of his early lodgings in Simon Square, and in appearance they are squalid and unprepossessing. See Homes and Haunts, opp. p. 46.
of town. In this, he was absolutely typical. Although Ecclefechan was in the South-West, it was to Edinburgh that Carlyle's bright contemporaries came. Like him, they walked to the city (a three days' journey) and lived at minimum expense for the academic year, which lasted from early November to April. The remainder of the year was spent in earning money in preparation for the next session at University.

The University was open to all but the most destitute of Carlyle's contemporaries. In fees it claimed very little, usually two (sometimes three) guineas per year per class, a maximum of three fees per session. In addition each student had to find a matriculation fee of five shillings, and a library deposit of a guinea per annum. Lodgings (with supplementary food supplies sent from home by "carriers", local transporters using horse-carts who travelled in three days from Annandale to Edinburgh) cost a modest 5/- per week, and so even allowing for books and clothes, it was quite feasible (though hardly comfortable) to exist for the short University session in Edinburgh for twenty pounds. Thomas Guthrie, son of the leading merchant (and provost) of Brechin, lived in lodgings in Edinburgh at this time for only 5/- - 6/- per week — he calculated his expenses, other than fees, at only £10 per session. A friend of his lived for three months from one chest of oatmeal; three months

6A. Grant, The Story of the University of Edinburgh during its First Three Hundred Years (London, 1884), II, 12 ff.
of porridge took their toll, however, and he lost his reason. Yet another lived on 2/6d per week. Carlyle was by no means exceptional in studying on a minimal budget which, while only £20 a year, was at least 20% of the entire family income, quite possibly more. Carlyle lost no time in supplementing his income from private teaching as soon as he could.

At the time of his first contact with life outside Ecclefechan, then, Carlyle found himself in a decaying part of a city still famous for its intellectual and literary life, yet cut off almost completely from this life by his poverty and the grinding work of the short University session. The uncomfortable surroundings of his existence, and possibly an inferiority complex from the lowness of his social position, could account for the sarcasm and irony noted in Carlyle at this time by Thomas Murray, a protective mannerism to hide unhappiness while studying there.

The University itself was in an unpleasant state of transition between the old and highly inconvenient buildings which had sufficed for the "tounis college" of a hundred and more years before, and the new and splendid quadrangle which

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7 The Autobiography of Thomas Guthrie, D.D., and Memoir, by his Sons (London, 1876), I, 44-45. Lockhart in Peter's Letters (I, 190, 193) estimated that few in Edinburgh studied with more than £30-£40 per annum for expenses, many with little over half that sum. One Aberdeen student left a detailed expense-sheet for his year's study in 1777, and calculated he lived (more lavishly than Carlyle) on just over £17. (ed. J.G. Fyfe, Scottish Diaries and Memoirs, 1746-1843 [Stirling, 1942], 292-293).
forms to-days's "Old College". The former college had been described as "a mean building",... extremely unsuitable, both to the rank which this University has for several years held, and to the present advancing and improved state of the country." The new college was begun in 1789, but funds ran short in 1793 and work did not recommence till the end of the war (and also of Carlyle's student career) in 1815. Parts of the old fabric remained in use (most notoriously, the overcrowded library), while in the half-finished new parts classes were already taking place, in conditions of acute overcrowding. Thirty-four professors taught in a total of only eleven rooms, five old and six new. Contractors' materials lay everywhere, making still more dull a building which Carlyle generally saw only in the winter months. It is necessary to appreciate the small extent to which Carlyle must have felt emotionally drawn to his University years. It was no life of dreaming spires for him, but a cold and cheerless existence in a seemingly chaotic institution.

8 T. Pennant, A Tour in Scotland MDCCLXIX (London, 1790), 69.

9 [W. Robertson], Memorial Relating to the University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1768), 6.

1 A. Grant, Story of the University, II, 197-203. Lizars made sketches (preserved in Edinburgh University Library) of the Quadrangle in this state, and its disorder was manifest.

2 One of these winters (1813-1814) was noted as "... the severest I have ever known." (R.P. Gillies, Memoirs of a Literary Veteran [London, 1851], II, 136).
In the details of the education he received there, the same generalisation is surprisingly applicable. David Masson (in *Edinburgh Sketches and Memories*) has provided a pioneer account of Carlyle's classes and reading at this time; what is necessary is to put the experiences of these years in the context of Carlyle's early life, and to conjecture some possible effects of Carlyle's University career. Carlyle, it must again be emphasised, was a normal and undistinguished figure at the outset of his education here. As his university career proceeded, so it deviated slightly from the normal; the process may be regarded to some extent as a result of his early years in Ecclefechan.

In the first session Carlyle studied the usual curriculum of the classical languages. His professors were Dunbar (Greek) and Christison (Latin). Christison, who held the chair from 1806 to 1820, was "a very great reader of all kinds of books, and ... a very diligent and delighted student of the higher mathematics." He was also the first academic figure with whom Carlyle came into contact. The fact does not seem to have been noticed hitherto; yet the general effect (as will be shown) of Carlyle's years at University was to convert him into just such a person. Whether this was partly in emulation must be purely speculation, but this seems not unreasonable. He may well have affected Carlyle's thought, or impressed him. The supposition

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is supported by the fact that Christison twice stood referee to Carlyle in his early post-university years, once offering him a lucrative position unsolicited. That the two had made some sort of contact is therefore not an unreasonable theory. If so, Christison's wide reading and mathematical interests (in the "higher" mathematics) may be held an important and unrecognised influence on Carlyle's early years. As a teacher of Latin, he was not distinguished. Students drew comfort from his eleven o'clock classes, "when the then dreary and unfinished college was cheered by wintry sunshine", but Carlyle complained of being confused with another student of the same name, "so 'dark' was the good Professor's 'class-room', physically and otherwise." This may be a hard judgment. A more specific description of Christison's teaching survives, supporting the theory that there may have been an influence on Carlyle's early thought.

Mr C. did not either in the first or second class deliver any formal set of lectures on general criticism, or on Roman antiquities. This had been the practice of his predecessors. But his plan embraced a much wider range. Whatever occurred in the course of reading in the class, whether it regarded the language or the sentiment, he illustrated in a very

4 This was in Kirkcaldy; the council minute is transcribed in N.L.S., 2993.1-10, and Christison's letter offering Carlyle the position is NLS 1764.78. All unpublished.


6 Reminiscences, 185.
miscellaneous way, calling in to his aid the writings of the most celebrated critics, poets and philosophers, ancient and modern. He also made frequent allusions to the sciences and even to the arts, all of which he occasionally laid under contribution, and ingeniously pointed out to the students what reference they bore to the passage to which their attention might happen to be directed.

In other words, Carlyle moved from formal instruction in the rudiments of Latin (which he fortunately had in good measure from Johnstone of Ecclefechan, and Dalgleish of Annan) which he did not require to study too closely, to the wide-ranging and miscellaneous reading which was to be typical of the remainder of his life. That he did so is well-known, but the reason appears to be in the twin circumstances of his coming to university well prepared for Latin studies (and therefore with free time to read), and in having a teacher who inspired a wide-ranging reading by his language lectures. Meeting Christison at the outset of his education must have been a landmark in Carlyle's thought.

The same cannot be said of his encounter with Professor Dunbar, who taught him Greek along with some 200 other students in an enormous and ill-regulated class. The professor's job was unrewarding, as Scottish students

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7 A. Bower, The History of the University of Edinburgh (Edinburgh, 1830), III, 300. Thomas Murray splendidly satirises this habit in writing to TC, 4 April 1815 NLS: 665.6 unpub. "'Stand up Sir,' says the Prof. 'you are idling your time, you will bring your Fathers gray hairs with sorrow to the grave — by the bye, Sir that is a happy expression both scriptural and poetical — turn it into Latin!'"
(often aged only 13 or 14) came to University little prepared in Greek, and so had to study the very rudiments of the language. The large class offered Carlyle little inspiration, and his Greek in later life was not outstanding.\(^8\) Charles Cowan thought his time there wasted, "there being no efficient surveillance on the part of the Professor, whose prelections were grave, dry, and without interest."\(^9\) Dunbar, another student wrote, "was never a popular teacher. His voice was harsh, his manner not captivating, his countenance stern, seldom softening into a smile."\(^1\) Gillies was even more indignant. "No, nor from the good professor himself, as he sat there with pale composed visage betwixt his two dingy tallow candles, could any such elucidations of Greek literature be derivable as an hour's study on right principles, at the home-fireside might not have supplied far better!" Discipline was bad, and "Snores, protracted yawns, and other indecorous noises, with practical jokes of diverse kinds, wore through the long hour."\(^2\) This gave Carlyle little encouragement. Far more would be found in

\(^8\)When tutoring Charles Buller, he was very little ahead of his pupil. Emerson, too, noted that he did not read Plato. To this we can add Carlyle's own statement in his notes to Althaust: "In the Classical field I am truly as nothing."


\(^1\)The Life of Sir Robert Christison, Bart., edited by his Sons (Edinburgh and London, 1885), I, 38.

Christison's class, and in the private teaching he had begun. His first year at University, in summary, gave him little new scholastic ambition, confirmed him in his study of Latin, helped his Greek, but enormously increased his habits of miscellaneous reading, encouraged by the example of the professor whom he doubtless found more admirable of the two.

In his second year Carlyle studied under three professors, one of whom inspired him as Christison had done, while the other two had little effect on him. One of his classes was the second Greek class, taught by Dunbar. Competent in Latin, Carlyle had not entered its second class; the inference is that he was less competent in Greek because Annan had taught him less. His other classes were the first mathematical one, and Professor Ritchie's first logic class. Ritchie represented something completely new to Carlyle. In a university education which aimed at philosophy as its summum bonum, the study of logic was a necessary step. The acquisition of it could have done Carlyle immense good in helping him find his way through German writings a decade later; it could have helped him to a chair perhaps when he thought of earning his living by university teaching. Yet the indications are that Carlyle remained untouched by the logic classes he attended at Edinburgh; for years afterwards he used "logic-chopping"

3Reported by D. Davidson, Memories of a Long Life (Edinburgh, 1890), 299.
as a term of reproach, signifying a man whose sole activity is to quibble without any fruitful result. Two interesting points are connected with this element in Carlyle's early life, one relating to the subject, one to the professor. Ritchie himself was a substantial city minister, solid, worldly successful. He had joined the considerable group of clergy from Edinburgh who had been appointed to chairs in the university, partly through interest, partly through the growing pressure of the ministers as a power-bloc. His qualities as professor were not outstanding. Christison found him "a tall, big-boned, strong man, with a powerful rough voice, and great energy, though little polish in delivery, more illustrious on the curling-pond than in the professorial chair." Others agreed. This personal lack of appearance, of appeal, helped repel Carlyle from the subject. Ritchie, he afterwards recalled, "professed logic, was great at curling, no ingenious contriver of neat little partitions of the divine spirit in man." The disposition of the various elements of the sentence shows how little respect Carlyle had for Ritchie. That he "professed logic" is passed over in favour of his prowess at curling. And the remainder of the sentence gives a clue to the other element of repulsion, namely the way in which the subject

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4Life of Christison, I, 45.
6Recorded by A.C. Fraser, Biographia Philosophica (Edinburgh and London, 1904), 246.
was taught by Ritchie. The professor suffered, as did the Greek one, from a very young class who had to learn the basic elements of an unfamiliar subject. Solid and uninspiring, Ritchie taught the theory of evidence, and described the faculties by which we acquire knowledge. Only then would he proceed to reasoning and method, by which time the session would be almost over. As one historian has observed, this "if well taught, would be very useful as instruction for youths ... though it was not high philosophy." He goes on to infer that it was not well taught. True though this is, Ritchie had to struggle with large and untrained classes. It was inevitable that he should deal with the more elementary parts of his subject, and Carlyle's memory clearly is of a course of "neat little partitions of the divine spirit in man" -- of a mechanical system which failed to seize his imagination. One more hostile critic remembered the course as being "... a diluted form [of] the psychology of Thomas Reid and the logic of Watts and Duncan." Carlyle's memory (quoted from the same source) is a less hostile one; we can assume that his reaction to Ritchie's logic classes was one of lack of interest, as his reaction to the successful but uninspiring minister was one of lack of enthusiasm.

There is a fine irony in the comparison of Ritchie and Carlyle's other professor during his second session,

7 A. Grant, Story of the University, II, 332.

8 A. Fraser, Biographia Philosophica, 46.
Professor Leslie. Ritchie was a specimen of the city ministers who formed a powerful group in Edinburgh, and one of their less successful exercises of power had been an attempt to block John Leslie's promotion to the chair of mathematics in 1805, for alleged infidelity, manifested in a passing complimentary reference to Hume's theory of causation. Ritchie stood in Carlyle's mind for the forces of the established church, Leslie for something quite different, and it was Leslie who fired Carlyle with enthusiasm even more than Christison may have done. In this second session Carlyle attended mathematics as a first-year course, and he was to attend again for the following two sessions, beyond the necessary length of time, partly from excitement and enjoyment of the work, partly for a personal attachment to the professor who held Carlyle in high esteem, gave him a complimentary testimonial when he left University, offered him several good positions of employment, and made a generous reference to Carlyle in thanking him for help in a footnote to the third edition of his Elements of Geometry. Just as Carlyle had been repelled from logic by the personality of the professor, and by the subject itself, so he was attracted to mathematics for the same reasons. He worked hard for Leslie, and his lecture-notes are written up and worked over with care. In other classes

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9 The Tracts Historical and Philosophical relating to the dispute were published in Edinburgh, 2 volumes, 1806.

1 They are preserved in Chelsea.
he was merely a unit in the impersonal whole; Leslie's classes were only 70, 46 and 41 for the three years of Carlyle's attendance, so he had the personal help and attention of the professor, for the only time in his University career. By its close Leslie could write that his pupil had "applied himself with the greatest diligence and success, & that he appears to possess talents peculiarly fitted for mathematical investigation."² He certainly flung himself into his studies. "Perhaps it was mainly the accident that poor Leslie, alone of my Professors, had some genius in his business, and awoke a certain enthusiasm in me. For several years, from 1813 onwards, ... "Geometry" shone before me as undoubtedly the noblest of all sciences" — and remained so for many years till "far more pregnant enquiries were rising in me, and gradually engrossing me, heart as well as head."³ His work had its effect. In the first class he won the class prize,⁴ and a student who shared his lodgings claimed he found it effortless, though Carlyle later denied this.⁵

Leslie's personality was as eccentric and exciting as Ritchie's was orthodox and dull. Obese, absent-minded, he

²Class card, preserved Edinburgh University Library.
³Althaus, N.L.S.
⁴MS:NLS 1764:2, letter to TC (unpublished) 4 July 1812, probably from Morley, his mathematics teacher at Annan. Some of Leslie's prize exercises (not Carlyle's) are in Edinburgh University Library, Dc.1.101-104.
had strange habits, which included unsuccessful attempts to dye his hair. Yet he taught with enthusiasm and communicated excitement to his classes. To the weaker ones, this was perhaps a bad thing. Said one writer, "He wanted the qualities essential in a teacher who shows established facts by experiment." Another wrote that "Leslie was an unsafe teacher for a mere beginner; he presumed too much on the aptitude of the youthful and untrained mind for mathematical reasoning. In arriving at results, his ingenuity had shorthand ways of working." "He always gave his hearers credit for powers which they did not possess." Yet obviously his methods inspired Carlyle, who was clever mathematically and (as we know) was quick himself, and scornful of others' slowness. Able to keep up with his teacher, he worked well with him. Also he was attracted to the subject, at least as Leslie taught it. Leslie followed the then classic pattern of mathematical teaching in the Scottish universities, treating mathematics as part of the philosophical education of contemporary theory. Thus the science of geometry or algebra was no mere affair of symbol and quantity, but could be used in speculation concerning

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6C. Cowan, Reminiscences, 27.

7Life of Christison, I, 39.

8R. Gillies, Memoirs of a Literary Veteran, I, 211.

"Tom", his father said to him around 1805, "I do not grudge thee thy schooling, now when thy uncle Frank owns thee a better Arithmetician than himself." (Reminiscences, 29).
the proof of existence of matter, or the behaviour of intangibles. This subject has been discussed by Dr. G.E. Davie who shows that the demise of this approach to mathematics (in favour of a more "rational" method of teaching the science indebted to Cambridge for its inspiration and practice) marked the decisive end of the Scottish university educational system. It was this sort of work, surely, that was in Carlyle's mind when he worded the statement in which he bequeathed Craigenputtoch to his University many years later to endow the John Welsh Bursaries, stipulating that "... 5 of the Bursaries shall be conferred for the best proficiency in mathematics, -- especially in pure Geometry, -- such being perennially the one symptom not only of steady application but of a clear, methodic intellect, and offering in all epochs good promise for all manner of arts & pursuits." To put this in the tradition of which Carlyle was a member, it can be compared with a remark by Sir William Hamilton, who was much admired by Carlyle. "Geometry", Hamilton wrote, "has always been reckoned as the transition study from the concrete to the abstract, from the science of matter to the science of the mind." Geometry occupied Carlyle's imagination, and also

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1 Dr. Davie's *The Democratic Intellect* (Edinburgh, 1961) is an invaluable source of guidance on Scottish University education at this time.

2 Quoted from the draft, preserved in Edinburgh University Library. MS:DC2.76/18.

3 Quoted from G. Davie, *Democratic Intellect*, 128.
his rational energies, during his senior years at university and for several years after he left it to begin teaching. His letters to his friends are studded with geometrical proofs and demonstrations, and he passed tedious coach journeys mentally performing the trisection of an angle by mathematical means. In his immediate post-university years he pursued the Scottish mathematical study still further, reading Newton's works till long past midnight, striving to continue the Scottish controversy concerning the validity of the Newtonian fluxions, against Berkeley's attacks. Not surprisingly, he soon admitted to being overwhelmed by "differential calculi, secondary quadratics, and systems of pneumatics, ontology theology and cosmogony." Perhaps the most single useful guide to what really happened in Carlyle's mind at this crucial point of his education is a prolonged passage in Wotton Reinfred, which is of course heavily autobiographical at this point.

Of his progress in the learned languages he himself made little account; nor in metaphysics did he find any light, but, rather, doubt or darkness; if he talked of the matter it was in words of art, and his own honest nature whispered to him the while that they were only words. Mathematics and the kindred sciences, at once occupying and satisfying his logical faculty, took much deeper hold of him; nay, by degrees, as he felt his own independent progress, almost alienated him for a long season from all other

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4 Cf. G. Davie, Democratic Intellect, 120-123.

5 TC—Thomas Murray, 28 November 1815, MS: NLS 8992, unpublished. Carlyle's listed reading includes Berkeley, Newton, and (important with regard to this very disputed point) Simpson's Fluxions.
studies ... He gloried to track the footsteps of the mighty Newton, and in the thought that he could say to himself: Thou, even thou, art privileged to look from his high eminence, and to behold with thy own eyes the order of that stupendous fabric ... 

This anticipates to some extent what was to follow in Carlyle's intellectual development, yet it illustrates at the same time the crucial conflict which arose in his second university session, a conflict of personality and from that of subject. Repelled from formal logic by Ritchie, Carlyle felt little enthusiasm for the subject because of the teacher. Attracted by Leslie's personality, Carlyle found himself drawn to the subject until he felt his progress — and thenceforward pursued it with enthusiasm drawn from a feeling that he had made himself master of it. Here a pattern establishes itself. Given a library in Annan, Carlyle established a habit of private reading in works of literature which he finds helpful, and continued with great energy (his student contemporary Thomas Murray was amazed by Carlyle's omnivorous and speedy reading). Feeling himself skilled in mathematics, he devoted himself to the pursuit of the subject, just as he was to do later with German language and literature. The pattern is one of self-direction and self-tuition. Once interested, Carlyle had an enormous capacity for self-instruction and self-improvement. Ritchie failed to kindle the vital spark where Leslie succeeded, and the result is central to Carlyle's development. For this second session at university saw the beginning of

\[\textit{Quoted from Last Words of Thomas Carlyle (London, 1892), 22.}\]
Carlyle's movement away from formal thought and logic towards self-education in ways which could perhaps have benefited from a logical training. Professor Wellek in *Immanuel Kant in England*, and Professor Harrold in *Carlyle and German Literature*, demonstrate the illogicality of some of Carlyle's apprehension of German thought, and the extent to which his self-directed energies led him astray from correct interpretation. Examples are his misapplication of the "Worship of Sorrow" from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* and of Novalis' conception of "Selbsttödtung". The beginning of the habit of mind which made this possible can be traced in the experience of this, Carlyle's second session at Edinburgh University.

If in the second session a split was established between the "standard" enquiry expected of Carlyle as student (represented by the logic class) and the more advanced speculation represented by the work he did for Leslie, it was a split which widened in the third session. Greek continued for a third year, under Professor Dunbar, emphasising again the degree to which Carlyle had begun his education with little training in the language, requiring him to study it for three years. A second year of study under Leslie continued his work in mathematics. The third, and crucial subject, was Moral Philosophy, under Professor Thomas Brown. Brown had just (in 1810) inherited the chair from Dugald Stewart, whom he had assisted previously while Stewart's health declined. Now, as full professor, he evolved a lecturing style which made him famous (his lectures
were reprinted repeatedly, and had considerable effect in the United States\(^7\) and which brought to his lecturing room "not a crowd of youthful students led into transports of admiration by the ignorant enthusiasm of the moment. Distinguished members of the bench, of the bar, and of the pulpit were daily present to witness the powers of the rising philosopher. Some of the most eminent professors were to be seen mixing with the students, and Mr. Playfair in particular was present at every lecture. The originality, the depth, and eloquence of the lectures had a marked effect upon the young men attending the University in leading them to meet physical speculations."\(^8\) This is not one man's opinion only; for confirmation one can turn again to Thomas Murray, Carlyle's student contemporary, who in addition to his Autobiographical Notes produced a Literary History of Galloway which, though little read to-day, made him famous in the early nineteenth century. Murray, attending the lectures almost simultaneously with Carlyle, found them "eminently distinguished for polish, ingenuity, and eloquence. His mode of reading, too, chaste and graceful to a degree unknown till his time in the university, added force to the delight with which his audience listened

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\(^7\) They had their influence after publication (in an abridged form) by Professor Levi Hedge of Harvard. See T. Martin, The Instructed Vision (Bloomington, 1961), 15.

\(^8\) A. Trotter, East Galloway Sketches (Castle-Douglas, 1901), 430.
to his disquisitions." Many others liked him — Lockhart, for instance, and Thomas Guthrie.

Not so Carlyle, who loathed him at once, and could not bring himself to study his subject any more than he seems to have tackled Ritchie's Logic. Brown's style was not perfect: Cockburn had spoken of what seemed to be "affectation" in his manner, although defending it as "the affectation of nice discrimination, fine feeling, and pensive reflection." Christison could never be "reconciled to his affected feminine delivery." Brown had been carefully brought up in London to the purest standards of taste (his parents had removed him from one school when two Scottish scholars enrolled, lest they communicate the taint of a Scottish accent to the youthful Brown) and embellished his lectures with much poetry, including his favourite Akenside. Carlyle's denunciation of Brown was repeated. To Masson he recalled often Brown as "a finical man they called Brown, or sometimes Missy Brown, that used to spout

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2H. Cockburn, Memorials, 368.

3A. Christison, Life, I, 45. For nice discrimination, a student's notes record the following: "A sword plunged into the body excites a sensation wholly unconnected with the idea of the sword itself." (9 January 1811, by [?] Lord John Russell, preserved in Edinburgh University Library).
poetry. To Campbell Fraser he spoke of "a dainty gentleman, we called him Missey Brown, who spoke about cause and effect, and neatly divided the spiritual life of man into faculties and states, and was said to be an imposing figure at tea-parties." In his notes to Althaus' article on his career, he wrote that "'Dugald Stewart' had gone the year before I entered [the Moral Philosophy class]; my Professorial Lecturer was Thomas Brown; an eloquent acute little gentleman; full of enthusiasm about 'simple suggestion' and 'relative' ditto — to me unprofitable utterly & bewildering & dispiriting 'as the autumn winds, among the withered leaves.' The criticism repeated by Campbell Fraser tallies very well with the criticism Carlyle made of Ritchie, namely that both were the inventors of mechanical systems which failed to take account of what went on inside the mind. And in each case this was coupled with a personal dislike for the professor, although he admitted "more true manhood" to Ritchie than to the effeminate Brown. Masson recalls Carlyle's scorn and mimicry when talking of Brown.

The result, of course, was to alienate Carlyle almost completely from the Scottish philosophy then being taught in

5 A. Fraser, Biographia Philosophica, 246.
6 Althaus, N.L.S.
7 A. Fraser, op.cit., 246.
Edinburgh, and to deprive him of the benefit of instruction from one of its most distinguished professors. The effect of Brown on Carlyle could have been to enlarge the limits of his sympathies at this early period of his life, perhaps helping to avoid the later unpleasantness when Carlyle suffered a crisis of conscience, largely brought about by an artificially delimited view of life. In the second lecture of his year's course, Brown proposed a world-view from which Carlyle could have drawn much good. "In the physics of the material universe there is, it must be owned, much that is truly worthy of our philosophic admiration, and of the sublimest exertions of philosophic genius." This was something Carlyle was finding out rapidly at this time, as he embarked on a period of his life dominated by mathematics and physics. "But even that material world", Brown continues, "will appear more admirable, to him who contemplates it, as it were from the height of his own mind, and who measures its infinity with the range of his own limited but aspiring faculties. He is unquestionably the philosopher most worthy of the name, who unites to the most accurate knowledge of mind, the most accurate knowledge of all the physical objects amid which he is placed; who makes each science, to each, reciprocally a source of additional illumination ..." It was precisely this which Carlyle was unwilling to do, on the terms of Ritchie and Brown, who

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represented to him the current Scottish philosophy. The method of enquiry entailed first accepting from Ritchie the methodology; then under Brown applying this to the study of the senses, of impressions from the senses, then the wider implications of these impressions. Brown, for instance, after almost 100 lectures, could claim that "We have already considered man in various aspects; as a sensitive being, capable of being affected by the things around him, and deriving from them not pleasure, and pain, and sustenance merely, but the elements of his knowledge; as an intellectual being, capable of discovering the relations of things, comparing, generalizing, forming systems of truth, and almost creating worlds of fiction that arise with the semblance of truth at the mere will of his fancy; and, lastly, as a moral agent, connected with other moral agents, by ties that are innumerable as the living objects to whom they relate." All this is mere recapitulation of carefully planned lectures justifying his argument with copious example and illustration from art and literature, and a preparation for the final part of his programme, which is to establish Man's place in relation to God. Clearly Carlyle rejected this method of enquiry outright; his memory was of Brown who "neatly divided the spiritual life

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9T. Brown, Lectures, 616. There is an interesting hint here of where Carlyle may have found his early distrust of fiction as "untruth".
of man into faculties and states", and the reason for the mode of enquiry seems to be forgotten entirely. A historian of the Scottish philosophy has perhaps indicated one cause for Carlyle's dissatisfaction. This lay in Brown's total reliance on his undoubted ability as lecturer, to the exclusion of written and spoken examination. In large classes this meant that only the gifted and systematic would derive full benefit (as Carlyle was doing in Leslie's class). The others would tend to be passed by. "As he left the impression on his students, that there was little wisdom in the past, and that his own system was perfect, he did not create a spirit of philosophic reading such as Hamilton evoked in select minds in a later age." What he did leave was the memory of fine lectures, exquisite literary taste, sensitive analysis — all totally lost on Carlyle. He gave Carlyle nothing new. Indeed his psychology has been described as "... a combination of the Scottish philosophy of Reid and Stewart, and of the analyses by Condillac, Destutt de Tracy, and the higher philosophers of the sensational school of France, together with views of the association of ideas derived from a prevailing British school." These were men Carlyle was to be reading himself shortly, and so what he learned from Brown he would recognise when

1Cf. n. 5 supra.
2A. McCosh, Scottish Philosophy, 323.
3op.cit., 325.
he saw it in the original. Like Ritchie, Brown was a competent teacher of a current school of thought and methodology, and like Ritchie he repelled Carlyle by his personality, and by his presentation of his subject. The third session at University, then, was to confirm the trend which had begun in the second, a trend away from the established pattern of education towards philosophy as the climax of the degree course, and towards the eventual Carlylean pattern of self-directed studies in mathematics and in the philosophical questions raised by the Scottish mathematical teaching.

The fourth session, the last of the normal M.A. curriculum, included a third, extra-curricular, year of mathematics under Leslie (already mentioned) and natural philosophy under the ageing Professor Playfair, one of the most illustrious figures remaining from the "golden age" of the late eighteenth century. In 1805 Playfair had vacated the chair of mathematics for his present one, in which new role he delivered one lecture each day (which he read, every word)\(^4\) and devoted the rest of his time to research and to the scientific literature of the world. The respect in which Playfair was held was enormous, Lockhart writing, respectfully, in a generally satiric book, of the "... fine old Archimedes with his reposed demeanour",\(^5\) Christison

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\(^4\) A. Christison, *Life*, I, 42.

describing him as "a charming teacher, — so simple, unaffected, and sincere in manner, so chaste in style, so clear in demonstration." Here, perhaps, was the man to continue Leslie's influence on Carlyle, to awaken in him an interest in natural philosophy to match Carlyle's interest in mathematics. Carlyle seemed ideally suited, for his undoubted ability in mathematics had circumvented one of the main criticisms levelled against university study of natural philosophy in Scotland at the time, namely that the mathematical teaching methods employed left the students insufficiently prepared in the normal course of events fully to benefit from their studies. Carlyle, exceptionally gifted, would be more than usually prepared to enjoy his studies in natural philosophy.

The session, however, was a failure. Once again the personality of the teacher repelled Carlyle from a proper enjoyment of his studies, and weakened his desire to work at natural philosophy. "For years," he told Moncure Conway with some exaggeration, "I attended his [Playfair's] lectures, in all weathers and all hours. Many and many a time, when the class was called together, it was found to consist of one individual — to wit, of him now speaking; and still oftener, when others were present, the only person who had at all looked into the lesson assigned was the same

6A. Christison, Life, I, 42.

7G. Davie, Democratic Intellect, 114.
humble individual."\(^8\) Clearly Carlyle tried to work hard at the subject, but he did not have the reward which had come in mathematics, namely the attention and respect of the professor. Playfair did not ignore Carlyle — indeed he asked him to perform some translation for him\(^9\) — but the only reward for a year's diligent study was a short insertion into the class-card Carlyle received at the end, to the effect that "... he has been regular & diligent and I have reason to know he has made proficiency in the study of Natural Philosophy."\(^1\) Carlyle, then, worked hard at the subject, and his repulsion did not come till he had done the work. In Moral Philosophy the previous year his hostile reaction to Brown had prevented him from paying much attention as the session progressed, and so his knowledge of the subject remained sketchy. In Natural Philosophy the work was done, and his dislike of Playfair came out only later, in the remarks quoted from Conway, and in the cancelled passage in Wotton Reinred which is reproduced later. Here Playfair is satirised as Sir Gideon Dunn, worldly,

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\(^8\) M. Conway, *Autobiography*, II, 90. It is difficult to take Carlyle's claim seriously. Lecture notes of the same course, taken the previous session, survive in Edinburgh University Library, and they are clear, continuously taken, beautifully illustrated, as if it were an interesting and well-explained course. H. Cockburn (*Memorials*, 359), records that Playfair's dying wish was to be read to not from the Scott novel he was offered, but from Newton's *Principia*, a book Carlyle deeply admired and read avidly. Perhaps Playfair caused this admiration.

\(^9\) M. Conway, *loc.cit*.

\(^1\) Class card preserved in Edinburgh University Library.
courteous, obviously anathema to the young Wotton Reinfred (Carlyle himself), who is serious, unpolished, unwilling to join in the jesting and light treatment meted out by Playfair. Obviously the passage is the result of a considerable dislike engendered at this period of Carlyle's university education. However, the study of natural philosophy, once complete, formed a valuable part of Carlyle's knowledge as it enabled him to earn a living by translation and reviewing before he established himself as a literary figure in his own right (by translation and criticism of German literature), and it remained with him a dilettante interest. In 1834, he seriously contemplated asking Jeffrey for an astronomy post, holding himself well qualified for the position. Even in old age he impressed his hearers by his knowledge of physics and natural

2These early scientific articles are listed by G.B. Tennyson in A Chronology of Composition for Carlyle's Work, in his SARTOR called RESARTUS (Princeton, 1965), 332-333. To the early articles cited in Professor Tennyson's list should be added the works in the Dumfries and Galloway Courier which concern mathematical and physical questions. A series of these can be found in the issues for February-March 1814, commencing with Carlyle's answer to a problem which was posed 15 February, and answered on 28 February. The Carlylean solution drew some unfavourable correspondence, and he defended himself ably by an early specimen of Carlylean witty writing which, though immature, shows his power of expression and amply justifies his "Dean" and "Jonathan" nicknames from his friends. A small example reads, "Respecting an extremely acute 'remark' which dropped from the pen of the right ingenious, and (I may add) right Rule-of-Thumb-ic 'mathematical' solver, to the question in your last, I think it necessary (since your correspondent, with laudable modesty, declines the honour of fathering his jeu d'esprit, though, haply, the only-begotten of his brain) merely to 'remark', in my turn ..." He proceeds to a crushing condemnation. A further article (in the form of two letters signed "Ichneutes", dealing with the phenomenon of thunder) appears on 6 and 20 June 1815.
philosophy. On scientific questions, wrote Professor Tyndall of Carlyle, "his questions showed wonderful penetration." When they travelled together to Mentone in 1866, followed the death of Jane, Carlyle had been fascinated by the phenomenon of synchronism, illustrated by the water in a carafe and drinking-glass in the railway compartment. "Carlyle", Tyndall wrote with obvious surprise, "was well acquainted with the effects of synchronism in periodic motion, but he was charmed to recognise in the water-bottle an analyst of the vibrations of the train." In all their subsequent discussions Tyndall, himself a noted scientist, was impressed by Carlyle's knowledge.\(^3\)

At the end of his orthodox four-year university career Carlyle was in the position he describes in Wotton Reinred's character, that of a man in whom "mathematics and the kindred sciences, at once occupying and satisfying his logical faculty",\(^4\) were displacing from the forefront of his attention what the planners of his university curriculum had conceived of as its crowning pearl, namely the philosophical studies. In the classics he was a normal student, in mathematics unusually good, in "philosophy" (whether logic or moral philosophy) uninterested, in natural philosophy keenly interested but frustrated. The effect of the

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\(^3\) Professor Tyndall, "Personal Recollections of Thomas Carlyle", *The Fortnightly Review* CCLXXVII (N.S.) (January 1890), 5-32.

\(^4\) Last Words, 22.
university education was thus to throw him quite off the lines of normal development which have been outlined to date in the description of his education, and to put him on to a path of strenuous self-improvement and self-education in the subjects which interested him and compelled his attention and respect. In particular the effect of his education was to repel him from the "Scottish philosophy" he could have learned from Brown and Ritchie. "The last class of our Scotch Metaphysicians", he was to write hostily in *Signs of the Times*, "had a dim notion that much of this was wrong", "this" being the predominantly mechanical approach to life and philosophy to which Carlyle was hostile from his attendance at Brown's classes onwards. But "they tugged lustily at the logical chain by which Hume was so coldly towing them and the world into bottomless abysses of atheism and Fatalism", so much so that the chain snapped and now "nobody cares about either." So completely did Carlyle dismiss the Scotch philosophers. This is the common thread which binds together any consideration of Carlyle's university career. If the educators were a failure, (as largely they were, in Carlyle's case) he was thrown on to the resources of self-education, and thus began a life-long habit. From it grew the method of acquiring German language and then literature, self-guided (and as a result with eccentric conclusions), the fictional method which culminated in *Sartor Resartus*, the social ideas which grew partly from

5 *CME* II, 104.
his enormous reading, and the histories which are the result of enormous research into every available text on the subject, illustrations, reminiscence, anything which seemed suitable, synthesised by Carlyle into a narrative in his own mind. Carlyle’s university career threw him on to his own resources, away from his educators, away from his previous standards and norms. Inevitably it threw him away from his previously respected Ecclefechan standards, but that must be the subject of the next chapter. It remains in this to note the means of Carlyle’s self-education which to some extent replaced the normal university career, namely the reading in which he gloried.

Thomas Murray, writing of his early acquaintance with Carlyle, recalled his incessant reading while a student. "He read through Chalmers’s edition of the British Essayists, forty-five volumes, without interruption, a herculean task. His reading was miscellaneous; but he preferred works of sentiment, such as the British Essayists, Shakespeare, the English poets, Burns, etc. He was not given to history or metaphysics ..." To this can be added what is known of his early reading, his love of Smollett, Swift, Milton and (of course) Shakespeare. Milton, Shakespeare and the Bible dominate the range of literary material from which he draws quotation effortlessly in his letter-writing.

6 Like a good member of his parents’ church. The Burghers appealed in their preaching to feeling, the Antiburghers to intellect. A. Scott, Annals of the Secession Church, 595.

7 T. Murray, Autobiographical Notes, 21.
in his early days, obviously material which he has known for years and not checked for the occasion, as the quotations are frequently slightly distorted from the original, as would be natural in a quotation drawn from memory rather than taken from a book for the occasion. There was at the time no chair of Rhetoric and English Literature, only one of Rhetoric, and Carlyle did not come into contact with it. The literary contact he had was with Brown, whose lectures were highly allusive, and we know he was not impressed with these. What counted to Carlyle was the use he made of the University Library, from the chaos of which, he made Teufelsdrockh say reminiscently, "... I succeeded in fishing-up more books perhaps than had been known to the very keepers thereof. The foundation of a Literary Life was hereby laid." 

"Chaos", perhaps a hard word, is indicative of the dissatisfaction that students felt at the University Library, still inadequately housed in a damp, unsound building within the splendidly-rising new quadrangle. Its condition can be surmised; in 1827, when finally the 70000 books were transferred to new premises, 3000 had to be completely rebound, 13000 required repair of some kind. 

Service was slow, and the hours of opening poor. By 1823 it was open for three hours a day, five days a week, representing a considerable improvement on the 4 hours a  

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8 Sartor Resartus, 113.

9 A. Grant, Story of the University, II, 179.
week of 1794.\(^1\) Borrowings were well registered, fortunately, and so Carlyle's progress can be followed.\(^2\)

Carlyle summed up in his rectorial address to the university what he saw as the advantages of the library. "What I found the University did for me, was that it taught me to read in various languages and various sciences, so that I could go into the books that treated of these things, and try anything I wanted to make myself master of gradually, as I found it suit me."\(^3\) This serves to emphasise how much he saw his university education as a process of self-improvement, and self-help.

He took no degree. In this he was not unusual; few did at this time, as graduation requirements were elementary.\(^4\)

\(^1\) A. Grant, *op. cit.*, II, 178 [1794], and advertisement in *The Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, XXVI 1346 (1 October 1823) [1823]. Other opinions of the library can be found easily; R. Chamber, *Walks in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1825), 246-247, mentions that in 1824 there were 70,000 volumes, stored very badly. R. Gillies (Memoirs of a Literary Veteran, II, 9) was badly disillusioned by the staff, and Adolphe Blanqui, *Voyage d'un Jeune Francais en Angleterre et en Ecosse* (Paris, 1824) remarks on p. 232 on how poor the library is compared with the rest of the College.

\(^2\) David Masson, in writing *Edinburgh Sketches and Memories*, had access to more than now survive. C. Finlayson has written usefully on Carlyle's borrowings for 1819-1820 in *The Bibliothèque III*, 4 (1961), 138-143. To this information can be added what Carlyle borrowed from the Divinity Library, details of which have recently been discovered. See my "Carlyle's borrowings from the Theological Library of Edinburgh University" in *The Bibliothèque V*, 5 (1969), 165-168.

\(^3\) On *The Choice of Books*, 55-56.

and some writers cast doubt on the value of the examinations required for graduation as "calculated to impart nothing but the mere nomenclature, the yeas and nays, the technical manifestations of the interrogative system — the smatterings, the shreds and patches of philosophy."

Carlyle left for Ecclefechan in 1813, with the requirements of an M.A. degree (Edward Irving had taken his degree, after a similar education), and the real crux of this period of his life is the extent to which his university education affected his relation with his home environment.

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5Edinburgh Magazine, N.S. XVIII (January, 1826), 92.
CHAPTER THREE
So far two main areas of Carlyle's formative experience have been charted. In the first, the very little-known period he spent before first coming to Edinburgh was described in detail, his education accounted for, and the religious background of his youth described. In the second, his student years in Edinburgh in the four formative years of the Arts curriculum were followed, and his reaction to the courses studied presented. The facts established in these two chapters must now be brought to bear on the third and last experiment in explication of Carlyle's early life. There exist several studies of Carlyle's "conversion" from doubt and scepticism to the eventual faith of Sartor Resartus. Of these, Professor Harrold's Carlyle and German Literature and Professor Tennyson's SARTOR called RESARTUS are perhaps the best, and describe most fully the process by which Carlyle assimilated outside influences in order to perfect an ethical and religious standpoint of his own, which in turn became incorporated in his literary work.

This study proposes a different area of investigation, namely that of Carlyle's decline from the religious faith of his childhood to the "Everlasting NO" of Sartor Resartus, a state of scepticism and despair which some biographers make their starting-point.

One may begin by dismissing the remaining parts of his university education. The period now to be studied covers an extensive part of Carlyle's life, from the spring of 1813 (when he completed his "M.A." studies) till 1821,
when he experienced his "conversion" in Leith Walk, Edinburgh, eventually to be incorporated in the "Everlasting YEA" of Sartor Resartus, nearly ten years later. These years in Carlyle's life were punctuated by half-hearted attempts to further his professional training at university; firstly by divinity study, secondly by studying natural history, thirdly by preparing for a law degree.

Carlyle had been intended by his parents for the church, in common with many of the more clever boys from his area. It was the ambition of many families to educate a boy for the church, and the Carlyles had this in mind when they financed a costly education for Thomas in Edinburgh. Biographers have not found it incongruous that Carlyle should study in the University's Divinity Hall, which prepared ministers for the established church, while he himself was of the Burgher Secession faith. In fact there was a Divinity Hall for the New Light Burghers, before 1800, and Carlyle could have been sent to it. He had, after all, been tutored by a minister who himself had tutored the Divinity Professor at that hall. Burgher divinity students, it is worth noting, were in no way prohibited from attending the Divinity Halls of the established church. However, one piece of evidence which survives indicates perhaps why Carlyle attended that in Edinburgh University; Burgher

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2 J. McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church* (Glasgow, 1841), 628-629. Discipline in the church was normally very severe, and such a prohibition was mooted as late as 1805.
students were expected to have passed a full arts curriculum, "but also to possess a competent knowledge of Hebrew", and there is no indication that Carlyle ever did so. In his fifth year of study at Edinburgh, specifically in preparation for his study for the ministry, he studied Hebrew, and in this he may have been keeping the door open for him to choose to study in the Burgher Divinity Hall. But in the event he chose the University one. One can conjecture that this was done without objection from home, where the family would not impede his ambition in any way. There was an extreme shortage of ministers in the Burgher church at the time, so extreme that in 1805 a committee was appointed specifically to investigate any method of increasing the number of prospective divinity students.

Carlyle's fifth year was an extra-curricular year, deliberately chosen to prepare himself for a period of training as an external student of divinity. This training involved merely six annual appearances at Divinity Hall to deliver a prepared discourse, combined with home study while earning a living, usually by teaching. This method was

3D. Scott, Annals of the Secession Church, 604.

4He notes specifically in Althaus that he was taught no Hebrew at Annan; only Johnstone could speak or understand the language in the whole area.

5J. McKerrow, op.cit., 628.
often the only practicable one, as the alternative was three full sessions (of 4 months each) plus one partial one, and the cost of upkeep for a further three years would have made this out of the question. Carlyle compromised by spending 1813–1814 at university, attending Divinity Hall\(^6\) for basic instruction, no doubt happy to be with his friends once more in Edinburgh. Very little record of this year survives. He definitely attended the Divinity classes of Professor Ritchie, and recalled his forceful style of delivery, particularly the phrase "The Devil, after succeeding in his vile machinations retires to his infernal den and grins with horrid satisfaction!."\(^7\) His classes were disorderly, his impression on Carlyle obviously very little. We know no more of Carlyle's experience there. Professor Meiklejohn of Church History was likewise undistinguished, except for "the readiness and alacrity which he always shows to promote [his students'] views and prospects in after life".\(^8\) One writer recalled that he had "... a smooth round face, that never bore any expression but that of good humour and contentment. He had no name in general learning or theology."\(^9\) He, too, made no impression on

\(^6\) It is commonly assumed he also attended Jameson's Natural History classes this session also; an appendix argues otherwise.

\(^7\) Carlyle's recollection in W. Allingham, A Diary, 232.

\(^8\) Edinburgh Magazine N.S. XVIII (April, 1826), 460.

\(^9\) Life of Christison, I, 408.
Carlyle, so far as can be judged. Professor Brunton, of the Chair of Hebrew, was a more interesting character, a particularly successful city minister, university professor, university librarian, yet a man who managed to spend six or seven months of the year in his country villa.\(^1\) His promotion to the chair had been a worldly appointment, and Carlyle noted this cynically at the time in a letter to Thomas Murray. "Brunton, I hear, has got the Hebrew chair ... aye! aye! "kissing goes by favour" [is] true yet, I see."\(^2\) Brunton, in his first year of office while Carlyle studied, taught Hebrew but made no impression on Carlyle. These three undistinguished academics were the first step in the ruin of Carlyle's ambition to the church. All his life, at home, he had been surrounded by pious and serious men, in Johnstone's case a man who could have risen to a chair by worldly manoeuvring, but who was content to work for 52 years in a small parish. The contrast when finally, his arts studies over, he attended the training-ground for the ministry, and found the professors either nonentities or mere worldly-wisemen must have been severe. A letter written to Robert Mitchell after a later visit to Divinity Hall (1817) indicates his dissatisfaction. "I intended to have enrolled in the Divinity-Hall; but their Doctor [Ritchie] was too busily engaged otherwise to attend to me."

\(^1\) A. Grant, Story of the University, II, 291-292.

\(^2\) TC-Robert Murray, 24 June 1813, MS:NLS 8992, unpublished.
The reason was a staff-student quarrel of some size, regarding the Divinity library, and Ritchie was confronting the students in a discussion of some heat. The outcome was a committee, and "as the committee appointed to decide on it consists of Meiklejohn, Ritchie & Brunton, it is easy to see how the affair will end." Mitchell had been unhappy, too, with the state of Divinity Hall. Carlyle agreed. "I have not been within its walls for many months — & I know not whether I shall ever return, but all accounts agree in representing it as one of the most melancholy & unprofitable corporations, that has appeared in these parts for a great while ... It may safely be admitted that tho' the Drs Ritchie junior and senior [i.e. Professors of Logic and Divinity], with Dr. Meiklejohn, Dr Brunton & Dr Brown were to continue in their chairs, dozing in their present fashion, for a century, all the knowledge which they could discover, would be an imperceptible quantity — if indeed it sign [sic] were not negative." Interestingly, he dismisses these dull professors as "the kind of professors we should get from the Edinburgh kirk" — equating such preachers with dullness. The student gossip cannot disguise the boredom and disillusion which plainly has replaced idealism and sense of mission. Mitchell, too, was disgusted by Divinity Hall, and Murray (Carlyle's other closest friend at the time) found his progress in

3TC—Robert Murray, 31 March 1817, MS:AHE pub. NEL I, 93-104.
the Church difficult. It was shortly after the above letter that Carlyle definitively broke off his intention to study for the ministry by failing to maintain his registration as an external student. "My instant feeling was, 'Very good, then, very good: let this be finis in the matter.' And it really was." 4

Second of the unsuccessful attempts to re-commence study at the university was his attendance in 1818-1819 at the classes of Professor Jameson, already an eminent Natural Historian, and soon to be responsible for the famous Natural History Museum incorporated in the new University buildings. 5 Jameson had studied with Werner, and this, one may conjecture, was his only effect on Carlyle, if one may believe Carlyle's statement to Goethe that what first impelled him to study the German language was the desire to read Werner in the original. 6 This may have been as a result of listening to Jameson; otherwise the results were few. Thomas Murray had written of

4 From a conversation with David Masson, recorded in Edinburgh Sketches and Memories, 262. The incident may be, as Carlyle's letter (supra) suggests, 1817, but Masson, who had access to the Divinity Hall register for 1817-1818 (now lost) claims to have seen Carlyle's name there. Perhaps he did register later (and forgot this in telling Masson), perhaps Ritchie hopefully inscribed the name in any case.

5 A. Grant, Story of the University, II, 434.

6 Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle, ed. C.E. Norton (London and New York, 1887), 156-157. The first impetus he credited at another time to Mme. de Stael. See A.A. Adrian, "Dean Stanley's Report of Conversations with Carlyle", Victorian Studies I, 1 (September, 1957), 72-74.
Jameson that "He is a tedious teacher, tho' I like him very much." Carlyle found him tedious without being likeable. He described the professor as "one of those persons whose understanding is overburthened by their memory. Destitute of accurate science, without comprehension of mind, -- he details a chaos of facts, [which] he accounts for in a manner as slovenly as he selects and arranges them." The classes were soon dropped, and so this attempt failed. Again, the personality of the teacher appears to have repelled Carlyle from the subject.

The final attempt was to study Scots Law in 1819-1820 under "Baron" Hume, Professor of Scots Law. Carlyle, as reluctant a student of the drier aspects of the Law as Alan Fairford, found little pleasure in this work, though he indicates that he survived the course for a full year. Hume and his colleagues "seemed to me mere denizens of the kingdom of Dulness, pointing towards nothing but money &c as wages for all that bog-pool of disgust; Hume's Lectures once done with, I flung the thing away for ever." Another time he described Law as a "Babel of sounds and everlasting talk about nothing." Once more, the personality of the professor failed to capture him. "David Hume owes

7 Thomas Murray–TC, 8 October 1814, MS:NLS 1764.35, unpublished.
9 Althaus. N.L.S.

I. Campbell, Portrait of Carlyle.
no spark of his uncle's genius; his lectures on the law are (still excepting Erskine's Institute[s]) the dullest piece of stuff I ever saw or heard of. Long-winded, dry details about points not of the slightest importance to any but an attorney or a notary public ... By degrees I got disheartened ... I became remiss in my efforts to follow our Lecturer thro' thro' [sic] the vast and thorny desert he was traversing; till at length I abandoned him altogether."2 Certainly lecture-notes from this period which survive3 are dry, but no more so than would be expected from their intention, and the subject; it seems not difficult to see how a man like Carlyle, repelled by Scottish philosophies which depend on minute analysis and consideration of detail, should find the study of the law (which he undertook with a view to a steady income and secure position, rather than for any deeper motivation) disgusting. The dislike of the lecturer completed the effect, and so the university was finally rejected. Thus culminated a number of unsuccessful attempts to find employment, and it is a contributory factor in the spiritual crisis in Carlyle. Now he felt little confidence in his ability and in the security of his future. "I have tried twenty plans this winter in the way of authorship", he


3 Preserved in Edinburgh University Library: Dc 5.2-4.
wrote in 1821; "they have all failed." \(^4\) "I have drifted and flitted about almost incessantly'', he added later, "taking to no settled employment because perpetually changing my place of abode, or perpetually expecting to change it."\(^5\) His addresses at this period do change continually, all over Edinburgh. Singing-masters set up business overhead, landladies are sluttish, the air is bad, the charges exorbitant — a change of lodgings follows at once. These were indeed his "four or five most miserable, dark, sick and heavy-laden years'', \(^6\) years which were aggravated by nervous ill-health and apparent failure to make a mark in life. "I was nearly in despair, for I could not see any recognised path of life for me to follow, and yet when I looked about me, I didn't see that anyone was much better than myself or more fit for work; whether the work was ruling men or making shoes.'''\(^7\) His only resource was teaching, and this merely aggravated the unease he felt, for teaching had been a source of income for him since university days, and he did not enjoy it. In Annan he taught in his own former school from leaving Edinburgh in 1814 till the summer of 1816. "I was abundantly


\(^5\)TC-James Johnston, 15 December 1821, MS:EUL, unpublished.

\(^6\)Reminiscences, 206.

\(^7\)I. Campbell, Portrait of Carlyle.
lonesome, uncomfortable and out of place there. Didn’t go and visit the people there … such their form of social politness … in short, thoroughly detested my function and position, though understood to be honestly doing the duties of it.”

His pupils found him "very strict, but we liked him." He taught on the method he ascribes to Adam Hope in the Reminiscences, and to the son of Johnstone (minister of Ecclefechan) who was Carlyle’s tutor for a short period. This man had taught by a method described by Carlyle in retrospect as "beneficent terror", a harsh method which did not endear him to his pupils, and obviously was a nervous strain to the teacher. His first, very tentative, love-affair (with a Miss Merchant in Edinburgh) failed at this time, making his position yet more uncomfortable. His great resource, when teaching oppressed his spirit, was to write to his friends, and it is to the period of his teaching that many of the most entertaining of his early letters belong. His friends appreciated his talent, indeed in the most practical way as they preserved remarkable numbers

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8 Reminiscences, 181.

9 Quoted from D.A. Wilson, Carlyle Till Marriage, 100.

1 Reminiscences, 175.

2 Very little is known of this, apart from passing references in letters. Carlyle eventually found Miss Merchant too intellectually shallow for his interests. One very interesting hint in the Story of 150 Years pamphlet on Ecclefechan (p. 18) is that a daughter of Johnstone of Ecclefechan’s, who died young, was Carlyle’s first love. This is the only mention of the fact in existence.
of his letters to them, thereby making the early volumes of the Carlyle correspondence possible by preserving long runs of Carlyle's early letters. "That you write so seldom", said Thomas Murray in 1815, "is the only circumstance I have to regret." 3 This was a great relief from loneliness, which continued after he left Annan in 1816 to teach in Kirkcaldy. There the Burgh School had been languishing under its ageing and inefficient master, Hume, and the council applied to Professors Christison and Leslie for a likely man to fill Hume's position. The Professors testified to the impression Carlyle made on them by offering his name, unsolicited, only telling Carlyle after they made the suggestion. It was a desirable post, only an hour's ride by ferry from Edinburgh, 4 and worth at least £80 a year. This was very good payment; Carlyle's own school-master had received only £17 a year, and the rector of Montrose Academy, a large fee-paying school, considered himself fortunate to have a salary of £50 a year. 5 His financial position easy, he still found teaching a burden. One pupil recalled him as "a strict and gloomy disciplinarian",

3 Thomas Murray-TC, 29 June 1815, MS:NLS 1764.58, unpublished.

4 [J.B. Ainslie], Reminiscences of a Scottish Gentleman (London, 1861), 150.

not using physical punishment often, yet "I have seen his mere scowl hush the whole school. The biggest and boldest boys specially dreaded his grins and his mocking words." School teaching obviously could not give him continuing satisfaction, though there is some evidence that he showed talent in its performance. Although he found the inhabitants of Kirkcaldy "a pleasant honest kind of fellow mortals", and the Reminiscences record the uplift and encouragement he felt at this time from the friendship of Edward Irving; although he was at this time enjoying a rapidly maturing romance with Margaret Gordon of Kirkcaldy, he felt alone, embittered, above all lacking in purpose and clear progress in life. "I continue [to teach]," he wrote to Robert Mitchell in 1818, shortly before the end of their valuable correspondence together "... with about as much satisfaction as I should beat hemp, if such were my vocation. Excepting one or two individuals, I have little society that I value very highly; but books are a ready and effectual resource."

In particular, he contrasts himself with his student

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6 [Robert and Mary Cochrane], Thomas Carlyle: The Story of his Life and Writings (Edinburgh and London, 1896), 25.

7 Provost Swan of Kirkcaldy was impressed sufficiently to intrust his son to Carlyle's care when the former left school in Kirkcaldy to study at Edinburgh University. See Patrick Don Swan, Provost of Kirkcaldy (Kirkcaldy, 1893), 9.

8 Reminiscences, 204.

9 See R.C. Archibald, Carlyle's First, Love, Margaret Gordon, Lady Bannerman (London, 1910).
contemporaries, who "desire not to understand Newton's philosophy but to obtain a well 'plenished manse.'" Now no longer a candidate for a church of his own, Carlyle clearly felt alienated from the friends and the course of study he had known hitherto in Edinburgh. As early as 1815 he had regarded it as a trade "completely overstocked", for "in this neighbourhood there are several students of divinity who, unless turned out to grass have no prospect of obtaining a livelihood at all." In the autumn of 1818 Carlyle, disheartened by the success of a school started in opposition to his own, seized the opportunity to resign and move to Edinburgh, breaking his connection with formal school teaching, and beginning on a life of private tutoring, attendance at university lectures, and extensive private study. The return to Edinburgh was a significant one, showing how far his interests and ambitions had become rooted in the city of his education; had he been indifferent to his habitation he could have moved to Glasgow, indeed the chance occurred later when Irving settled in Glasgow. Carlyle chose to remain in Edinburgh, with occasional visits to Ecclefechan. This established a pattern which survived till his marriage, and was not entirely lost after that.

1TC-Robert Mitchell, 16 February 1818, MS:BM 33515.33 pub. NEL, I, 138-148 and M. Conway, Thomas Carlyle (London, 1881), 164-167 [date mistakenly given as 20 Feb.]

2TC-Thomas Murray, 22 August 1815, MS:NLS 8992, unpublished.
Carlyle chose to live in the city for convenience, company and employment, yet he longed for the cleanliness and the company of the country and the people whom he knew and admired there. He could live permanently with neither. His mother's severe illness in 1817-1819 (temporary insanity, connected with an illness from which she suffered) shook to some extent his security in his unchanging home values. Although his mother recovered, his father's health shortly began to decline, and Carlyle's letters home from this period onwards show a growing awareness that the home environment from which he had come was not an unchanging one. As he matured (and became responsible for the education of his brother John at Edinburgh University), Carlyle slowly adopted a more independent and adult tone in his letters home, showing that he regarded himself as close to his family, yet slowly forming his own independent existence. This independence is connected with the religious doubt Carlyle felt, indeed to some extent caused it. In his undergraduate days he had questioned the strict accuracy of Biblical narration, questioning for instance how it was known that the Song of Solomon was symbolical, representing Christ and the Church. Once he recalled questioning his mother "Did God Almighty come down and make wheelbarrows in a shop?", and causing her weeks of anguish. The result, as he himself recorded it, was to make him keep such enquiries to himself.³ Thereby he lost the opportunity

³ W. Allingham, A Diary, 253, 268.
to argue religion with his parents, who (had they argued) might have been able to offer viable interpretations of some of the passages of scripture which made Carlyle unhappy. Instead he had to carry his doubts to Edinburgh and to his later jobs in Annan and Kirkcaldy, where the arguments he advanced, and met, would be of a different nature. As he progressed, he drew away from his fellow students of divinity, and so the people with whom he argued would be more inclined to support Carlyle in his doubts, to have in their own minds sceptical rather than orthodox ideas. There are scattered references in letters to the fact that Carlyle attended student debating societies, and here again he will have heard developed arguments against religion (as well as for) which he would never have heard in Ecclefechan. By 1817 he could write, privately, to Robert Mitchell that "Christianity itself is only supported by probabilities; very strong ones certainly, but only probabilities." This is not an idle thought composed in isolation. Thomas Murray had written to him that "It is

4 Thomas Murray wrote (Thomas Murray-TC, 9 October 1814, MS: NLS 1764.35, unpublished) of "our Society" flourishing "unprecedently", and in 1813 Carlyle mentioned two others to Murray in TC-Thomas Murray, 24 June 1813, MS:NLS 8992 unpublished. Also in TC-James Johnston, 10 December 1816 Carlyle records having attended the Philalethic Society. (MS in private hands; quoted by permission of Miss Armstrong of Waterbeck: unpublished). Thomas Murray summed up the feeling of Carlyle's friends: "You have friends -- real friends in Edinburgh ... Your health was drunk most cordially by all." (Thomas Murray-TC, 21 June 1814, MS: NLS 1764.21, unpublished)

easy to maintain the **negative** side [of] a question — for one can bring so many objections and general arguments against any thing — and even against the Christian system that it requires no common talents and sagacity to refute them."

Perhaps, it could be argued, Carlyle's close companionship with Edward Irving, a convinced Christian and unswerving candidate for ministry in the Church of Scotland, would have been a steadying influence, one student friend who was sure of his faith. In fact the reverse is the case: Irving was an argumentative man, an unsettling influence. Jane Welsh's father had said of Irving, "This youth will scrape a hole in everything he is called on to believe." Yet his faith was strong, and having argued a question out, he would be as secure in his Christian faith as before. One can conjecture that Carlyle's orthodox faith can only have suffered by this contact, for though Irving would regard the argument with pleasure, no doubt advancing sceptical theory with relish, Carlyle would take the sceptical theory seriously, lacking Irving's secure conviction. More than conjecture is available, however, in Carlyle's own record (in the *Reminiscences*) that on Irving's bookshelves he found authors which would have been forbidden in Ecclefechan even more severely than the fiction

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6 Thomas Murray-TC, 29 June 1815, MS:NLS 1764.59, unpublished.

he had loved to read — namely Hume and Gibbon. Hume had been part of Carlyle's study at university, and so this can have been no new introduction for Carlyle to the philosopher's work, perhaps more a chance to read it at leisure in a climate of personal thought and opinion more receptive to the arguments put forward by Hume. What did come as a surprise was Gibbon's Decline and Fall, which he read through in twelve days, at the rate of one volume a day, so intense was its fascination and its power. "It was of all the books perhaps the most impressive on me in my then stage of investigation and state of mind", most particularly for "his winged sarcasm, so quiet, and yet so conclusively transpiercing, and killing dead." This reading of the Decline and Fall is generally accepted as the point at which Carlyle's religious belief finally disintegrated — indeed Carlyle gave evidence to support this yet it can be seen to be part of a much wider process, connected with his friendships, with his distaste with his studies and his work as schoolteacher, with a feeling that he would not succeed as a minister, with a growing independence from his native environment, with his relationship with Edward Irving, and finally with the relentless reading

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8 Reminiscences, 187.

9 "I studied the Evidences of Christianity for several years, with the greatest desire to be convinced, but in vain. I read Gibbon, and then first clearly saw that Christianity was not true." Carlyle to Allingham, quoted by W. Allingham, A Diary, 232. The Evidences were Paley's: see my Carlyle and the Theological Library of Edinburgh University, 166-167.
and self-education which had been characteristic of Carlyle since his early schooldays. If the dating of Carlyle's collapse of religious faith be accepted as his Kirkcaldy experience of reading Gibbon, it can be seen in its larger context as part of a ferment which upset the decade of Carlyle's life following his university years.

As Carlyle's orthodox faith weakened, he found new strength and impetus in the study of eighteenth-century writers who had been proscribed in his strictly religious youth, and who motivated the intellectual climate of the city in his student days. In Irving's library he read the Didot French classics, and his later essays (particularly those on Voltaire and Diderot) show a close acquaintance with the work of these authors. What interests him at the time of writing the essays (the late 1820's and early 1830's) is fresh biographical material relating to them: their works are part of his long-held knowledge.

A zealous reader, he covered many of the subjects which came under the "Enlightenment" heading, the French and Scottish eighteenth-century historians, essayists, the philosophes, the Encyclopédie. Their manifested power and dexterity (to quote his own description of the powers of destructive argument which his family admired in him) obviously appealed, and the cloud of "infidelity" under which they had previously lain was now lifted. In this period, Carlyle thus became aware of the work of the Enlightenment, and acquainted with the writings of the
period; when he reacted, in later years, it was not in ignorance, but in opposition to a body of work with which he was well acquainted.

Further contributory factors in the weakening of his faith have to be mentioned, however. One is his steadily declining state of health, combined with uncertainty about his future. He wrote of his memory of this time in Edinburgh, after abandoning Kirkcaldy, "I well see myself yet, stepping up by the old Theatre,\(^1\) in a dirty wet wintry afternoon, with the feeling in me, "Kirk is over the horizon to me; Schoolmastering ditto next (better die than be a schoolmaster for one's living!) -- possible, surely, to find something other, that will give honest wages if one do it honestly!'\(^2\) He felt that it was not personal unworthiness, for "... when I looked about me, I didn't see that anyone was much better than myself or more fit for work ..."\(^3\) His work as tutoring fluctuated badly, never paid well. His rooms were cheap, his food in all probability worse. He tells his mother in letters of long nights spent sitting reading by candlelight. Uncertainty, overwork, bad conditions, combined to make him unsociable, and though he had some few friends (one copied work for him voluntarily,

\(^1\)Now the General Post Office, Edinburgh.

\(^2\)Carlyle's note to Althaus.

\(^3\)I. Campbell, Portrait of Carlyle.
and would "... run through fire and water for me") he grew morose, and his friends grew fewer. Irving "used to give breakfast to Intellectualities he fell in with, — I often a guest with them. They were but stupid Intellectualities; and the talk I got into there did not please me even then, though it was well enough received ... I was without friends, experience, or connection in the sphere of human business, was of shy humour, proud enough and to spare, — and had begun my long curriculum of dyspepsia, which has never ended since!" Reading, a lonely substitute, was not easy, as he had to find his books where he could. "I have, it is true, the privilege of appearing on the floor of the college library, to ask for any book, — to wait about an hour, and then to find it missing." In the reading which he did, a similar uncertainty to that of his surroundings is evident.

By August of 1820 he is able to write to Thomas Murray of the "new heaven and new earth" which "a slight study of German literature has revealed to me — or promises to reveal." There is a new interest here, yet it is only the beginning of his interest in German thought. As Jean-Marie Carré notes, "dans la crise de 1822 [the Everlasting NO]

4TC-JAC, 14 February 1820, MS:NLS 522.5, unpublished.

5Reminiscences, 206.


7TC-Robert Mitchell, 4 August 1820, MS:NLS Acc 3671 pub. Conway 183-4.
Goethe n'a joué aucun rôle." What it did was to provide new hope, a new interest as personal ambition faltered, and old ambitions and interests dulled. Carlyle, noticeably, continues a course of self-directed education, when in uncertainty about his future, his habit from earliest times in Ecclefechan. "I am nearly tired of what is called natural science", he wrote to Matthew Allen in 1820. He added to this mathematics and "the ordinary systems of philosophy"; what occupied him instead during his summer holiday at Ecclefechan was "coasting all summer on the borders of German or Italian literature." His summer occupation was "strolling about the fields, revolving most dreamy thoughts -- which the far-darting and impetuous character of Faust, delineated in Goethe's play of that name, did not by any means tend to repress." Natural science, the mathematical and physical calculations he had pursued while teaching and partly living at home, and they had been to some extent intelligible to his family, and his student friends. His letters are full of mathematics, his parents would have listened to his conversation and explanations with interest, especially his father. "Nothing could please him better


9 TC-Matthew Allen, 15 September 1820, MS: John Rylands Library, unpublished. Quoted by permission.

than a well-ordered Discourse of Reason; the clear Solution and Exposition of any object: and he knew well, in such cases, when the nail had been hit." He loved to hear his son argue well, and rejoiced "in my dexterity and manifested force."\(^2\) The beginning of his contact with German, however, must have weakened this contact with his parents, this shared experience. Not only was the language a foreign one, and the philosophy also, but much of what he read was in the form of fiction (and drama), of no interest to his parents. Thus, though he might spend summer months in Ecclefechan, it was more and more a solitary pleasure. Edinburgh became more and more solitary, especially after Irving's departure, first to be Chalmers' successful assistant in St. John's Church, Glasgow, then to London to a sensational career as minister of the National Scotch Church in London. Thus there was little company in Edinburgh, and the city itself lost its early attraction. Its sanitary conditions were still primitive (the splendours of the new town concealed indifferent plumbing, and the smell and filth of the old were proverbial) and Carlyle, never insensitive, reacted violently, writing of the "unsupportable abominations which human animals when crowded together in cities occasion to each other",\(^3\) which make Edinburgh

\(^2\)Reminiscences, 12.

resemble "a day on the shores of Acheron more than any Christian place." When at home he dreaded city life. "I know not when I shall go to Edin*. Its reek & stench is hurtful to me." Eventually he learned to alternate between "bickering with the chagrins of Edin*; [and] snatching a taste of the joys of Annandale.* Edinburgh itself had become "this accursed, stinking, reeky mass of stones and lime and dung", which he was glad to escape from to new and very suitable lodgings in Moray Street, almost in the country to the north of Edinburgh. Even so he fretted. In April of 1823 he wrote "Thank Heaven! we are to leave this infernal city in a month!" The disturbance of old patterns of friendship, at home and in Edinburgh, can thus be added to the elements which underlay his "Everlasting NO".

Two major possibilities remain to be considered in this examination of Carlyle's "Everlasting NO" and the conditions which led to it. The first is the university experience, the second the studies for the ministry. It has already been demonstrated at length how Carlyle reacted violently to

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4TC-James Johnston, 15 December 1821, MS:EUL, unpublished.
6TC-James Johnston, 3 June 1823, MS:EUL, unpublished.
7TC-JAC, 10 February 1821, MS:NLS 522.10, pub. NEL, I, 319.
8TC-James Johnston, 8 April 1823, MS:EUL, unpublished.
personality while at university, and with rare exceptions was ready to dismiss his experience there as unprofitable. In *Sartor Resartus* there is a growing indication in the autobiographical Teufelsdrockh's mind that he is being educated away from the instinctive certainties of life which he loved to hear from Father Andreas, to gather from the speech of the wise men beneath the linden tree. Education was not helping him, not fulfilling the early interests thus aroused. "Besides all this, we boasted ourselves a Rational University; in the highest degree hostile to Mysticism; thus was the young vacant mind furnished with much talk about Progress of the Species, Dark Ages, Prejudice, and the like; so that all were quickly enough blown out into a state of windy argumentativeness; whereby the better sort had soon to end in sick, impotent Scepticism; the worser sort explode ... in finished Self-conceit, and to all spiritual intents become dead." This is Carlyle's indictment of his university, fifteen years after leaving it, and clearly he blames it for some of his loss of faith. The terms he mentions are certainly those of "enlightenment" historians and thinkers,

9 Carlyle reinforces this in Wotton Reinfr. (Last Words, 61) describing a discussion very possibly modelled on the "verbal fencing" he had with Jeffrey. The hearers laugh heartily at "mysticism", and dismiss it summarily. Jeffrey Carlyle described as "Scotch Voltaire", Playfair as "Scotch D'Alembert". (Reminiscences, 341) For a possible description of the real-life discussions depicted in Wotton Reinfr., based on Jeffrey, see Reminiscences, 328.

1 *Sartor Resartus*, 112.
which he must have heard mentioned and criticised favourably. Playfair (see the appendix on Sir Gideon Dunn) is credited by Carlyle with using the "Progress of the Species" terms, the talk of Dark Ages would be familiar to Carlyle as student of Hume and Robertson. The Established Church Divinity Hall would have tried to teach him to look on other churches (including, no doubt, the Seceders) as prejudiced, the product and the producers of Dark Ages. Carlyle's summary of the experience he had at university made after due reflection, is of a contagious and irreligious institution. It is difficult to accept this uncritically. Cockburn, for instance, is quick to record the exact opposite in his Memorials. "It is not unusual", he writes, "for certain persons to represent Scotland, but particularly Edinburgh, as having been about the beginning of this century as very irreligious." This Cockburn strenuously denies, and particularly the assumption that "... the College of Edinburgh used to be tainted by infidelity." "I attest that, so far as I ever saw or heard, this charge is utterly false. I am not aware of a single professor to whom it was ever applied, or could be applied justly. Freedom of discussion was not in the least combined with scepticism among the students, or in their societies. I never knew or heard of a single student, tutor, or professor, by whom infidelity was disclosed, or in whose thoughts I believed it to be harboured, with perhaps only two obscure
or doubtful exceptions.2 This is an emphatic enough denial of Carlyle's recollection.

One must take into account the statement which Carlyle's biographer Wilson repeats, namely that "What set him on enquiry [about the truth of religion] was the discovery that men he respected were careless about it."3 The conclusion here is that Carlyle's university professors taught him scepticism, by precept or example, and this could be reconciled with Carlyle's statement to Francis Espinasse that "the chief result ... of the years which he spent at the University of Edinburgh, was to throw him into an attitude of defiant protest against its teachers and their teaching."4 One finds it difficult to imagine that he caught the contagion of scepticism from Divinity Hall teachers, disgusted as he was by their inefficiency, nor from the Professor of Logic, who was a city minister. The candidates for suspicion would be the professors of Moral Philosophy and of Mathematics (which pre-occupied his mind after religion had left a blank). In the case of Professor Brown, it is difficult to see a man for whom Carlyle conceived so violent a dislike as a major influence on his thought, even if it could be proved that Brown's course was

2 H. Cockburn, Memorials, 43-44.

3 D. Wilson, Carlyle till Marriage, 1, 78, quoting as corroboration J.B. Crozier, My Inner Life (London, 1905), 388.

4 F. Espinasse, Literary Recollections and Sketches, (London, 1893), 208.
inclined to teach scepticism; and the concluding lecture of the course, if taken as a sample, will indicate how little this suspicion would be grounded on fact. "The very conception of Annihilation is wretchedness in the thought. For when conducted by Religious reflection, how deliberately is the mind withdrawn from the fear of death, how freely does it resign any retrospect of temporal existence, and with pious Confidence, and divine ardour do the virtuous affections of grateful piety raise our view to the Creator ..." Brown's stature as teacher of Christian thinking seems difficult to challenge, on the basis of this extract and others of his lectures which are preserved.

Leslie seems more open to suspicion on this count, as having been the object of an attack for infidelity at the time of his election to the chair of Mathematics in 1805. Yet Cockburn's account of this political manoeuvre on the part of the city clergy to annex the chair to one of their own number suggests that Leslie's offence was little more than scientific admiration for clearness of thought exhibited by Hume, a virtue which hardly can be classed with "infidelity", indeed a virtue which Leslie may have trained Carlyle to appreciate in Hume. The result of the manoeuvre was, as Professor Burleigh writes, "The charge was dismissed,

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5Quoted from MS notes of the lectures (in the year Carlyle attended them) in the Edinburgh University Library. Lecture of 18 March 1811.

6H. Cockburn, Memorials, 200-209.
Leslie secured in his chair, and the Moderates were discredited in the eyes of the literary classes with whom they had eagerly and proudly allied themselves in the past."

It is easy to see this circumstance as providing some sort of explanation for Carlyle's later hostility to the Moderate clergy in Edinburgh, as they had publicly attempted to discredit the man who was Carlyle's first "hero", unless James Carlyle can be so counted. The moderate clergy (we have seen) were prominent among the staff of the university, and so the dislike may have been transferred in Carlyle's mind from the professors to the institution which they staffed. He dismissed Rev. Andrew Thomson, the foremost churchman in Edinburgh at the time, as "... a lean-minded, iracund, ignorant kind of man.""Stupid those Edinburgh Clergy were not all by any means; but narrow, ignorant, and barren to us two, they without exception were." The institution of the established Church likewise earned his dislike, its promotion system by currying favour with patrons, and this has been shown to animate his disgust with his contemporaries at Divinity Hall, waiting to fall into a vacant pulpit, "whence after spinning out a few years of


8 Reminiscences, 208.

9 Reminiscences, 194.
dreary existence, they 'drop into the grave unpitied & unknown.'

The dislike of the institutions of Edinburgh University and the established Scottish Church, the theological and philosophical training, individual members of staff and of the ministry all blend in Carlyle's mind into a generalised picture of a corrosive influence on his formative years, contributing to the downfall of his religious faith.

Finally, an unexpected source may be argued for his decline in faith, namely his "theses" or trial sermons performed as partial fulfilment of his study in divinity. Carlyle in fact delivered three of these (not two, as many biographers claim), and the third, a substantial discussion Num Detur Religio Naturalis? occupied part of the winter of 1815-1816. The discourse was "sustained without difficulty", indeed he admitted to a "kind of innocent satisfaction ... in turning it into Latin in my solitude", and in the applause of his professors and fellow-students. He devoted energy and reading to it, and the reading which

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1TC-Thomas Murray, 22 August 1815, MS:NLS 8992, unpublished.

2Christmas 1815 and 1816 are the accepted dates, but in "Peter Pindar" [J.E. Hill]-TC, 21 March [1814], (MS:NLS 1764.12, unpublished) Carlyle is reported as having preached the third in March, 1814.


4Reminiscences, 182.
he had performed is now known in detail. Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* and his *Natural Theology*, Hugh Blair's *Sermons* and Campbell's *Dissertation on Miracles* were studied by him, and he was familiar with them, as indeed were his contemporaries. Hugh Miller, for example, was being examined on his reading by his parish minister.

"Had I read Reid?" "Yes." "Brown?" "Yes." So far the replies are as Carlyle might have made. "Hume?" "Yes."

"Ah! ha! Hume!! By the way, has he not something very ingenious about miracles? Do you remember his argument?"

I stated the argument. "Ah, very ingenious — most ingenious. And how would you answer that?" I said, "I thought I could give an abstract of the reply of Campbell," and sketched in outline the reverend Doctor's argument. It was to Campbell that Carlyle, like Miller, turned at this crucial period of his life, and it is difficult to resist the speculation that he did so because his theological studies had put him in contact with reading which offended against orthodox Christian teaching, as well as in contact with the standard apologies. Both Paley and Campbell were such, and one can assume Hume's *Essay on Miracles* to be one of the sources of Carlyle's weakening of faith. Equally one can speculate that the *Natural History of Religion* was a powerful corrosive agent on Carlyle's faith at this time,

5 See my "Carlyle and the Theological Library", 166.

6 H. Miller, *My Schools and Schoolmasters* (Edinburgh, 1889), 410.
maintaining (as one critic has defined it) that religion "has ... no more authority over the human mind, in so far as it is just another passion, than any other passion would have." Its authority, the feelings of awe it excites in men's minds, arise from the inexplicable nature of its origins alone. The persuasive argument must have told on Carlyle, at a time when his certitudes were wavering. Yet he was told by the college authorities to investigate the possibility of natural religion, and this he conscientiously did, finding in the process fresh evidence that the old religious faith he had known was susceptible of reasoned attack, that perhaps mechanism and systems of thought based on human values could be argued to be of superior status to those he had known dependent merely on "faith". Hume he certainly had known of as a major figure from his early days. In 1815 he had borrowed Hume's Essays from Robert Mitchell, and wrote with delight of the effect they had on him. "He has prejudices, he does maintain errors — but he defends his positions, with so much ingenuity, that one would be almost sorry to see him dislodged." Almost sorry, but not quite; a few weeks later he wrote to Thomas Murray of his delight in Hume. "What a pity that he is a Deist! How much might his strong talents have accomplished in the cause of truth, when they did so much in that of error!"

8 TC—Robert Mitchell, 24 May 1815, MS:AHE, pub. NEL, I, 38-44.
9 TC—Thomas Murray, 21 June 1815, MS:NLS 8992, unpublished.
This is a note which is not heard again in Carlyle, as the standards of judgment of his parents (surely heard in this extract) cease to be valid for him. He later talks of Hume's "clear & candid but cold-hearted" history\(^1\) with more regret for its rationalist tone than for its unorthodox views. This was just as he was reading Gibbon, who completed the process.\(^2\)

Hume, then, was brought to Carlyle's notice by the very discourse which was to have been an antidote to Hume's sceptical arguments, and the result was to encourage Carlyle's own self-questionings, leading eventually to the collapse of his orthodox belief. His religious education, by his own testimony, did not impress him. Writing to his mother, he explicitly separates it from the rest of his education (by which he clearly means his university education) received by his early manhood. "There are few things in this world more valuable than knowledge — and youth is the period for acquiring it. With the exception of the religious and moral instruction which I had the happiness of receiving from my parents — and which I humbly trust will not be entirely lost upon me — there is nothing for which

\(^{1}\) TC—Robert Mitchell, 19 November 1817, MS: AHE pub. NEL, I, 123-131.

\(^{2}\) The overthrow of his religious views by Gibbon is confirmed in a conversation reported by D. Masson in Edinburgh Sketches, 263-264. What Carlyle specifically mentioned was the last of his belief in miracles: as he had been reading Hume immediately prior to Gibbon, it is easy to suppose that it was a combination of the authors which worked on him so powerfully.
I feel more grateful than for the education which they have bestowed upon me."^3

This chapter has seen the gradual separation take place in Carlyle between the book-learned, formally-instructed or self-taught knowledge which he acquired at school and university, and the religious feelings in his mind which were the product of private and largely undirected reading and questioning which slowly overthrew his inherited belief, not nearly so abruptly as might be suggested by mere reading of the Reminiscences, but by a complex series of influence, and a variety of contributory factors and pressures on him, many linkable with earlier experience and thought. The nature of his religious training at Divinity Hall, his dislike of an uninspiring professoriate, his dislike of schoolteaching (and apparent inability to find something better), his increasing alienation from parents and friends (except Irving, a dubious privilege in this case), the possible contagion of scepticism from his earlier student days, his reading (particularly in French authors) and the chance of a sermon subject which directed him to Christian "Evidences" which corroded, rather than bolstered his faith all contributed to the process, all are part of the larger pattern of his life up to this point. All lead up to the experience in Leith Walk (literally true in detail, Carlyle

^3TC-MAC, 17 March 1817, MS:NLS 1763.4 pub. Froude, I, 46-47.
attests, unlike the rest of Sartor Resartus\(^4\) where he faced up to all the uncertainties and the doubts, and "Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed: not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance."\(^5\) Armed with this change of mood Carlyle was to face the long process in the 1820's of reconstruction of his faith with the aid of the Germans, and of a new pride and confidence in himself as a result. The Leith Walk episode marks a new beginning, it also marks the end of all that his earlier experience had stood for, an experience and an education based on traditional Christian values, aimed at the goal of a Christian life and a Christian ministry. It was with this aim that his parents sent him to university, and with the final convulsion of Carlyle's mind and faith, a new direction was set in his life, self-chosen and independent of the values he had inherited. The remainder of this study examines the extent to which Carlyle's new aims and experience form a complete break, how far he was right in describing this moment in Sartor Resartus as "my Spiritual New-birth",\(^6\) how far he remained under the influence of the values he seemed thus to have cast aside.

\(^4\) Carlyle's notes to Althaus.

\(^5\) Sartor Resartus, 167.

\(^6\) Sartor Resartus, 168.
CHAPTER FOUR
With the final collapse of his orthodox faith, described in the "Everlasting No" of *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle might seem to have cut the links which bound him to the early upbringing and education which have been described. Closer examination of evidence, from many different sources, reveals that this supposition is far from correct, indeed Carlyle remained surprisingly close to his original self despite the decisive religious break. This is evident even from the effect which it had on personal relationships. His parents had known from his early sceptical questionings that his faith was open to attack from "infidel" Edinburgh, and his mother had suffered greatly from his naive questions. They might be expected to reject their son when he declined to enter the ministry, and showed increasing inability to subscribe to their deeply held religious beliefs. His father, whom he had described as "always living under a sense of the great unseen Spiritual Presence, and deeply impressed with the certainty of a doom awaiting him in a Future of everlasting weal or everlasting woe", in particular might understandably have cast him out. Fortunately this did not happen at all. Carlyle told Robert Herdman of their ambition to make him a minister. "I believe they had set their hearts upon it: but after proceeding some little way in my studies, I fell into devious ways of thought, and I saw it would be quite impossible that I could ever be a minister."
I told my Father and they [my parents] were much,grieved; it must have been a sore distress to them, but they bore it nobly — and my Father said to me that notwithstanding, his house would always be a home to me and that no one in that house should ever speak or act with severity towards me on account of what I had done. This is more than mere generous feeling on James Carlyle's part. Happening as it did in 1817 or 1818 it gave Carlyle the continued security of a home in the years when he most needed such security, the years already described of poverty, ill-health, and above all uncertainty while he worked out for himself a philosophy to replace what he had lost. His holidays were spent at home, and the Ecclefechan carrier frequently had letters to and from the family farm which obviously gave Carlyle enormous encouragement while he lived alone in Edinburgh. In purely practical terms, then, this generous move on James Carlyle's part probably helped Carlyle towards his "Everlasting YEA". Equally important, it maintained Carlyle's respect towards his father, which is obviously as strong in 1832 (when the Reminiscences of James Carlyle were written) as it was before Carlyle's loss of faith. It will emerge from this section that Carlyle's eventual religious orientation was strongly towards the values which James Carlyle represented, and this was made possible by their continued friendship and mutual respect.

1I. Campbell, Portrait of Carlyle.
The continued friendship was not only with his parents, but (it can be conjectured) the whole community of believers in Ecclefechan, both seceders and members of the established church at Hoddam. Edward Irving, too, accepted Carlyle's fall from faith graciously, which was of similar benefit in giving Carlyle a continuing friendship and fellowship of mind which was enormously useful to him. In addition, this maintained the friendship between Irving and Carlyle from 1820, when Carlyle confessed his apostasy, till Irving's death, during which time Irving's influence and practical help were of great financial assistance to Carlyle, including (to name only one kindness) the arrangement of the tutorship of the Buller boys, which removed at a stroke all Carlyle's early financial difficulties. Irving had determined not to cut Carlyle if the latter should prove a sceptic, "and right loyally he did so, and to the end of his life we needed no concealments on that head; which was really a step gained." In short, so long as Carlyle remained in Scotland he could count himself a member, although a lapsed one, of the religious community from which he had come.

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2 He speaks of his 1825-1826 year near Hoddam Church in the Reminiscences, "Nowhere can I recollect of myself such pious musings; communings, silent and spontaneous, with Fact and Nature, as in these poor Annandale localities. The sound of the Kirk-bell, once or twice on Sunday mornings (from Hoddam Kirk, about a mile off on the plain below me), was strangely touching, — like the departing voice of eighteen hundred years." (p. 282)

3 Reminiscences, 225.
From 1822 (the "Everlasting No") till 1825, Carlyle moved round Britain, and also paid his first visit to the Continent, spending a few days in Paris. In 1825–1826 he spent a very happy year in Hoddam Hill, a farm near Ecclefechan, with his mother as housekeeper and a brother as farmer, recovering from the ill-effects of city life and trying to find a religious faith again with the scattered hints he had taken from his German reading. For years after this idyllic interlude he had "a constant inward happiness that was quite royal and supreme; in which all temporal evil was transient and insignificant; and which essentially remains with me still ..." It is clear from Carlyle's memory of this, and his descriptions of the "Centre of Indifference" and the "Everlasting YEA" of Sartor Resartus, that the process of reconstruction described in the fiction is closely related to the real-life restoration of the "not ignoble russet-coated Idyll" at Hoddam Hill in this year, in which his new-found philosophy is synthesised with existing Christian belief (a process described best by Professor Harrold in Carlyle and German Thought). What Ecclefechan gave him was the assurance of the continuity of the values which he was blending with his new German values, the Calvinistic doctrines of "right", "duty", "submission" which Professor Harrold also traces in Carlyle's mature

4 Reminiscences, 282.
5 op.cit., 281.
work, and attributes to his experience in the Ecclefechan Christian community. The fact of his continuing contact with the community and individual members whom he respected is therefore of great importance.

The Noddam Hill episode ended in the summer of 1826; in October Carlyle married Jane Welsh, and for two years they lived in Edinburgh's suburban Comely Bank. Choosing a place of residence had been a major problem, as Carlyle demanded country quiet and country cleanliness after his life in Dumfriesshire. The summer of 1826 had been "the warmest and dryest in the memory of man", indeed much as Sir Walter Scott loved Edinburgh, he complained of the "dreadfully warm weather — the most stifling I remember fit for nothing but wasps and flies ..." The Edinburgh house, it must be emphasised, was in the country. Stockbridge, the nearest part of the city, was itself separated from the New Town by a steep hill, which was "lined with hedges enclosing cornfields. The Water of Leith was a clear running stream, with plenty of roaches and eels." The Carlyles lived a good walking distance from the busier streets, in a newly-built row of houses alongside a country road. Even so, the noises which so

6 C.F. Harrold, "The Nature of Carlyle's Calvinism".

7 [J.D. Burn], Autobiography of a Beggar Boy (London, 1855), 110.

8 W. Scott, Letters, ed. H. Grierson et al. (Edinburgh, 1936), XIV, 61.

9 "Reminiscences of a Town Clerk" in The Book of the Old Edinburgh Club XIV (1925), 156.
annoyed Carlyle in Chelsea were a nuisance.\(^1\) By 1828
Carlyle was eager for a country residence, and his choice
returned to Ecclefechan. It was not without dismay, for
"possibly enough, had our house been still to let, ... we
might have been tempted to engage it again."\(^2\) It was not
to let, however, and after the expiry of the lease in May
1828 the Carlyles left Edinburgh, never to return except
as temporary guests or lodgers. Their experiment in city-
living in Edinburgh was a failure in the conditions of life,
and a failure in the sense that (as an appendix argues)
they could not afford to live at Edinburgh prices. Its
positive value lay in the personal contact which the Carlyles
made, both in casual meetings in the city, and in their
weekly "at-homes" which they held in their house on
Wednesday nights. These were economical but brilliant
affairs with Jeffrey as chief guest, but with a considerable
circle of talented friends in addition to this supremely
famous and provocative one. This circle, and the
stimulus which both received from their contact with it,
has been best described by Carlyle himself in the Reminiscences
and the letters of the time amply confirm the excitement
that both felt. Yet even in the outer suburbs they did

\(^{1}\) Jane had to "write down", by tactful notes to the Edinburgh
neighbours, a bantam cock and a house-dog. Mentioned in a
letter to MAC of 1839 printed in English Letters of the

\(^{2}\) TC-JAC, 16 April 1828, MS:NLS 522.68, unpublished.
not settle, and Carlyle returned to his wish for country life, to resume the existence which he had known for most of his life and which was still most important to him. Froude and others have exaggerated the misery of the years at Craigenputtoch, which were certainly different from the comfortable middle-class existence Jane had known in Haddington. Yet it is important to remember that she and her mother had lived on a very small income, maintaining appearances only by steady economy, and that Jane had protested continually in her correspondence against the "social round" which accompanied such living. Much as she enjoyed Edinburgh, she must have found Craigenputtoch a novelty, yet one she could cope with easily. To Carlyle Craigenputtoch was a return to a familiar environment, South-West Scotland, to a farming existence, to his family circle (who were always nearby, as residents or visitors) and to the values he had known during his formative period. From 1828 to 1834 he existed in his "Dunscore Patmos" and it is in these years that he produced Sartor Resartus and a remarkable body of critical work. Some re-emphasis is necessary here, for many have written of these years as years of exile and poverty, of loneliness and sickness. This interpretation is undoubtedly correct to some extent, and accounts such as Emerson's (and Froude's) do much to emphasise the lonely John-the-Baptist appearance of Carlyle in these years. Yet to him Craigenputtoch represented security (it was his own), dignity (not to be dependent on
a landlord), it gave him the silence he craved for desperately, and it allowed him to resume to some extent the Dumfriesshire values which his experience since leaving home had steadily eroded. To this extent it represents a direct continuation of the Hoddam Hill episode, in which he found a pleasure in resuming the ways of his forefathers, after some considerable experience of the wider world. To a considerable extent, Craigenputtoch marks a re-identification on Carlyle's part with the values he had replaced after leaving home. Sartor Resartus, the product of these years, shows that the re-identification is only a partial one, and the new factors in his philosophy are extensive and important. What follows attempts to focus attention not on the new interests in Carlyle's mind, but on the re-emerging ideas from his earlier intellectual experience. Two main areas of investigation emerge, one concentrating on social theory, the other on religious thought.

First, it is necessary to outline the alternatives which confronted Carlyle during this period, before making a case for the importance of local values. Two main opportunities for new experience presented themselves. One was the winter of 1831-1832, spent with Jane in London, the other the visit in the spring of 1833 (again with Jane) to Edinburgh. The London visit was conceived of originally

3There were other excursions, of course, but these were the principal ones.
as an exploration, which might lead to a permanent residence. "I am coming up to London to look about me", Carlyle wrote to his brother John, "and if possible even to establish myself in London. This place [Craigenputtoch] is as good as done: not even the last advantage, that of living in any pecuniary sufficiency, for I never was as poor." Craigenputtoch was thus rejected as early as 1831. There "... I am with my loved one, and among my tools: otherwise it has never yet become homelike to me." London, unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, was "in a foam with politics" at this time, and this political activity was the chief influence on Carlyle during this visit. With Jane he lived modestly in lodgings, and although they dined out little (Jeffrey and Edward Irving were their chief social contacts initially) they mixed with much London society, particularly with the radical groups among whom Carlyle found his concern with the plight of the poor was a live issue which he could openly and freely discuss. Irving agreed with Carlyle's increasingly radical political views (Jeffrey, of course, could not) but the most outstanding feature to emerge from the letters home at this time is

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4 TC-JAC, 7 July 1831, MS:NLS 522.101, pub. Froude, II, 155.
5 T. Carlyle, Two Note Books, 269-270.
6 W. Scott, Journals, II, 414. [8 October 1831]
7 Irving's agreement reported by Carlyle's brother John. JAC-TC, 12 February 1831, MS:NLS 1775A.136, unpublished.
the very large number of new friends Carlyle made. He described them to his mother as "...various well-disposed men, most of them young men, who even feel a sort of scholarship towards me. My poor performances in the writing way are better known here than I expected: clearly enough there is want of instruction and light in this mikr midnight of human affairs." It was this instruction which Carlyle set out wholeheartedly to give and with Jane's help he talked into the night with his "young men struggling to escape from the general baseness." The letters of the time show the excitement which this new conversational experience transmitted to Carlyle, who after several years at Craigenputtoch with few neighbours and fewer visitors welcomed this opportunity to exercise his always formidable conversational powers. The Saint-Simonians contacted Carlyle, a flattering mark of his public recognition, and one of his new friends, John Stuart Mill, eagerly discussed social questions with him. "La classe la plus pauvre", Carlyle wrote in his Journal, "is evidently in the way of rising from its present abasement", and he clearly awaited

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9 TC–MAC, 25 December 1831, MS: NLS 519.77, unpublished.

1 See H. Shine, Carlyle and the Saint Simonians (Baltimore, 1941).

2 See E. Neff, Carlyle and Mill (New York, 1924).

3 T. Carlyle, Two Note Books, 158.
the outcome with interest. He read the now popular
Examiner\(^4\) eagerly, and passed it on to the family in Dum-
friesshire who awaited it (to judge from their letters) with
equal impatience. Hogg, Galt, Lockhart, Lardner,
Destrosier, John Stuart Mill, Hunt, Lamb, Maginn, Procter,
Crabb Robinson, Henry Taylor, Edward Irving, the Bullers —
his acquaintance was formidable and his pleasure in mixing
with them intense.

Yet this visit to London was not made permanent, and
the Carlyles returned to Craigenputtoch and the bleak moors
with something approaching pleasure. "On the whole, this
London is the most \textit{twilight} intellectual city you could meet
with: a meaner more utterly despicable view of man and his
interests than stands pictured even in the better heads
you could nowhere fall in with."\(^5\) Elsewhere he described
London as "a true all-ruining anarchy ... it is a huge
Aggregate of little systems, each of which is again a small
Anarchy, the members of which do not \textit{work} together but scramble
against each other."\(^6\) Yet he said he did not regret this
visit, for "... [I] already feel my mind much stimulated,
and as it were filled with new matter to elaborate. It will
be very useful for me to come back from time to time: the'

\(^4\)Founded 1808; by 1812 it was circulating 7000 copies
weekly. R.G. Cox, "The Reviews and Magazines" in The

\(^5\)TC-JAC, 21 October 1831, MS:NLS 522.104, unpublished.

\(^6\)T. Carlyle, \textit{Two Note Books}, 211.
I think I have hardly found a single man that has given me a new idea."\(^7\) Other factors intervened: James Carlyle died in Scotsbrig, and Carlyle felt his father's death keenly, marooned as he was in London and unable to attend the funeral. This turned his thoughts powerfully towards Scotland. Further, there was a cholera outbreak at the time, which threatened to be severe in London. The country air of Craigenputtoch seemed to offer shelter from this. Indeed the country air attracted the Carlyles from London as it had done from Comely Bank, despite the excitement of urban living. "We are both ... considerably hurt in health, and longing to be home; which we expect soon. The climate of this place is among the most detestable on Earth: otherwise, the place has been wholly agreeable to us."\(^8\) London, then, was an excitement enjoyed while it lasted, but Craigenputtoch was still their permanent home.

This had been Carlyle's second visit to London, a renewal of a pleasurable excitement he had first felt in 1824. Similarly the visit to Edinburgh in 1833 was a renewal of a familiar pleasure; both knew the city intimately and had a wide circle of acquaintance. Edinburgh friends had corresponded regularly and visited them in Craigenputtoch and they had spent a holiday with the Jeffreys in Edinburgh in 1829, so their holiday there was undertaken under similar

\(^7\)TC–JAC, 10 January 1832, MS:NLS 523.1, unpublished.

\(^8\)T. Carlyle, *Two Note Books*, 255–256.
conditions to their London one. Perhaps Froude is responsible for the impression that Edinburgh was hostile to Carlyle on this visit. "London treated him, in 1831," writes Froude, "as a person of importance; when he spent the winter following [that is, the spring of 1833] in Edinburgh he was coldly received there — received with a dislike which was only not contempt because it was qualified with fear." This is extraordinarily wide of the mark. They spent an agreeable season in New Town lodgings, living a quiet middle-class existence among their quiet middle-class friends, and were welcomed by many. The welcome was secure. The disgust, the contempt, come from Carlyle's own reactions to the city. McVey Napier, Jeffrey, Sir William Hamilton were three distinguished friends, and many more of the less well-known of his contemporary literary figures welcomed him back. With Hamilton ("an earnest soul, an openness for truth: I really think him a genuine kind of man") he walked much, talked more. Yet times had changed, and the people had a different effect on Carlyle. One close friend still gave the impression that "... there are no bounds to his regard for me", yet "otherwise he is a wearisome man." McRie, author of the life of Knox, was not received as a lion, but as "dull, heavy, but intelligent and honest." A close student contemporary and friend

\[^9\text{Froude, IV, 297.}\]

\[^1\text{TC-MAC, 27 January 1833, MS\text{NLS 520.14, unpublished.}\}
(Thomas Murray) "... is withered up into a poor sapless creature; keeps boarders, had two prattlers jingling the pokers and so forth." He met John Wilson, and "whether we meet a second time or not is of little or no moment."² Houses were cheap, and they had much pleasant society.³ Yet change is evident in the feeling Carlyle showed towards the people he met. His new friends in London tended to overshadow in his mind the older acquaintance of Edinburgh, perhaps because of their very newness. But the impression arose not only from the people themselves, but from the city in its state of 1833. He complained to Mill in London of finding "much that is spiritually Kleinstadtisch" in Edinburgh,⁴ and added that "I feel indeed that no John Mill will come in on the Wednesday evenings here; but a much fainter sort of spiritual worth must suffice." A later letter to Mill sums up his attitude to Edinburgh, his reasons for dissatisfaction. They turn out to be political reasons. "On the whole I predict that in this country, as in France, the movement, political and other, will proceed from the Capital." Edinburgh, that is, has become a provincial centre. Indeed he was struck with the "village-like impression of Edinburgh, after London."⁵

²TC-MAC, 13 February 1833, MS:NLS 520.15, pub. Froude, II, 337.
³TC-MAC, 27 January 1833, MS:NLS 520.14, unpublished.
⁵Journal, quoted from Froude, II, 324, with MS correction by Alexander Carlyle.
"No Benthamite, or Islamite, or other false Believer, exists here that I see: innumerable respectable Whigs, that know not the right hand from the left, and desire of all things to eat their pudding in peace; numerous distressed, partially distracted Conservatives (they too are numerous in the washed classes); a small forlorn hope of half-rabid Cobbett Radicals ... this is our condition in respect of Politics, whereby you may judge of us in others." The impact London of 1831-1832 had on Carlyle was a personal and political one. The dissatisfaction with Edinburgh of 1833 was based on the lack of such an impression. Politically it failed to match up to the excitements of London over the winter of the Reform Bill agitations, and the personalities seemed to be less exciting precisely because Carlyle was judging man now as a political animal, and the predominantly legal, or literary friends he had in Edinburgh did not match up to this criterion. Edinburgh editors, he supposed, "rather think me a dangerous sort of fellow"; McVey Napier "dislikes my Radicalism, worse than I do his Toryism." "My utterances fall like red-hot aerolithes [sic] or bursting bombs into the peaceful tea-garden of their existence, and they look upon me with astonishment, and an incipient shudder." This is very different from Froude's version.


7TC-MAC, 27 January 1833, MS:NLS 520.14, unpublished.

The Edinburgh circles, who received Carlyle in a friendly way, were gradually alienated by the loud radical political monologues which had been such a success in London the previous winter. The difference was that this was not London, where radicalism was much more openly discussed in a wider circle of friends; and the worst of the reform agitation was past. Carlyle was in fact making a very unfair equation between one city (London) in the grip of a fever of agitation one winter, and another (Edinburgh) recovering from the same fever a year later. To call the one dull compared with the other is not fair comment, yet it is what Carlyle was doing, and it was on this, largely, that he based his dislike and dismissal of the Scottish capital in favour of London. "Carlyle was wilful", Froude admitted, "and impatient of contradiction. When his will was crossed or resisted, his displeasure rushed into expressions not easily forgotten." And this displeasure was increasingly expressing itself in political monologues on the states of the time. The Edinburgh reaction — not one of hero-worship — must have approximated to one later recorded in London from a man on first hearing Carlyle.

"Met and walked with Carlyle, who raved about the general anarchy he imagined he saw around him, and praised Bismarck to the skies." Carlyle's immense powers of oratory were


1 M.E.G. Duff, Notes from a Diary (London, 1911), 209.
not sufficiently controlled to make them fully effective, and when the auditor was not sympathetic to Carlyle's views (as in this case) they affected hearers very unfavourably. So it was with the Edinburgh New Town circles in which Carlyle performed as prophet of doom. George Moir, once a quasi-disciple and now an established figure as Professor of Rhetoric at Edinburgh University, was described at this time by Carlyle as "settled in every way into a dilettante ... dry, civil, and seems rather to feel unheimlich in my company." Similarly, when his student friend Robert Mitchell organised a dinner party in his honour he felt he "... astonished them, I fear, with my exposition of Belief and Radicalism, as compared with Opinion and Whiggism." Wilson, too, who had always had a playful half-regard for Carlyle, drew back at this time, and Carlyle felt he "... cannot look at me, as I look at him, with free regard; but eyes me from behind veils, doubtful of some mischance from me, political or other." The inference is clear that Carlyle's London experience had made him a violently radical propagandist, and the New Town circles of Edinburgh did not accept this gladly. Nor did they accept his new style of monologue, for Edinburgh had always been (as outsiders like Coleridge had often complained) a talking town, one in which debate was accepted and welcomed. The important part played by literary clubs and societies in the Golden Age testified to this. Carlyle himself admitted to seeing a change at this last Edinburgh visit. "The talent of
conversation, tho' I generally talk enough and to spare, has as it were quite forsaken me. In place of skilful adroit fencing and parrying, as were fit and usual, I appear like a wild monstrous bison among the people, and (especially if bilious) smash everything to pieces." Thus he lost one of the most valuable parts of his earlier experience from Edinburgh, the conversational and debating experience with keen minds which had made him popular among his student friends and his later literary circles and which (as is clear from the Reminiscence of Jeffrey) did him enormous good in his debates and skilful word-fencings with Jeffrey in Craigcrook and elsewhere. If he failed to make contact with his friends in Edinburgh at this time, then the blame lies more on his shoulders than on his friends'. This may lie behind his remark, a year later (now in London) that he was "surprised occasionally and grieved to find myself not only so disliked -- suspected -- but so known", and uncomfortably received "in all Whig circles." This was truer, undoubtedly, of London than of Edinburgh where his personal friends esteemed him highly despite his extreme views.

Further, it is not altogether fair to condemn Edinburgh as politically dead, as Carlyle does at this time. It has already been pointed out that the Reform Bill agitation was

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2TC-JAC, 10 February 1833, MS: NLS 523.11, pub. Froude, II, 332.

3Journal, 1 October 1834, quoted Froude, II, 467.
past, the Scottish Bill through, and the city was recovering. Outside appearances showed a city much as it was before, striking Mrs. Fletcher, the diarist, as one which "still retained in our eyes its unrivalled beauty and unbounded hospitality" as the Whigs were "still in office" and all seemed well with the world.

The Conservatives, too, rallied their forces, reminding themselves that their party still included "an immense majority of the property, the respectability and the intelligence of Edinburgh." Yet the city had been convulsed throughout the preceding year as Reform agitation swept away the corrupt voting system (in 1830 there were only 2304 effective voters in the whole of Scotland) and the equally corrupt Edinburgh City Council, and public opinion became almost frenzied as it approached what one historian has called "... a composite reflection of an intricate social pattern." The intricacy is notable, far transcending the mere smugness which Carlyle imputes to Edinburgh's social thinking of the early '30's. When the Scottish Reform Bill became law on 17 July 1832 the city

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5 "The Late Conservative Dinner in Edinburgh", *Blackwoods XXXIII (CCIV)* February 1833, 266. Author, George Moir.

6 W.L. Mathieson, *Church and Reform in Scotland* (Glasgow, 1916), 208.


convulsed. "The bitterness of the hostility felt at that time by the young men of the two opposite political creeds cannot easily be understood by those in the same stage of life at the present day", recalled John Hill Burton a generation later. "We used to make faces at each other as we passed; and if a few words were exchanged, they were hostile and threatening." Archibald Alison sneered in Blackwoods at the Whig candidates for the reformed Parliament, who "could not show themselves in Oxford or Cambridge, and at Trinity College [Dublin], they were defeated by a majority of three to one." In poorer districts, however, they found success, "irresistible among the weavers of Manchester, and the blacksmiths of Birmingham, they could not venture a struggle with the educated gentlemen of England." The Edinburgh Town Council's last gesture of defiance was to reject Jeffrey's candidacy as M.P. for Edinburgh, in the face of a petition signed by 17000 on Jeffrey's behalf, in favour of their candidate, Dundas, "a respectable young man and a keen Anti-Reformer." Riots followed, and the nervous became more so. "Such conduct is giving up every thing to the mob", wrote one Edinburgh citizen, unfairly,

9 Quoted from Mrs. Gordon's Christopher North (Edinburgh, 1879), 258.

1 Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine XXXIII, CCIII (January, 1833), 117.

2 H. Cockburn, Journals (Edinburgh, 1874), I, 13.

for although there had been enormous gatherings to discuss the Reform Bill (the celebrations in Edinburgh after its success drew crowds of 55000)\(^4\) they were peaceful demonstrations of "orderly joy."\(^5\) The point of these descriptions is to emphasise that Edinburgh in 1833, on Carlyle's visit, was recovering from a period of quite exceptional political activity, probably resting and recuperating. Arrangements were tentative, the new council not yet fully experienced. The old Tory/Whig opposition was to some extent broken, and the new political forces re-aligning themselves. "In a few years the Whigs will be the Tories and the Radicals the Whigs", wrote Cockburn just after this time. "It is between these two that the struggle will henceforth be."\(^6\)

In 1831, then, Carlyle rejected the idea of settling in London, despite its excitement over the Reform Bill; in 1833 he rejected Edinburgh as being too quiescent. In each case he returned to his moorland fastness of Craigenputtoch to be in the countryside and among the people whom he preferred. Having rejected London and Edinburgh, what were his political and religious views in this critical time around the time of *Sartor Resartus*, and how did they seem affected by his early experience?

\(^5\) *op. cit.*, I, 31.
\(^6\) *op. cit.*, I, 32.
To answer this question with regard to politics is to see the train of Carlyle's thought during the Reform period rejecting alternatives, interested only in his immediate experience of "la classe la plus pauvre", of which he had first-hand experience. In Craigenputtoch, after all, he was frequently very poor, reduced to publishing very insubstantial items (like Four Fables) which normally he would not have considered offering to the press. Poverty was all around him, and was his immediate concern. His friends, his neighbours, his family knew this poverty, and he saw very little other company. His two excursions into urban life have been shown to be failures insofar as they led to no re-identification of Carlyle's interest with a party. The radicals (and the Saint-Simonians) failed here, as did the New Town Edinburgh circles. Carlyle identified politically with the realities of lower-class life as he experienced them in Dumfriesshire, and his efforts were turned towards showing up these sufferings, and pleading for something better. Typical of this is his little-known yet eloquent letter to the Dumfries and Galloway Courier, over the signature "Vox", protesting against an incident in which the butler of the neighbouring mansion Knockhill had murdered an interloper one night, and appeared to be protected by his employer's rank from prosecution at law. The butler was in fact prosecuted (and lightly sentenced to six

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7Dumfries and Galloway Courier, 22 September 1829, 20 and 27 April 1830.
months' imprisonment) but only after prolonged delay. Carlyle's anger and involvement are seen in the context of this local suffering, among his own class.

Outside his own class, his anger and his involvement are more difficult to find. Carlyle was retreating into the position his own family adopted consistently, of extreme self-sufficiency, of who-cares-about-the-world-so-long-as-we-are-well, which earned them the reputation for pride, obstinacy and dourness which early biographers made so much of. The Reminiscences recount with relish the fierce battle with their landlord (General Sharpe) while the Carlyles were living at Hoddam Hill in 1825-1826, the unbending pride and self-sufficiency of James Carlyle in the presence of his social superiors. "Even for the mere Clothes-screens of rank, my Father testified no contempt: he spoke of them in public or private without acerbity; testified for them the outward deference which Custom and Convenience prescribed, and felt no degradation therein: their inward claim to regard was a thing which concerned them, not him." This is the attitude, without perhaps the lack of contempt, which grows in Carlyle's political thought in the '30's, an attitude bred in the same countryside and among the same people and social circumstances as his immediate predecessors.

8 Dumfries and Galloway Courier, 21 September 1830.
9 Reminiscences, 281.
1 op.cit., 8.
Correspondence at this time affords the best guide to this development in Carlyle's thought. "Few people speak of the Reform Bill", he writes to his mother from London on Christmas Day, 1831: "all are heartily sick of such jargonizing about; there will be an outburst soon, unless they get on; yet nobody expects that the business will be got done before March. Grant us patience! This is a frightful empire at this moment; an empire in the death-throes, and must be born anew!" \(^2\) This is a very interesting comment, coming as it does from London and what could have been involvement in the agitation which was gripping everyone's attention. Carlyle's attitude is one of indifference, not planning for the future, but conscious of the rottenness of what is there. This is the keynote for other correspondence of the time. To his brother Alec he writes at much the same time, "People are all quiet as yet; in great anxieties about their Reform Bill; and not unlikely, as I calculate, to get into some convulsions, one day, before all be done: but for the present there are no symptoms of it, neither is it I chiefly that need apprehend such a thing: so long as they leave me the head standing on my shoulders, my main possessions in this world are left uninjured." \(^3\) Again the feeling, that his own quiet is what matters — the reform agitation is "their" agitation. The death of the system,

\(^2\) TC-MAC, 25 December 1831, MS:NLS 519.77, unpublished.

\(^3\) TC-AC, 24 November 1831, MS:AC family, Canada, pub. Marrs, 283-289.
the necessity for a new one, interest him far more than the planning for the future. He described the Coronation (September 1831) to Jane, who was still in Craigenputtoch, as "the ghost of a Past perhaps taking final leave of a world, where as body or as ghost it has now walked for some three thousand years!" In time Carlyle came to affect a vast indifference to politics. The most he can do, he claims, is "cry: Canny! Canny! ... politics, especially Radical Politics are an especial weariness to me." Satirically he wrote in his essay on Goethe's Works of the impossibility of drawing people's attention to a subject as important as Goethe's writing, "the tendency of which is neither for the Reform Bill nor against it, but quietly through it and beyond it; wise to prescribe this or that mode of electing members, but only to produce a few members worth electing" — this would be a great achievement. But not one Carlyle can see readily approaching. Party politics are quite rejected at this period of his life; "Radicalism goes on as fast as any sane man could wish it, without help of mine. Conservatism I cannot attempt to conserve, believing it to be a portentous embodied sham, accursed of God, and doomed to destruction, as all lies are; but woe the while if the people are not taught, if not their reason, then their brutish

4 TC-JWC, 8 September 1831, MS:NLS 610.15, pub. NL26-36, 238-244.  
5 TC-JAC, 2 December 1832, MS:NLS 523.9, pub. Froude, II, 316.  
6 CMF, III, 125.
folly will incarnate itself in the frightfullest reality." This remark throws important light on this problem of Carlyle's political alignment at the time. Radicalism, it has emerged sufficiently, was something which interested Carlyle in the sense that he was convinced the existing order was doomed; it must fall, and so the radical movement seemed to Carlyle inevitable. He professed lack of interest in the movement per se. The remark above is confirmation of this -- the radical movement is self-evidently, to Carlyle, something that will succeed. True, also, has been the supposition that the existing order seemed rotten to Carlyle, for he commits himself very strongly here to a condemnation of the Tory position. What of the alternatives?

The discussion above seems to be concerned with national matters. Edinburgh offered the Whigs, as distinct from radicals and Tories, and this might seem a real possibility for Carlyle, friendly as he was with Jeffrey and the Craig-crook circle. Several factors militated against Carlyle being a Whig, however. One was the breach of friendship which is recorded (tentatively; the reader must read between the lines) in the Reminiscences of Jeffrey. In London, as Lord Advocate, Jeffrey was too busy to pay much attention to Carlyle, and Carlyle's letters home during 1831-1832 show a growing alienation from his former frankness and openness with Jeffrey. Indeed a note of condescension creeps in,

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7 TC-JAC, 16 February 1835, quoted from Froude, III, 25.
after Jeffrey's patronage had failed to find a publisher for Sartor, and a considerable part of this condescension is connected with Jeffrey's fussy business connected with the reformed parliament. This is perhaps just an extension of the break in their friendship which Carlyle noticed during his 1829 holiday in Craigcrook, and which developed, imperceptibly, into a complete rupture when Jeffrey irritably (he was in very poor health, which Carlyle forgot too easily) refused Carlyle a position in Edinburgh in 1833. Jeffrey's friendship is therefore on the decline between 1828 and 1834, and the attraction of the Whigs therefore likewise. Another factor exists, however, also traceable in the Reminiscences. This is the equation, in Carlyle's mind, between Whiggism and the mechanical, and therefore dangerous, trends of thought he detected in Edinburgh. After the prolonged soul-struggle of the 1820's, he viewed Edinburgh as the home of sceptical and possibly atheistic thinkers; Goethe and the Germans had given him the material from which to reconstruct his life-philosophy, and his political view that progress must come, that a new system must arise from the ashes of the old, is clearly linked with the phoenix-symbol of Sartor Resartus. In this context the mechanical is to be shunned at whatever price, and it was a point Carlyle had been making publicly since Signs of

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8 Reminiscences, 327.

9 op.cit., 336.
the Times. Hence when Jeffrey is accused by Carlyle of being "bent on, first of all, converting me from what he called my "German Mysticism," — back merely, as I could perceive, into dead Edinburgh Whiggism, Scepticism, and Materialism",¹ he is obviously figuring in Carlyle's mind as an evil agent, and what is more one whose evil is personified in Edinburgh — "dead Edinburgh Whiggism." Whiggism is not only dead, but it is the philosophy of "gigmen", Carlyle's hated rich. Hence he can refer to the New Monthly Magazine as "the work as of Gigmen, or rather Gig-boys, and Whig-boys", clearly equating the two in his mind.²

This confirms Joseph Hamburger's analysis of the political situation at this time, which he sees as hingeing on "the conflict between People and Aristocracy." In this conflict the Whigs were doomed to fail as "philosophic radicals" — men of principle who were willing to engage in politics on behalf of these principles. "Really a party of aristocrats, yet claiming to be reformers and friends of the people, [they] evaded the central issue of aristocracy versus democracy."³ In local terms, then, the Whigs were no viable political party for Carlyle.

¹Reminiscences, 320.
Still more locally, there were political possibilities in Dumfriesshire. Carlyle could have engaged in the local electioneering and politicking, which (judging by the local paper, The Dumfries and Galloway Courier, over this period) was intense, leading sometimes to blows. Again, he declined to be engaged. "The whole world here", he wrote from Craigenputtoch early in 1831, "is in a state of frothiest fermentation with Electioneering. M'Diarmid,\(^4\) who was here yesterday, is quite in a whirl ... I myself care not one halfpenny which way it go: except that their Reform Bill is like to prevent or divert immediate cutting throats, which would otherwise follow ere long, it is no matter of mine."\(^5\) This is his confidential letter to a friend who was brought up locally, and it describes his attitude to the radical electioneering of Dumfries. The Whigs he described to Goethe as people "... of altogether mechanical intellect, looking to Elegance, Excitement, and a certain refined Utility, as the Highest; a man halting between two opinions, and calling it Tolerance ..."\(^6\) The tone is strongly reminiscent of the attitude he inherited from his Evangelical ministers towards the Moderates. The Whigs, one could argue, are being seen as the Moderates of the political arena, trimming to suit the conditions, more interested in

\(^4\)Who had taken over from Rev. Henry Duncan as editor.


\(^6\)TC-Goethe, 10 June 1831, pub. GC 279-286.
the mechanism of society, and in managing their environment, than in high seriousness.

One alternative political source of influence remains, namely the orthodox Dumfriesshire Christian approach to the political upsets of the time. Fortunately an indication of the nature of this attitude exists, in Henry Duncan of Ruthwell, a remarkable minister who befriended Carlyle at an early age (his recommendation had given him an entrée to Edinburgh literary circles in 1819), and remained a staunch friend even when Carlyle's apparent apostasy made him unfit to be trusted (in Duncan's opinion) with the Moral Philosophy chair at St. Andrews in 1827. Duncan, asked for a certificate of recommendation, refused it reluctantly, yet obviously retaining respect for the lapsed believer. The two men knew each other well, and respected each other. Duncan's contribution was a novel in which he personified the plight of the radicals in William Webster, a young country-bred weaver who leaves the innocent Christian home of his forefathers to become involved in the radical disturbances in the cities. The results are alarming. The values he left at home were those of a hard-working Christian peasantry, who feared God and honoured the king. When confronted with the radical thinking of the towns, William Webster recites the values he learned to respect from his father. The aristocracy were now less free to oppress the poor; the aged were tended, the children educated better than ever before; desperate poverty, once common, is now
little known; honest work at least earns an honest competence; wages are higher to compensate for higher prices; "Our just and equal laws are a great encouragement to trade and industry, because every body kens that when he makes any property, be it muckle or little, it's his ain, and canna be ta'en from him; and our free government makes him sure, be he ever sae low born, that if he prosper in the world, he may haud up his head wi' the best in the land." Over all this is the fabric of the established Church, which binds the country together. The whole plot of Duncan's novel is organised to show how the abandonment of true religious principle, and the abandonment of the social attitudes expressed above, will lead to death, exile, disaster, murder, persecution. Webster survives the radical uprisings because he refuses to abandon the values of his early youth.

There is much that is familiar in this account, and the familiarity arises from its similarity to the Reminiscences of James Carlyle. He, too, had known desperate poverty, he had seen men literally unable to afford to buy food for themselves, he had lived in a family which existed at subsistence level. Yet (like Webster's reverend father) he worked on, in his own station, to achieve worldly prosperity sufficient for his needs, and he never questioned the

rightness of things as they were in social organisation. Yet the difference between Carlyle's father and Duncan's fictional William Webster points to the reason why Carlyle could not accept Duncan's social blueprint, which in its turn accepted the status quo as right and divinely ordained. Carlyle's father, though gravely respectful to his social betters, emphatically desired to be left to himself, indeed actively opposed the aristocracy when they tried to stop him from going his own way. He followed his own judgment in everything, under the overall control of what he judged a Christian code of morality. He accepted no status quo in any sense, but acted freely as he thought just and fit. Even in Church government he adopted this attitude, and frequently opposed the rest of the Burgher body when he disagreed with what it was doing. This tradition of independence was marked when later his descendants for a time abandoned the family Church, and became members of the Established Church at Waterbeck, over a dispute concerning the running of the Ecclefechan Secession Church. The dominant note here is independence, and it animates all Carlyle's analyses of his father's behaviour in the Reminiscences. It is important, extremely important, to see this, for it puts Carlyle's religious, as well as his political, thought into place during this period of his life. Independent in everything, he wished to make his own judgment, and to be left free to follow it without interference. In politics,

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8Reminiscences, 32.
this has been borne out in the examination of his thought during the Craigenputtoch years. The refusal to align himself with any party, the repeated retreat to Craigenputtoch and solitude (but independence), the professed lack of interest, even indifference, in the actual political developments of the time, the consciousness of the rottenness of the system, these are indebted to the proud isolation of the community from which Carlyle came. Once again, it may be stressed that Ecclefechan was not a small peasant village but a prosperous and expanding town dependent on industry for a large part of its income. It was known as a weaving town, and so Carlyle grew up among the working classes of both agricultural and industrial types. The reality of suffering was one he could well appreciate, having known among his hard-working Seceding friends in Ecclefechan many who suffered (as Carlyle's correspondence records) among the troubles of the '20's, and there are references in the letters to poverty and to bankruptcy which show that he had not come from a rustic idyll to the dangers of city life (like Duncan's William Webster) but to a scene where the conditions of youth were repeated on a larger and more violent scale. Although city life in Edinburgh may have appalled him by its dirt, noise and smell, the actual industrial conditions he knew there, when he lived in his poorer years in working-class areas, were merely a magnified version of Ecclefechan. The people, too, were akin to those of his youth, as a hint in Hugh Miller will convey.
Miller, writing of the reforming working-men who were politically active, and agitating for improvement, noted that they were "the intelligent Dissenters of Scotland", the other reformers being non-religious. In other words, among the working classes, there was not an Established Church party and a Dissenting party; "... the working men of Edinburgh and its neighbourhood, at this time, were in large part either non-religious, or included within the Independent or Secession pale." Now Carlyle retained throughout his Edinburgh years friendship with Ecclefechan friends, and was keenly interested in the movements towards reform in the early 1820's. In this he had company in Edward Irving, who saw poverty at even closer hand in the slums of Glasgow while ministering there with Chalmers. Both saw in Edinburgh the abortive 1820 radical uprising, both resisted the move to draw them into the middle-class militia to crush it, both hoped for the great social upheaval "against such a load of unveracities, impostures, and quietly inane formalities." Irving, however, became estranged from most of his friends, included Carlyle, because of the fanaticism with which he pursued his belief in the Apostolic Church, particularly his belief in the "Gift of Tongues" manifested

9 H. Miller, My Schools and Schoolmasters, 322.

in half-hysterical interjections into public worship by "prophets" among the congregation. Many of his congregation left him at this point, and his downfall was completed by heretical beliefs concerning the humanity of Christ, which resulted in his expulsion from the Ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1833. In 1833 Carlyle had adopted the position outlined in this chapter, seeing society's death and rebirth as inevitable, because of the corruption at its core. He wished only to stand back from it, and watch the result from a safe distance. Irving's approach was more affected by his extensive reading among apocalyptic writers, and his condemnation of the country is based on a vision of Christ's Second Coming which would be quite unacceptable to Carlyle. His technique of condemnation of each and every institution is in some ways similar to Carlyle's, but the conclusion quite different. "One common sleep beguiles them to perdition. The more fervently, O Lord, do I beseech thee to carry these truths into every corner of my miserable, sin-hardened native land." The truths were the Gospel, in Irving's interpretation, and his denunciations fill many volumes of the sermons he preached both as a Minister of the Church, and afterwards when his impassioned rhetoric could still draw huge open-air assemblies. Hence he endured the trials of the General Assembly (which he described as "ungodly") and the expulsion by his Presbytery in Annan, and died tragically early in
1834. Carlyle and he had parted decisively in 1832, after Irving had attempted (in London) a justification of his doctrine "... which did not last long, or do anything to convince me." While Carlyle's essay on *The Death of Edward Irving* shows the esteem in which he held his friend, the expression of Irving's belief, calling for a Christian Apocalypse, shows how far apart the two were by now. Not only Carlyle, but Dumfriesshire, had rejected Irving; insofar as Carlyle's sympathies lay in either direction, they lay with Dumfriesshire.

The outcome of this political discussion, then, is to focus attention on Carlyle's rejection of politics rather than on a new birth of interest on his part. Insofar as there was new birth, it was an earlier interest (dating to his childhood experience) intensified, or a new interest based on personality more than on theory. Carlyle's ridiculous early misjudgment of Mill (he thought he had made a disciple of him) is an indication of this truth, for it was the interest and respect of London audiences, particularly the young, which drew him into radical discussion, and the

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2 *A Judgement, as to what course the Ministers and the People of the Church of Scotland should take in consequence of the decisions of the late General Assembly by the Rev. E. Irving (Greenock, 1832)*, 15; see also *Trial of Edward Irving, late Minister in the National Scotch Church ... before the Presbytery of Annan, on 13th March, 1833* (Dumfries, 1833).

3 *Reminiscences*, 299-300.

4 *CME*, III, 297-300.
interest of personal debate (or at least hostility) which plainly animated his monologues which shocked New Town Edinburgh. Political systems interested him less and less at this time; his interest was concentrated on the people who suffered, on individuals whom he respected. Irving fell from grace, and his beliefs with him. The people to whom he returned were the Seceders of Ecclefechan and the working-population of his native countryside, particularly to the attitude embodied in his father. James Carlyle's death in 1832 clearly was a strong emotional force in Carlyle's life, and it made him examine his father with new eyes. It was a time of rejection of forces around him, and plainly he envied his father's massive calm, his self-control, his absolute faith, his independence. James Carlyle walked, indifferent and self-assured, through life, and Carlyle's political non-alignment at this time can be at least illuminated by comparing his behaviour, and his comments in letters, with that he is obviously admiring in his late father.

Interpreted in this way, Emerson's account of his 1833 visit to Carlyle in Craigenputtoch makes a new sense. "I found the house amid desolate heathery hills, where the lonely scholar nourished his mighty heart ... He was tall and gaunt, with a cliff-like brow, self-possessed, and holding his extraordinary powers of conversation in easy command; clinging to his northern accent with evident relish ... "not a person to speak to, within sixteen miles
except the minister of Dunscore." ... Gibbon he called the splendid bridge from the old world to the new ... He still returned to English pauperism, the crowded country, the selfish abdication by public men of all that public persons should perform."\(^5\) Worth noting here are the loneliness and self-sufficiency of a man living in total isolation, yet aware of what was around; not the provincial, oblivious of the state of the wider realm, yet a man who chooses solitude and independence. The minister of Dunscore (Bryden) was not an intimate in any case; he had cut the Carlyles on finding their religious beliefs to be unorthodox, and indeed this unorthodoxy is emphasised by the glowing reference to Gibbon's work. Yet the theme of Carlyle's conversation, as it remained in Emerson's memory after the visit, was the rottenness of public life, and a close concern with the plight of the poor. As an indication of Carlyle's actual state of mind in Craigenputtoch, towards the end of his stay there, Emerson's record is valuable. It has another value, however, in showing the professed reasons behind his removal from Craigenputtoch to London in 1834. After rejecting London in 1831-1832 and Edinburgh in 1833, there must have been some more deep-seated reason in Carlyle's mind than the obvious ones of loneliness and distance from books, publishers, literary friends. The reason he gave Emerson is very interesting.

"He was already turning his eyes towards London with a scholar's appreciation. London is the heart of the world, he said, wonderful only from the mass of human beings. He likes the huge machine. Each keeps its own round ..." 6 On the face of it this may seem paradoxical from the great critic of "machinery" in nineteenth-century life. Yet viewed in the light of his political thought at this time it is not so unintelligible. His desire to live in London is based on four wishes; to be in the centre of scholarly life; to be in the heart of a great city of many people; to be part of a "huge machine"; to be in an environment where each keeps his own round. The desire to be in scholarly London is understandable. He found great difficulty in finding a publisher with long postal delays when writing from Craigenputtoch. To be where each kept his own round is also an understandable wish, as his thoughts were conforming more and more to a desire for independence. A man who had known him in Craigenputtoch, Murdoch by name, was asked many years later if Carlyle had been sociable while living there. "Na, na; he aye keepit folks aff the road — him!" 7 What seems paradoxical is Carlyle's wish to be part of the "great machine", showing some ambivalence of feeling perhaps related to his strangely ambivalent

6 Emerson, loc.cit.

7 Noted by E.M. Sellar, Recollections and Impressions (Edinburgh and London, 1907), 242.
feelings towards Edinburgh. The wish was not to live in a mindless and terrifying machine (the nightmare of Sartor Resartus), which he attacked in Signs of the Times, but to be part of a great assembly of individuals existing in a fabric of society allowing each to pursue his own ends while enjoying the company and convenience of city life. The change of mind must have been a consequence of loneliness, too long continued, in Craigenputtoch; even in London, however, it may be noted that his first desire was to find a suburb as quiet and as remote as was practicable without being cut off from city life. This is how the Carlyles planned their London life, taking major part in its social life in literary circles (as nineteenth century letters and reminiscences testify amply), yet in their Chelsea isolation remaining quite independent, often seeing little company for days on end if Carlyle was busy. The struggles they had to maintain "country quiet" in Chelsea belong to the folklore of Victorian studies.

In this interpretation, then, the removal from Craigenputtoch to London in 1834 is not a change of attitude and principle, but something quite comprehensible in view of the development of Carlyle's thought. Perhaps Edinburgh was dismissed for the very friendliness of its welcome to the Carlyles in 1833. They were surprised to meet so many friends in casual walks along the city streets, and

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8Journal, 12 January 1833, quoted from Froude, II, 324.
remarked on this after the anonymity of London. In his aloof frame of mind Carlyle may be imagined to have weighed up the attractions of friendly Edinburgh and anonymous London, and decided on the latter.

Mention was made above of the similarity between Carlyle's dismissal of Whigs and his attitude (and the attitude of his Secession Church) to the Moderates. A connection can be seen between the religious development in his mind, the subject of preceding chapters, and the political development outlined above. A good starting point would be Carlyle's remark, already quoted, that every man's object in life was "to find a footing where he shall be able to snap his fingers in the face of men and devils." This is in the context of his religious arguments in the 1850's when, a public figure, he was pleading for a renewal of the nation's religious strength. The position, as outlined informally by him in conversation here, is strongly related to the position Teufelsdröckh takes during his soul-struggle in the Rue St. Thomas de l'Enfer. Carlyle's purpose in this section of Sartor Resartus is to establish the strength and independence of the individual in the face of suffering, and Teufelsdröckh's victory is the assertion of his selfhood in the fact of all his upsetting experience; interpreted by Carlyle as the achievement of spiritual manhood. This, it may be emphasised, is the independence

9Recorded in C. and F. Brookfield, Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle, 395.
which has been characterising his political thought, and which was typical of his father. Not just a family trait, it may be traced to his early religious roots, among the Seceders.

When an argument is made for comparing Carlyle with his family in political and other thought, one question which cannot be avoided is, how far is this valid in the light of Carlyle's rejection of the belief of that family? In his late teens Carlyle grew restless, in his early twenties he rejected Christianity, in his early '30's he enjoyed living in the same community again (at Hoddam Hill) yet with the outsider's awareness of the death of the system every time he heard the bells of Hoddam Kirk. So what of Carlyle in 1834? The clue lies in this same pattern of independence, but interpreted in Carlyle's own original way. First, it must be admitted that Carlyle did not lose his identification with the Burgher Seceders of his youth completely, although he may for a time have rejected Christianity almost completely, and certainly in maturity he never returned to the unquestioning faith of his childhood experience. He retained the strong anti-Prelatic prejudice of the Seceders,¹ the strong opinion of the necessity for a re-infusion of Holy Spirit into the Church which Edward Irving had expressed to Coleridge,² and which lay behind Carlyle's criticisms of

¹Carlyle admitted this in 1852; see Brookfields, Mrs Brookfield and her Circle, 387.

²Reported in T. Brash, Thomas Carlyle's Double-Goer, and his Connection with the Parish of Row (Helensburgh, [1904]).
contemporary churches. The petty differences of the Seceders did not alienate him from them as a party, and on their Union in May, 1821 as the United Secession Church he reported to his mother that "I rejoice to see so many worthy characters — casting off the old man — Laying down their miserable squabbles — and uniting in the good cause with all their heart." This is in direct opposition to the contempt he felt at the time for scepticism, particularly "the gimcrack palace of French rationality." The philosophe fades to insignificance in Carlyle's mind beside the concepts of earnestness, reverence, faith. This is not just a generalisation from the Reminiscences, it is amply attestable from the Critical and Miscellaneous Essays. In Voltaire, for instance, Carlyle defines Reverence as "the highest feeling that man's nature is capable of", in Sir Walter Scott the same respect is paid to "the feeling of a Heavenly Behest, of Duty god-commanded", in Boswell's Life of Johnson to the people going forth "to do battle against the mighty." Reverence is admirable, scepticism detestable, and the mechanical, in life or society,

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3TC-MAC, ?4 May 1821, MS:NLS 511.7, unpublished.
4T. Carlyle, Two Note Books, 45-46.
5CME, II, 14.
6CME, IV, 150.
7CME, III, 64.
8CME, I, 113 and III, 103.
horrible. This tallies completely with the Burgher Seceder world-picture which can be constructed from the Reminiscences and from other sources. Carlyle's mature attitudes on these matters, then, correspond closely to his earlier ones. His father admired authors as individuals (James Carlyle admired Adam Smith, without accepting his social theories, just as his son admired Voltaire without accepting his deistic position) and his son admired individuals as they tallied with his notions of right and wrong. Often these individuals were of a similar social class, and a similar religious persuasion, to those he had known in Ecclefechan.

Granted, then, that Carlyle retained respect for the Seceders, and to some extent a community of thought with them, further investigation may be made (as it was in the treatment of his political ideas) of the religious alternatives facing him. Full identification with the Seceders of Ecclefechan was impossible after the revolt of his early twenties. What of the Established Church? The strong pull here is not, as often assumed, Carlyle's Divinity Hall experience; this has been shown to be profoundly depressing to him, and revolting to his standards of true Christianity on the grounds of the utilitarian attitudes of staff and students alike, and also on the grounds of Carlyle's

9 CME, II, 103.

1 Reminiscences, 5; CME, II, 1-56, esp. 30.
hostility to the Moderate Establishment who staffed the Hall. They differed enormously from the earnest, non-utilitarian, completely selfless clergy of the Dumfriesshire Secession whom Carlyle admired. Divinity Hall could not interest him in the Established Church, but his early friendship with Henry Duncan of Ruthwell might have done so. Duncan has already been mentioned as the creator of the fictional William Webster, and he was a many-sided character, founder of Savings Banks, and of the Dumfries and Galloway Courier, amateur geologist of wide fame, educational reformer, and beloved minister of the Church of Scotland. It was he who patronised Carlyle and his friends in their student days, who published their early literary and scientific writing in his Courier, who employed some as teachers in his school and entertained all who visited him, and who reluctantly presided over the court of the Church which expelled Irving in Annan in 1833. Duncan was respected by Carlyle in his youth, gave him introductions to Edinburgh figures when he most needed them, and kept in close touch with him through friends and acquaintance. Although Duncan was to become a prominent figure in the Disruption, he must at this period of Carlyle's life have seemed the ideal of the Established ministry, humane, intelligent, socially concerned, scientifically curious. "In the course of time, Ruthwell Manse was considered a rendezvous for writers of all descriptions", writes one
Galloway historian; 2 another speaks of it as "the abode of true religion and literary refinement;" 3 and Carlyle records his visits among his letters. Duncan emerges as a man he can respect for the virtuosity of his interests (his scientific papers on fossilised footprints in 1827, and his work on the Ruthwell Cross were most impressive) and for his principles. Strongly Evangelical, Duncan took his parish duties seriously and was a powerful influence to correct the jaundiced view of the Ministry Carlyle felt after Divinity Hall. Other isolated figures in the ministry attracted Carlyle's favourable attention also: Irving's father-in-law, minister of Kirkcaldy, and Chalmers, who had been senior minister in St. John's Glasgow when Irving worked there.

These are the positive sides to the religious attitude forming in Carlyle's mind, individual figures whom he could respect and who represented a hope that there was still a hope that there was still a useful and living Church in a world which seemed increasingly mechanical and atheistic in Britain. Contrary factors repelled him, however. One has been mentioned, his hostility to the Moderatism which he saw in Edinburgh both in religion and in politics. Carlyle articulates his hostility to the Moderates most


clearly in the Burns essay, in which he extols the virtue of a strong individual Scot who "never saw Philosophy; never rose, except by natural effort and for short intervals, into the region of great ideas." This soul was exposed to the contagion of the "New Light" clergy, in Ayrshire and later in Edinburgh, where the "Learned of that period were in general more noted for clearness of head than for warmth of heart", and the result was a weakening of the peasant strength and individuality he had in his early days. "At the tables of these free-minded clergy, he learned much more than was needful for him. Such liberal ridicule of fanaticism awakened in his mind scruples about Religion itself; and a whole world of Doubts, which it required quite another set of conjurors than those men to exorcise." The time was particularly ill-chosen for this to happen to Burns, for it is the sceptical age which hastened his downfall beyond his powers of recovery. "He loses his feeling of innocence; his mind is at variance with itself; the old divinity no longer presides there; but wild Desires and wild Repentance alternately oppress him." Now, it is too easy to read this as Carlyle's commentary on his own loss of faith, but there can be little real support for this.

5 op.cit., 227.
6 op.cit., 223.
7 ibid.
In the first place this is written in 1827, when Carlyle had realised that he had not fallen as irrevocably as had Burns. In the second, he is writing from the nineteenth century, in which (as he repeatedly claims in his essays) the sceptical eighteenth has burnt itself out, and the massive confidence and religious support of German thought has made possible a new awakening. Thirdly, this is written from a position of implied superiority which makes it difficult to see Carlyle identifying fully with Burns. Burns came from a restricted home background, to fame in Edinburgh. Carlyle came from a small-town (not isolated country) background to an early Edinburgh career as literary hack; the two cases were not the same, and Carlyle is not here claiming for himself the sort of Moderate corrosion of a strong faith which he describes in Burns. His own case is much better put in the intellectual agonies of Wotton Reinfr. What matters in the Burns essay is the very explicit hostility to the Moderate clergy of Edinburgh, and the Moderate principles, to which he could in no way adhere.

Moderates were one party in the Church, and the Evangelicals directly opposed them. In particular, "The Seceders represented a type that was particularly unhappy and impatient in the company of the Moderates"; and this has already liberally been illustrated from Evangelical

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8G. Henderson, The Church of Scotland (Edinburgh, 1939), 106.
Another historian writes of the Moderates that their interests were "more cultural than theological and more ethical than religious. They were children of the Enlightenment, with its Erastianism and horror of enthusiasm. Hushing new voices of the Church, they fed the secessions, and fearing ecclesiastical innovation they fell behind the times." This comment is quite appropriate to Carlyle's case, considering his contact with the Moderate clergy and their stifling effect on his Secession Church feelings, and ambition to enter the Church. Reinforcing evidence comes from Irving's difficulty in finding a Church among the more orthodox congregations until the Evangelical Chalmers offered him an assistantship. Irving's is a classic case of the tensions discussed here. Bred by the Burgher Seceders, he went like Carlyle into the Divinity Hall of the Established Church, and persevered through his trial sermons to be ordained to the ministry of the established church. His friendship with Chalmers (it was no idolatory, for he indignantly repudiated the idea that he was Chalmers' protegee on arriving in London) led him to city experience of the need for social reform as intense as Carlyle's, and his sympathy with the working man.


1 The Metropolitan Pulpit, or Sketches of the Most Popular Preachers in London (London, 1839), I, 163. "I came here," Irving said warmly, "relying entirely upon my own resources."
was a feature of his character throughout his life. One reason for parting with Chalmers must have been disagreement with the latter's attitude, his distrust of the working classes. "Their 'irreligion' shocked his [Chalmers'] standards of order and decency. These were conservative, evangelical and agrarian. In post-war Glasgow he saw radicalism, demoralisation and destitution as a descending series of logical consequences ..."² This may well lie beneath the very understated criticism of Chalmers in the Reminiscences³ for neither Carlyle nor Irving hero-worshipped the good Doctor, though retaining respect for him. This shows the intense independence bred in both by the Burgher Seceder training of their youth. This was what permitted Irving to form his own doctrine, bred of the Moderate and Evangelical training he had already received, with the extra layers of interest his studies of the Spanish Mystics had added. He was part of the signs of the times himself, for "Evangelism in Scotland meant more than the secession of zealots and a rising tide of opposition to Moderatism in the church courts. There is abundant evidence of 'revivalistic' phenomena in Scottish (and Ulster) parish life from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century."⁴ Yet Irving fell.


Despite the generosity of Carlyle's tribute to him (The Death of Edward Irving), the letters of the period 1826-1833 leave no doubt that Carlyle had repudiated Irving as a wayward, half-mad creature. With the Moderates dismissed in his mind as unworthy of his admiration, and Chalmers also dethroned, this left him essentially stranded between the opposing parties of the Church. The Evangelicals, in the large scale (and the smaller secession bodies were uniting) did not grasp his attention, and it is unfortunate that Chalmers did not earn his respect. Irving would have represented the living Secession, Evangelical, sincere, inspired, had Carlyle and he remained friends. But with the "Gift of Tongues" controversy this link with the Church also was broken, and all that remained was the Church Carlyle had known in his youth. And so the pattern of the development of his political thought is repeated in his religious experience. Alienated by circumstance and character from the established and the secession church, from Moderates and Evangelicals, he retreated to the values he had known earlier, to admiration of individuals in the Burgher Seceders of Ecclefechan, to individuals he admired, his father, Johnston the minister of Ecclefechan, Johnston's son, pious working-class men he had known, and knew, in Ecclefechan.

The religious community he knew in his youth retained its charm for him long after the removal to London. He spoke in old age of the Bible as "the grand Old Book, crammed full of all manner of practical wisdom and sublimity --
a veritable and articulately divine message for the Heavenward guidance of man." This was the very attitude of his mother and his father, whose Biblical idioms in his speech suggested the familiarity with the book one would expect from the rest of his character. The identification with his early home goes deeper, however, as revealed when a new translation was produced for his inspection. He replied that he could not logically oppose the new version, "but, that his whole feeling went sorely against the altering of a single word or phrase, for he liked to use the very words his mother had taught him; and that dear old associations should be undisturbed." Sentiment may be involved partly here, but the remainder of the feeling expressed points to a pronounced continuing identification on Carlyle's part with his early religious experience. Further evidence occurs in a little-known letter of 1843 to Varnhagen Von Ense. "A man with a pen in his hand, with the gift of articulate pictorial utterance, surely he is well employed in painting and articulating worthy acts and men that by the nature of them were dumb. I on the whole define all writing to mean even that." This explains to

5 See, for example, Reminiscences, 11, and his mother's note on 6.


7 TC-Varnhagen Von Ense, 16 February 1845, MS: formerly Prussian State Library, Berlin: lost through war damage, pub. Last Words of Thomas Carlyle, 228. Italics mine.
a large extent the writing of the Reminiscences of James Carlyle, a pious act in memory of a man or remarkable talent who would otherwise be forgotten with his death. More than the memory of James Carlyle is involved, however, for to Carlyle there were great numbers of such worthy men in the area at the time of his childhood, and the fact is stressed in the Reminiscences. "Men that by the nature of them were dumb" fascinated Carlyle, who believed that the Scots had a "deeper and richer character as a nation" than the English, and that character was to be found among the poorest. "Is the true Scotchman the Peasant and Yeoman; chiefly the former?" Carlyle himself lived, dressed and spoke like just such a person. This explains the querulous (but very amusing) carping at Scott's version of Scottish history in the Two Note Books; the aristocracy alone were concerned, and one felt that "Scotland herself was not there." It was familiarity with religious matters which made Carlyle base his admiration for the Ecclefechan burghers on their religious certainties. "To me", he wrote in his journal, "there is nothing poetical in Scotland, but its

8 Cf. Reminiscences, 174-175.

9 T. Carlyle, Two Note Books, 135.

1 op.cit., 134. It is worth noting that he was unsure of the justice of his sweeping condemnation of the Scottish aristocracy. (pp. 133-134)

2 T. Carlyle, Two Note Books, 168-169.
Religion. Perhaps because I know nothing else so well.  

The Scottish peasant and his religion were the themes of Carlyle's monologues on the state of the times. "We had the Scottish Kirk, Wordsworth, Petrarch, Burns, Knox and Hume, the Church of England, Dante, heaven and hell, all through our 'growing hands;' and strange work was made with most of them." So wrote one man who had heard Carlyle declaim on the evils of the time at Jeffrey's home, Craigcrook, in 1840. "From the debris of Robert Burns a thousand Wordsworths might have been made", Carlyle said on the same occasion, and it is easy to see from the list of subjects how the declamation must have gone. The Kirk is mentioned in company with Burns and Knox, the English Church with Dante, heaven and Hell (and Hume!); the proximity of subjects in the hearer's memory suggests that Carlyle connected the Kirk with peasant strength, and Knox, whom he had elevated to heroic stature. However independent evidence exists of this equation in Carlyle's mind, in the form of a record kept of another of Carlyle's monologues on the evils of the time. "Scottish and English Universities, British Houses of Parliament, orthodox theologies, railroads, and free trade, were all shaken out and sifted under the category of Sham; while Oliver Cromwell and his Iron-sides

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3 op.cit., 132-133.

and the Old Covenanters who sang psalms and handled pikes on Dunse Moor, were held up to admiration as the only heroes in this country for the last two hundred years."\(^5\)

The equation here is clearly made, between the peasant faith of Carlyle's boyhood experience, and true religion. It was not his own invention, this equation, for it can be found also scattered through the works of Edward Irving.

"No one bred in towns," wrote Irving, "can comprehend the nature of a Scottish peasant's prayer, and the martyrwildness of their psalmody."\(^6\) Nothing Irving heard in pulpits, he went on to assert (and he had heard many sermons from Chalmers, whose preaching was quite outstanding)

"cometh near to what I have heard in the smoky cottages of my native country." He stated elsewhere that he had spent more pleasant hours among "the very lowest classes" of Scots, "the Lowland farmers, shepherds, and peasants of Scotland" than among "the learned of the land."\(^7\) Irving took pains to point out to his congregations the peasant worship of the Covenanters, and to make his own services resemble them where appropriate, perhaps thus "to strike a chord in the hearts of his hearers by touchingly alluding to Covenanting times."\(^8\)

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\(^7\) E. Irving, Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed of God: A Discourse on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse (Glasgow, 1826), II, 383.

\(^8\) J. Dodds, Personal Reminiscences and Biographical Sketches, 40. Irving's enthusiasm for the Covenanters led him to write "A Tale of the Martyrs" for the Dumfries Literary Cleaner (Dumfries, 1830), 328-335.
wishes to "reduce the British metropolis to a Scottish heath, with a few miserable hovels upon it, where they may worship God according to the root of the matter," but Irving was quite serious, and so was Carlyle. The Reminiscences testify to this.

The religious development preceding his move to London can thus be seen to conform to a pattern established in examining Carlyle's political ideas. Offended by various alternatives, he adheres to no system, but seeks personal freedom of thought, and admires individual characters and their heroism rather than any particular system or its exponent.

The final chapter which follows attempts to place Carlyle's reactions, traced in the preceding pages, against some background of thought from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the personal opinion, the violent hostility, and unshaken loyalty, these form part of a pattern which remains to be outlined.

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CHAPTER FIVE
The preceding chapter related changing patterns in Carlyle's thought to earlier forces operating on him, and offered an interpretation of some changes in his social and political thought as a re-assertion of earlier, localised values inherited from his home background. It remains in this chapter to turn the attention outwards, from re-asserting early forces, to the environment which had produced this process of re-assertion.

The great virtue of Ecclefechan and what it stood for in Carlyle's mind, as is abundantly clear from the Reminiscences, the correspondence, and elsewhere, is its character as a bastion of faith in a sceptical and faithless world. James Carlyle and his fellow-seceders are types of virtue standing up against the pressures of the world outside, Edward Irving the strong man who finally succumbs to these pressures. Carlyle's peak of happiness at this time was to re-establish himself with his family in Hoddam Hill, safe from the world, and regard the world from a distance while within the safety of his family's faith and way of life. Thus Teufelsdröckh, sitting in his "skyey Tent", was able to recompose himself after the turmoil of the "Everlasting NO" and the "Centre of Indifference."

"If, in my wide Wayfarings, I had learned to look into the business of the World in its details, here perhaps was the place for combining it into general propositions, and deducing inferences therefrom."¹ A revelation follows,

¹Sartor Resartus, 187.
the "Everlasting YEA", "wherein all contradiction is solved", and one problem which has worried the Professor is thereby banished. "Cease, my much respected Herr von Voltaire", says Teufelsdrockh, "... for the task appointed thee seems finished. Sufficiently hast thou demonstrated this proposition, considerable or otherwise: That the Mythus of the Christian Religion looks not in the eighteenth century as it did in the eighth ... But what next? Wilt thou help us to embody the divine Spirit of that Religion in a new Mythus, in a new vehicle and vesture, that our Souls, otherwise too like perishing, may live? What! thou hast no faculty in that kind? ... Take our thanks, then, and ---- thyself away."  

Significantly, his religious position reasserted, his doubts to some extent dispelled, Carlyle characterises the poison of which he is ridding his system as that of Voltaire. Voltaire to Carlyle is the symbol of eighteenth-century scepticism, and its attack on the Christian religion. Yet Voltaire is not thrown out so easily from the real-life Carlyle's imagination as he is from Teufelsdrockh's; like Diderot, he occupies a place of respect and considerable fascination despite his intellectual sins, and in this apparent contradiction lies an important key to the uncertainty and the doubts of Carlyle's developing years.

The French had first been drawn to his attention at Annan Academy, and he had read them extensively in Irving's

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2Sartor Resartus, 193-194.
Kirkcaldy library. Strangely, it was a French writer, Mme. de Staël, who first drew Carlyle to study German authors. "She did not make it clear what she thought was so important in Germany, but she made me feel that there had been something which would solve all the questions with which I was tormented."\(^3\) What he found in her was a writer who shared his growing interest in the moral value of writers; Mme. de Staël had admitted that "sans la morale, tout est hazard et ténèbres."\(^4\) Both she, and reading her work, Carlyle found in the Germans a moral depth and earnestness which satisfied some of their unhappiness at the state of contemporary literature, and indeed Carlyle's State of German Literature is an important plea for a judgment of the Germans in such a way as to give them credit for their peculiar excellences, rather than dismissing them for such badly-chosen (essentially French-inspired) reasons as their lack of taste. Taste, Carlyle maintains, is defined as "a general susceptibility to truth and nobleness", which makes the Germans above criticism on this matter, as they have their own criteria, "a certain clear, light, unaffected elegance, of a higher nature than French elegance, it might be."\(^5\) French elegance he had seen at

\(^3\)A. Adrian, "Dean Stanley's Report of Conversations with Carlyle", 73.

\(^4\)Mme. de Staël, De l'Allemagne (Paris, 1813), I, 18.

\(^5\)C.M.B., I, 31, 38.
first hand, in "Paris the Vanity-fair of our modern world!" and what he had seen had disgusted him. His reaction to the capital city typified his reaction to French books. "French books," he remarked to Richard Monckton Milnes, "have most dancing-dog thought about them; ours are like the quiet intelligent meditation of an elephant or a horse." Although a French book "exhilarates us and fills us with glorying for a season", it is the "comfort of an Indian who warmed himself at the flames of his — bed." It is, in short, unproductive and useless and destructive pleasure. On another occasion, after attending a French theatre in 1851, he reported himself disgusted by "their wretched mockeries upon marriage, their canine libertinage and soulless grinning over all that is beautiful and pious in human relations." The general point about the French character is one which transfers itself to Carlyle's description of French eighteenth-century philosophers in general; they are tainted by their age and by their nation. "Faith is gone out; Scepticism is come in. Evil abounds and accumulates ..." "Scepticism", he writes in Heroes and

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6 Two Note Books, 64.


8 Two Note Books, 85.

9 "Excursion (Futile Enough) to Paris; Autumn, 1851", quoted from Last Words, 164.

1 Carlyle, Works, I, 14.
Hero Worship, "means not intellectual Doubt alone, but moral Doubt; all sorts of infidelity, insincerity, spiritual paralysis."² The mal du temps and mal du pays taint those who work within the confines of eighteenth-century thought. "The age of Louis XV. is among the most barren of recorded ages."³ Voltaire, much as Carlyle admires certain features of his character, is "the man of his century." He embodies "whatever spiritual accomplishments were most valued by that age", he makes himself completely European in an age when France dominated European thought.⁴ Carlyle even admires Voltaire's power of trimming, of moving with the times, but his formulation of Voltaire's cleverness embodies his loathing of the environment. "He can talk blasphemy, and build churches, according to the signs of the times."⁵ Carlyle's signs of the times were radically different. Diderot, too, is the product of his times, "in such a confused world, under such unheard-of circumstances."⁶ His faults are summed up for Carlyle in the one statement that Diderot "was a Polemic of decided character, in the Mechanical Age."⁷

²Carlyle, Works, V, 170.
³CME, II, 53.
⁴CME, II, 5.
⁵CME, II, 11.
⁷CME, III, 229.
This last phrase is one to which we must return. Yet to sum up Carlyle's attitude to the French is not difficult, as it has been traced so far. The French aroused national antipathy in Carlyle, bred to earnestness and simple life, and his visits to Paris were both productive of highly critical diaries and letters home. The lifestyle of the French too is antipathetic, and bound up in his mind inextricably with the eighteenth century in France, its reign of the philosophes, denying, destroying, making barren. The extraordinary thing in Carlyle's major essays on French figures (Diderot, Voltaire) is the extent to which he can overlook his own prejudices to perceive virtue in their individual strength of character. Diderot and Voltaire are both shown at length as clever men who, despite living in an age which blighted their efforts (and eventually excluded them from stature as Heroes of Carlyle's world) employed their intellects to produce good work according to their own lights. This is Carlyle's positive praise, and in both essays it is united with marked interest in the biographical material to which he has access regarding his subject. They are, like many of the Critical and Miscellaneous Essays, not "reviews" in the strict sense: Carlyle frequently confessed early in his "reviews" that he had no intention of following the usual pattern of such essays. They are manifestos, declarations of Carlyle's interest in the previous century, and they offer a valuable insight. In each case, Carlyle is
positively drawn to the eighteenth century by the attraction of personality, and by the success of the person in being active, in producing, in employing his faculties to the best of his ability despite the drawback of his environment. What repels him is the attitude which results from the environment, frivolity, baseness, lack of seriousness, mechanical thought.

To return to Diderot, the remark that he was a Polemic in a "Mechanical Age" leads to a major topic in Carlyle's consideration of the previous century. Signs of the Times is familiar to Victorian students as a great counter-statement to mechanical systems of thought and mechanical styles of life. This theme was to be developed and constantly popularised by Carlyle. Mechanism, the mechanical in life, is death. As late as 1873 Carlyle was hammering home this point. "Referring to the mechanical spirit of the age he remarked, 'Human beings with souls in their bodies cannot rest satisfied in that belief; they will have to come out of that.'"8 The eighteenth-century was very guilty of mechanical thinking. "The only use to which they put the intellect was not to look outwardly upon nature, and love or hate as circumstances required, but to inquire why the thing was there at all, and to account for it and argue about it."9 Gibbon, despite Carlyle's early

8E.W. Marrs, Jr., "Reminiscences of a Visit with Carlyle in 1878 by his Nephew and Namesake", Thoth VIII, 2 (1967), 82.
admiration for him as "the splendid bridge from the old world to the new", 1 was guilty of this same fault. "With all his swagger and bombast", Carlyle said, lecturing only five years later, "no man ever gave a more futile account of human things than he has done of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire; assigning no profound cause for these phenomena, nothing but diseased nerves, and all sorts of miserable motives, to the actors in them." 2 This is the perennial complaint in Carlyle against "mere" philosophers, whom he wrote off as "logic choppers", even his brother John coming under this description. Diderot, at worst, is a "Philosophic-Atheistic Logic-Mill." 3 The Mechanical system of thought is not only destructive of human spirit and soul; "... the Mechanical System of Thought is, in its essence, Atheistic." 4

The real sin in mechanical thinking is to apply it to the conditions of everyday life. The practical results are pointed at in Signs of the Times, the theoretic ones in Diderot. In this latter essay Carlyle traces two results which follow from atheistic mechanism. One is concerned with a subject Carlyle had already encountered, and which

1 The remark is quoted from Emerson's English Traits ([Riverside edition] London, 1883), 18.

2 T. Carlyle, Lectures on Literature, 176-177.

3 CME, III, 194.

4 CME, III, 232.
had troubled him in his student days — Natural Theology. In 1833, his faith re-established in new form, he dismissed Natural Theology; man's belief in final causes is attained "not by glimmering flint-sparks of Logic, but by an infinitely higher light of intuition." The "extant Natural Theologies, as our innumerable Evidences of the Christian Religion, and such like", are of value to counteract "the strange season they appear in" — the sceptical eighteenth century — but they prove nothing. This is the work of divine intuition. Equally unnecessary is the controversy surrounding the other concept, that of the "Machine Universe", which so terrified Teufelsdrockh before his "Everlasting YEA". This, Carlyle is convinced, "may turn out to be an inanity and nonentity, not much longer tenable", in the light of new-dawning faith from Germany.\(^5\)

Carlyle's earlier soul-struggles over the idea of an Absentee God, over Natural Religion, belong to the era before his conversion to a new faith with the aid of the Germans. In his mature faith he can look back on these soul-struggles, which at the time were painful partings from an inherited and valued world-picture, painfully recollected in Wotton Reinfred, and classify them with the influence of the sceptical eighteenth century, particularly of France.

\(^{5}\)CMEX, III, 230-231.
A connection, however, requires to be made at this point. To return to the essay on Voltaire, it may be repeated that Carlyle saw Voltaire as the Man of Europe, most perfectly adapted to what the Continent wished, and reflecting this in his own character. The French and the European character were thus blended into one horrid tissue of scepticism and unbelief. This idea is carried a step further in the essay on Diderot. Here Carlyle exemplifies the thought of Diderot "and his followers" in this proposition, "That in the French System of Thought (called also the Scotch, and still familiar enough everywhere, which for want of a better title we have named the Mechanical), there is no room for a Divinity...." In this, Carlyle specifically links Scottish and French philosophical ideas, and introduces a link between them and "mechanism" which helps to explain part of his reaction against the centre of Scottish philosophy, Edinburgh.

Edinburgh Whiggism has already been cited as a source of dissatisfaction to Carlyle, and Jeffrey's exemplification of it seemed an opposition to Carlyle's desire to find new faith. Jeffrey represented dead Whiggism in his politics, and his dead editorial hand (in his pruning of the Burns essay) the Edinburgh answer to Carlyle's new-found faith. This is, admittedly, an attitude born of bitter memory rather than actual fact. In kinder moments Carlyle

\[6^\text{CME, III, 230.}\]
recollected Jeffrey's enormous kindness; "when my essays on Goethe and German literature were published there was an outcry by a number of people asking who was this that was wanting to drive them back to the incomprehensible and the absurd? But Jeffrey said that it might be as well to watch and see if the man had really something to tell them before they abused him." This is closer to the real-life Jeffrey, who acknowledged in his much-abused review of Goethe's Meisters Lehrjahre the international nature of genius, and his full recognition of Goethe's German genius, however eccentric its form in the work under review. But Jeffrey and the Edinburgh critics, and the literature centred on Edinburgh, and the philosophy which owed so much to Edinburgh as a culture-centre, suffered in Carlyle's mind from a clear connection with French, European, sceptical thought and literature. The passage from Burns, quoted below, amply illustrated this link in Carlyle's mind.

For a long period after Scotland became British, we had no literature: at the date when Addison and Steele were writing their Spectators, our good John Boston was writing, with the noblest intent, but alike in defiance of grammar and philosophy, his Fourfold State of Man. Then came the schisms in our National Church, and the fiercer schisms in our Body Politic: Theologic ink, and Jacobite blood, with gall enough in both cases, seemed to have blotted out intellect of the country; however, it was only obscured, not obliterated. Lord Kames made nearly the first attempt at writing English; and ere long, Hume, Robertson, Smith, and a whole host of followers, attracted hither the eyes of all

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7I. Campbell, Portrait of Carlyle.
Europe. And yet in this brilliant resuscitation of our 'fervid genius,' there was nothing truly Scottish, nothing indigenous; except, perhaps, the natural impetuosity of intellect, which we sometimes claim, and are sometimes upbraided with, as a characteristic of our nation. It is curious to remark that Scotland, so full of writers, had no Scottish culture, nor indeed any English; our culture was almost exclusively French. It was by studying Racine and Voltaire, Batteux and Boileau, that Kames had trained himself to be a critic and philosopher; it was the light of Montesquieu and Mably that guided Robertson in his political speculations; Quesnay's lamp that kindled the lamp of Adam Smith. Hume was too rich a man to borrow; and perhaps he reacted on the French more than he was acted on by them: but neither had he aught to do with Scotland; Edinburgh, equally with La Flèche, was but the lodging and laboratory, in which he not so much morally lived, as metaphysically investigated. Never, perhaps, was there a class of writers so clear and well-ordered, yet so totally destitute, to all appearance, of any patriotic affection, nay of any human affection whatever.

This is a very remarkable source of information on Carlyle's attitude. In the first place we may notice his use of the "we" as distinctively "we Scots", including the writer; his early neutral style of the essays for Brewster's Encyclopaedia (published as Montaigne and other Essays, Chiefly Biographical) eschewed such patriotism, and referred to "England" when Britain was in question. Now Carlyle takes part in the discussion, he throws his lot in with one side, and battles against what Edinburgh represents. This is a whole-hearted process in the Critical and Miscellaneous Essays; eighteenth-century Edinburgh figures are very often quoted only to show how out-of-date they are, how

little they are paid attention to. Their theories, their attitudes and ideas are linked in his mind with those of the eighteenth-century French, and so dismissed as dying, frivolous, unimportant. The second point of interest is to see Boston put forward, a specimen of Carlyle's early reading when the family staple was John Owen, MacEwan, Boston; this, Carlyle claims, is Scottish literature, and the religious schisms which accompanied and followed such writings are played down in comparison to the upheaval of the Jacobite rebellions. Whether or not this is a fair judgment in literary terms, it shows Carlyle's re-identification with the community of his youth, publicly to put John Boston forward as representative of Scottish literature to a readership who would treat this proposition hostilely. The point is not without clever support, for Carlyle would be trapped into making Boston a superior literary figure to Kames and the others, if he were to extol him as a Scottish writer and dismiss the others. Carlyle sees the insecurity of his position, and neatly evades the issue by denying to eighteenth-century Edinburgh writers the title of Scottish. They are merely tenants in Scotland, writing of it, investigating it, not living in it.

The third, general point, which makes possible this extraordinary proposition of denying Edinburgh a Golden Age in Literature is that it was, properly speaking, no Scottish culture, but a French one. This attitude permits Carlyle to abuse the age, to consider it not only sterile
but contagiously harmful. Thus it is "a flat, continuous thrashing-floor for Logic, whereon all questions, from the 'Doctrine of Rent' to the 'Natural History of Religion,' are thrashed and sifted with the same mechanical impartiality." Again the natural history of religion comes to his mind with horror, the attempt to impose a mechanical system on a supra-mechanical erection bounded by nothing, susceptible to the operation of no laws, no logic-chopping. The contagion is seen easily in Carlyle's description of the harmful powers of this "French" Scottish, Edinburgh-based culture on Burns, destroying the noble peasant, sending him away with his innocence corrupted. If compared with Carlyle's address in Dumfries on Burns, where the native worth and local strength of the man, the type of the noble Scot, are emphasised, the bitterness of Carlyle's attack on the eighteenth-century Scottish writers will be seen to be emphasised.

Fortunately other attacks by Carlyle on the eighteenth-century Edinburgh writers survive. Carlyle was interested in Scottish literary figures, and possessed considerable national pride. He retained his Scottish habits, dress, way of life to the end, and Burns was the last book he ever

9CME, I, 218.

read. He would have enjoyed learning even more of Scottish literary history than he did from his residence in Edinburgh. Writing from Edinburgh to a friend in 1826, he proposed a series of "Scottish Biography, especially that of Scottish literary men. Except Buchanan (a heavy enough gentleman, he seemed to me) we have no account that I could ever find of our ancient worthies. Who was Gavin Douglas? Who was Sir David Lindsay? Who was Baron Napier? These questions we must answer in a half sentence. Did it never come into your head to start a regular series of Scottish (purely Scottish) literary Biography?"

Nationalism grew in Carlyle's mind as he recovered, gradually, from his doubts and self-questionings. It typifies both his renewed self-confidence and his increasing ability to identify himself once more with a milieu, after a period of rejection of previous experience. German thought gave him a new faith, but the process bred in him not a loyalty to Germany, but a renewed Scottishness, a new strength of personality after a self-reconstruction gradually undertaken, and painfully achieved. He was then willing to identify — very selectively — with what he admired, having rejected so much. His remarks on eighteenth-century literature are in keeping with this.

2 Catalogue of Printed Books ... Formerly The Property of Thomas Carlyle, 1795-1881 (London, 1932), 3. (Item 15)

What he admired has been shown to be, predominantly, features of his early, Scottish, experience, and so Carlyle's attitudes to Scotland, to Edinburgh, are important as manifestations of a growing confidence and self-awareness.

One unusual national attitude, curious in that we find Carlyle in a utilitarian mood, lies in his remarks on the English universities. Oxford and Cambridge offended Carlyle by the way he thought they indurated young men against reverence; "Now we are proof", he imagined the graduates saying, "we have gone through all the degrees, and are case-hardened against the veracities of the Universe; nor man nor God can penetrate us." In the *Latter Day Pamphlets* the "Etons and Oxfords" are seen as out-of-date and inadequate seminaries "for the training of young English souls to take command in human industries, and act a valiant part under the Sun!" Yet these places, called "logic-shop and nonsense-verse establishment", are lumped together in another of the pamphlets with Edinburgh — "Eton, Oxford, Edinburgh, Halle, Salamanca, or other High Finishing-School." May be this is a mere fit of annoyance, but it certainly shows Carlyle dismissing Scottish

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6 T. Carlyle, *Works*, XX, 211.
education with the worn-out part of the English. Yet the quirk of attitude mentioned above, the utilitarian approach to education, was a remark he made to a casual visitor about the respective merits of a Scottish and English university education. "At Cambridge or Oxford there are many advantages for a young man. He rubs against the best in the land, and learns in manners and style, and in a correct enunciation of our own language, much that is useful to him in after-life. He has too ... the road open to appointments under the Government, — places of great honour and emolument, that are not open to the Scotch Universities. If a young man leaves Edinburgh or Aberdeen, however high his attainments, — though he rank with the cleverest at Cambridge, — he has not this outlook, but has to fight his way single-handed."

These half-bitter words reflect the experience of a man who reached success in life despite the disadvantages he describes.

This hostility to the Scottish universities, however, is not typical of his attitude to his Scottish roots. When his brother Alexander considered emigration (in 1822) Carlyle wrote, "Could you banish yourself from all that is interesting to your mind, forget the history, the glorious institutions, the noble principles of old Scotland, that you might eat a better dinner perhaps (which you little care

7"A Visit to Carlyle", by "L" in The Carlisle Patriot 26 December 1884.
for), or drink more rum (which you care nought for) as a great pursy Yankee? Never! my boy — you will never think of it. Scotland has borne us all hitherto; we are all Scots to the very heart; and the same bleak but free and independent soil will I hope receive us all into its bosom at last." Brave words, but addressed to a man who was to emigrate to Canada, from a man who was to renounce residence on Scotland's bleak but independent soil in favour of the warmer and equally independent environment of Chelsea. This examination of Carlyle's attitude shows him torn between an emotional desire to live in Scotland, and a practical knowledge of the disadvantages, and disgust with parts of Scottish life. It is a predicament familiar among Scottish authors of the time. Carlyle, on the surface, rejected Scotland decisively for residence in England. Yet his growing national pride, at the same period of his life, showed how little this was a rejection. Carlyle's sympathies lay in many ways with Scotland and Scottish experience, not in a systematic way but in his reactions to various attitudes in others. Fortunately a clear example has lately been discovered which illustrates this point.

The semi-autobiographical novel Watton Reinfred occupied Carlyle's spare time during his early residence in Edinburgh, and in it many of the questions which tormented him are

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8 TC-AC, 22 February 1822, MS:A Carlyle family, Canada, pub. Marrs, 105-108.
discussed. German mysticism, the work of Kant (which he was struggling to understand at the time), religious doubt, his unhappy education, his tragic love-affair with "Jane Montagu", are some of the topics covered. The attitude to Scotland, also, is slightly indicated. Wotton, hearing Scotch philosophy mentioned in an ambiguous way, asks if it is "in very bad odour" locally, "somewhat piqued for the honour of his country." The subject is merely raised, and instantly dropped. But in an unpublished part of the novel, crossed out by Carlyle soon after writing (the manuscript was not completed, and so presumably unrevised) the topic of Wotton's (and so Carlyle's) Scottish pride is very fully dealt with.

[... but to forget them was a living death].

"Of the guests most part had been out all day; on the mountains, on the Lake; fishing, hunting, botanizing: a few seemed to have been occupied in business or study within doors. Sketches of personal adventures chiefly prevailed till the cloth was removed: after which insensibly the conversation took a higher or at least a wider range. Opposite our Friend sat an ancient gentleman of a rather singular look. Of a spare shrunken form, his little bullet

9 This clearly is the "Margaret Gordon" episode, the name being compounded from Jane Welsh's, and from a London friend Mrs. A.D.B. Montagu.

1 Last Words, 53.
head, surmounted by a patch of brown scratch-wig, exhibited a face still full of liveliness and well-being tho' it had been puckered by Time into the colour and consistency of shrivelled parchment. His small gray eyes were clear and sprightly; only that the lids had somewhat perversely sunk half over them; so that in looking and speaking, he was forced to elevate his head till the chin almost came into a level with the brow. He had been presented to Wotton, as Sir Gideon Dunn, a Scotchman and a man of Science. 'I rejoice, Mr Reinfred,' said Sir Gideon passing the bottle, with a calm adroitness as he spoke, 'I rejoice to see you with your face southward. True it is, as old Samuel said it! A Scotchman has many fine prospects; but none half so fine as the great Turnpike to England.' A very slight titter from one or two young persons rewarded the cosmopolitism of Sir Gideon.

'Proof that the English like us,' answered Wotton with a smile, tho' the observation little satisfied him.

'Like us? Nay that they cannot get rid of us!' cried the same gay husky voice. 'At home, what have we? Hunger and logic! Theories without end and no Practice. Political discussion with nothing to divide; twenty Critics for one Poet; Essays innumerable on civil government and no Public Spirit; full accounts of the Formation of the Earth and land that maintains a sheep and a half per acre! Confess with me, it [is] a poor and barren country, and altogether very pleasant to-quit.'
Wotton's face was darkening, but he spoke not; he only smiled and shook his head. 'There is no substance in the people', continued Gideon: 'they live in smoky huts, fare ill, are hard-worked.[]

'If dining on pudding be a moral virtue, many of the Scotch are indeed miserably deficient,' said Wotton, 'and scarcity is never out of sight from year's end to year's end. But look at England! Rich, abundant, merry England! Commend me to the land of Plenty, where the very cattle are fat and sleek, and each man — as the song goes, 'thinks it sin without pudding to dine!' If I were a Scottish quadruped, I think I should agree with you; but being a Scottish man I shall crave permission to doubt. You speak of Poverty. But are the [word illegible] of the Stock Exchange the flower of England? And what of our barrenness? Believe me, Sir Gideon, there is still a trifle of food left in the country; at least so, from Buchanan to Adam Smith, have many Scotchmen rendered probable, and neither you nor I have yet died of hunger.'

Sir Gideon joined in the laugh with the loudest. 'Bravo!' cried he: 'This is what I like: the true Scotch thistle; Nemo me impune! Your health, countryman, and to our better acquaintance! I am a Scot as well as you, however I may talk. Wotton pledged the humourist, of whom he scarcely knew what to make.

'It is cruel even to jest so,' said the fair Dorothy: 'Nothing lies so near a good man's heart as his Fatherland
the land of his birth when he is parted from it. If it be poor and barren, nay if it even be degraded and despicable, it but appeals to him more surely: it is his mother still, his mother brought to beggary, whose wretchedness he hastens to hide if he cannot relieve it.'

'Comparisons are odious,' said Maurice, such was the name of their host.

[The cloth being removed, conversation, which had hitherto turned chiefly on various personal adventures of the morning . . ."

Traces of Carlyle's youthful experience abound in this passage. Bernard Swane is very possibly Edward Irving, and Sir Gideon (for reasons argued in an appendix) Professor John Playfair, who had taught Carlyle Natural Philosophy in Edinburgh. Carlyle's dissatisfaction with the classes he then attended is vented in this passage, and his portrait may well be drawn from life, in some conversation he had overheard where Playfair gave voice to opinions like those recorded here.

Wotton, however, Carlyle's voice, is shown by Carlyle himself to be a decided nationalist. His main point is that Scotland has not the material advantages of England, but this is unimportant beside the immaterial advantage —

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2 I am grateful to Professor K.J. Fielding for the discovery and copying of this passage, and to the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, for permission to use it. Its place would have occurred in the published text in Last Words, 59, with the text immediately preceding and following indicated in square brackets.
the pride he himself feels at being a Scot. Poverty is no sin, Carlyle maintained, and patriotically reminded his hearers of Scottish advances in agriculture which had made progress in that field possible. Wotton here passionately defends Scotland against accusations of barrenness, in the material or spiritual sense, opposing a fierce nationalism to the logical arguments of the expatriate Scot, a type against whom Carlyle had reacted violently as in the case of Thomas Campbell, met in London in 1824.

Here, for once, Carlyle openly admits to nationalistic tendencies, quickly retracted. His nostalgia for Scotland was for the peasant country he had known in his youth, for the countryside in which lived the people he admired and whose ideas remained with him. This was a private feeling, not one to be paraded like Barrie's superficially similar intention in *A Window in Thrums*. Barrie is parading the values of Kirriemuir, provincial, static, religious, smug, as a comfortable haven in a rapidly industrialising world which knows these days have past, yet which returns to them in fiction for the warmth of imagined residence in such a town. This is a slightly patronising attitude on the part of an audience living in vastly different conditions, in a different social class, knowing it is being invited to a fantasy world long dead. There is none of this in Carlyle. While he may have opted out of the uncomfortable side of Scottish farming life himself, to live in Chelsea, he retained sincere admiration for the Scottish peasantry,
as did Edward Irving, admiration for a people still existing, still strong, in some ways stronger than the writer himself, belonging to a community which gave their lives a purpose which the writer envies. Obviously, sentiment is mixed with this nostalgia, but in Carlyle's case, with the Reminiscences of James Carlyle to give ample detail, there is a wealth of genuine admiration for the Scottish peasant community. Early in his life he admitted to "becoming a patriot of the most decided stamp. Scornfully as I used to speak and think of Scotland in my hours of bitterness and irritation, I never fail to stand up manfully in defence of it thro' thick and thin, whenever a renegade Scot takes upon him to abuse it."³ This is patriotic pride, and clear-headed pride, too, for he admits that in London "... I think of the grim landscape of Perthshire or the bleak simplicity of Annandale with a pleasure which the sight of them was often far from giving."⁴

Edinburgh, then, is quite subverted in Carlyle's mind from the position one might reasonably expect, namely that of culture-capital of a country enjoying a "Golden Age." It becomes a city of sceptical thinking by a curiously neutral body of thinkers, divorced from their country,

⁴ibid.
propagating a pernicious doctrine. Scotland — the real Scotland — is in the countryside, the country people, once again the community from which Carlyle himself came. This identification is not with a system of thought, a system like the one manifested by eighteenth-century French thinkers. Rather it is an occasional one with individuals and the ideas they stood for.

Definitely, however, Edinburgh does not symbolise what he values in Scotland. He rejects Edinburgh, and the Edinburgh philosophers. This makes more intelligible his attitude to the education he received in Edinburgh. This was designed to revolve completely round the study of philosophy, and the philosophers who taught it (both in the strict sense, and those teaching "philosophical mathematics" and "natural philosophy") were the disciples of the Edinburgh great figures of the Golden Age. Thomas Brown followed on from Stewart, Playfair belonged to the later stages of the great period, Leslie had experienced the strong feeling which characterised the relations between the eminent literati and the town authorities (a later example of which was the Town Council’s treatment of Jeffrey’s political ambitions). In a sense, Carlyle only just missed the "Golden Age"; he was taught by men who had been part of it, or who succeeded "Golden Age" figures. It has already been shown how his experience at university was quite the opposite of the intended education designed by the authorities. He rejected the pattern of learning
imposed on the students, and subjected himself to strenuous self-education in fields not emphasised, in rhetoric and literature, in the French authors he had first met in Annan Academy, but who formed no part of the Arts curriculum he attended.

Nevertheless his experience was not one totally negative; he definitely derived benefit from Leslie, possibly did so from Christison. Arguably, Carlyle shared to some extent, however little, and in a short-term way, in the ideals of the golden age.

Peter Gay has described, and brilliantly analysed, the eighteenth century as one where men "found their nerve". "In the century of the Enlightenment, educated Europeans awoke to a new sense of life. They experienced an expansive sense of power, over nature and themselves: the pitiless cycles of epidemics, famines, risky life and early death, devastating war and uneasy peace — the treadmill of human existence — seemed to be yielding at last to the application of critical intelligence." The result of the awakening, the Enlightenment, was an enormous outburst of energy, and Professor Gay has described how this energy was turned to exploration of the past (in his first volume), and on the world of the Enlightenment in his second. Another historian has emphasised the same outburst of energy, of enquiring interest, and applied his conclusion to

Hume. "In all this Hume is representative of his century. Its characteristic note is not a disillusioned indifference, but an eager didactic impulse to set things right." Hume carried this interest, this energy, into Edinburgh, and affected the city twice over, once by the fertilising power of his presence (he had an enormous and brilliant circle of friends) and again by the reaction among other Edinburgh philosophers who sought to re-establish systems and beliefs dangerously threatened by Hume. One such was Reid, and Reid's keenest critic was Thomas Brown. The study of Thomas Brown may add to our understanding of Carlyle's attitude to Edinburgh.

Brown was part of the last stages of the "Golden Age", and was typical of the city in that he existed not as an individual so much as part of a brilliant circle. He numbered among his friends Stewart, Robison, Playfair, Black, Horner, Leyden, Reddie, Erskine, and "there was no subject in literature or philosophy, that did not engage their attention." The Enlightenment attitude is seen in this circumstance, certainly -- the willingness to enter into any debate on life or letters, to discover more about...


life and about the world. Brown himself would have been admirable as an Enlightenment figure in Professor Becker's analysis. He studied law, qualified in medicine in addition, published poetry, "dipped deeply into the German philosophy", was a distinguished classicist, published a controversial pamphlet on Darwin's theories, was an unsuccessful candidate for the chairs of Rhetoric and of Logic at Edinburgh University, and finally made an immense reputation as a lecturer in moral philosophy before dying at an early age. This was not mere omnivorous talent, it was part of the curiosity of the times to know as much as possible about the world, to exploit the talents given the individual to the full. When the controversy over Leslie's election took place, he plunged wholeheartedly in. "In a question where the interests of science, and the honour of Scotland were so vitally concerned, Dr. Brown could not remain an unconcerned spectator." He wrote a pamphlet not in defence of Leslie as an individual; instead he "boldly undertook to prove that the doctrine of Hume upon this point [causation] was not fraught with one dangerous consequence." This is a sign of these times; not only in the prestigious ability to enter the controversy from another field, but to take part in the prevalent exercise of countering the consequences of Hume's arguments. Brown neither defended Leslie nor attacked Hume, but

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9D. Welsh, "Life of Brown", ix.
concentrated on making his point by turning to the original question, and examining that. This is typical of the man. He is animated by the interests of science, by the honour of his country, and he turns his defence into philosophical argument. He is supremely concerned with freedom, with "the diffusion of knowledge and of liberal opinion", and the attempt of the city clergy to stifle these two roused him. He wished for "The most perfect toleration of all religious opinions, and an unshackled liberty of the press", and he brought his formidable powers (allied, incidentally, with an acquaintance with "the principles of almost all the fine arts") to work on the establishment of these states.

Here the character of the Edinburgh Enlightenment (as distinct from the French philosophes) begins to become somewhat different, for Brown's concern for perfect religious freedom is somewhat different from "Écrasez l'Infâme!" Hume had caused an immense reaction, among Christian thinkers, to the sceptical conclusions of his arguments; but it was a contest, partly joined for the sake of the contest (Hume numbered members of the moderate clergy among his friends), partly for genuine reasons of re-establishing a shaken faith. In Carlyle's student days Hume was regarded with regret, as Carlyle showed in his letters; "What a pity he is a Deist!", a strong mind, lost to the

1D. Welsh, "Life of Brown", xxii.

2op.cit., xxiii.
world by his wrong thinking. Brown and his Enlightenment colleagues are men of more secure religious faith; witness the earlier discussion of Brown's lectures, certainly not the source of Carlyle's university-induced scepticism. Many of the Edinburgh philosophers sought to undermine Hume's conclusions by the close study of sensational arguments, by scientific study of psychology, following Hume's method but establishing (if possible) that the arguments Hume used could also be used to lead to a proof of the existence of God, not of the worthlessness of the proofs of His existence. There was genuine interest in (and pleasure in) the argument, and it must have been with some of this method, although with different subject matter, that Carlyle entertained his family during his university vacations, greatly to their interest and pleasure.  

Where they differed was in the application of argument. Reid and his school were, Brown's biographer writes, occupied mostly in "the induction of facts", while to Brown facts "had little other interest, but as they were to be analysed and arranged. And his arrangements were made, not according to the accidental uses, but according to the essential properties of the objects." Neither (as he showed in his early letters) interested Carlyle. Brown's systematic nature, so remarkable as to be much admired at

3 _Reminiscences_, 12.  
the time, was mere mechanical time-wasting to Carlyle.
His justification of each arrangement was time-consuming
in lecture, his attacks on Reid (which are open and
obvious) of little interest to the non-specialist.
Hence it is that the man of the Enlightenment in Edinburgh,
who exemplified much of what was best in the energy of the
time, its restlessness and free (yet rigorous and scientific)
enquiry into the world, its humane toleration of other
opinion, repelled Carlyle, who was seeking other things.
Dependent as he was on self-education, Carlyle required
something less systematic, more "inspiring" than the
systematic exposition of a method which gained none of his
sympathy. It was this which lingered in his memory to
make the memory of Edinburgh literati that of "mechanical"
thinkers. He did not share the passion for ideas pursued
by systematic enquiry — he had quite a separate passion
for ideas. Yet he shared the loneliness, the sense of a
shaken religious faith and certainty. Brown could not offer
him this, and so Enlightenment Edinburgh and Carlyle failed
to make what could have been a useful contact. Brown,
polymath, humane, Christian, enlightened, sensitive to
literary excellence, would have leavened Carlyle's education
at a crucial period.

Instead Carlyle turned to Leslie. In a long-term
view, Carlyle's needs were those Brown might have filled, a
renewal of shaken religious certainty, literary guidance, a
viable moral philosophy. Leslie, on the other hand,
offered natural philosophy, that part of the Enlightenment exploration of the world which survived least in the later century. Maclaurin, in the Golden Age, had published a schema of Natural Philosophy, "to describe the phenomena of nature, to explain their causes ... and to inquire into the whole constitution of the universe, is the business of natural philosophy ... But natural philosophy is subservient to purposes of a higher kind, and is chiefly to be valued as it lays a sure foundation for natural religion and moral philosophy; by leading us, in a satisfactory manner, to the knowledge of the Author and Governor of the universe." Hence our views of Nature serve to show us "that mighty power which prevails throughout." This underlay the teaching of mathematics as practised in Scottish universities in the age of the Enlightenment. In Leslie's classes, both in mathematics and in the natural philosophy in which he later interested Carlyle, the subjects were taught in a manner which made them susceptible to use as means of exploration of the universe, types of the systematic examination of existence (life, society, history) which characterized the Enlightenment. The Christian basis of Maclaurin's schema, we may surmise, was not stressed by Leslie. This approach to the subject, as Dr. Davie has shown in The Democratic Intellect, was shortly to be abandoned in favour of a "pure" mathematics

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5 C. Maclaurin, An Account of Sir Isaac Newton's Philosophical Discoveries, quoted from Becker, Heavenly City, 62.
and an experimental physics method, a process which Professor Becker describes the transformation of natural philosophy into natural science. "Natural science became science, and scientists rejected, as a personal affront, the title of philosopher, which formerly they had been proud to bear." Mathematics and Philosophy as Carlyle learned them at Edinburgh, were in a transitional stage: his education left him in his early days as schoolteacher spending long nights over Newton, corresponding with his friends on mathematical and natural philosophical problems on the lines Leslie had inculcated. This satisfied him less and less, as his religious doubts grew, and his ambitions were disappointed one by one. Hence the gradual betrayal, described in Wotton Reinfréd, of the soul which is engrossed by mathematics, but feels its inner nature is not fed, till deeper enquiries engross it, heart and soul.

To summarise, Carlyle received from the natural philosophers of Edinburgh's Enlightenment an education of strictly limited utility. In scope, it did not last long enough (despite his extra year of study with Leslie) to give him a thorough training, designed as it was to be part of a "philosophy"-based education whose rationale Carlyle did not accept. In conception, it belonged to an era with which he did not sympathise. In life-span it was limited, both in general acceptation and in Carlyle's own

6C. Becker, Heavenly City, 22.
experience. For Carlyle was keenly susceptible to the literary movements of his time, and the early "Romantic" feeling discernible in Wordsworth's writing is related to the unhappiness of the autobiographical Wotton Reinfred, suffering disillusionment when his Enlightened education fails to satisfy his soul.

It is apposite here to refer to one of Carlyle's earliest (and little-known) writings, his review of Faust for the New Edinburgh Review. It was his first published work on German literature, it was also an early piece of writing which shows his personal feelings and judgments much more clearly than the critical essays on his maturity where a persona is increasingly developed, and used as a literary device. Faust was the work which animated Carlyle just before the "Everlasting NO", it excited him with the prospect of a "New Heaven and New Earth" which, then little understood, offered an escape from a world-picture which was collapsing in ruins. Two years later, he reviews a translation with scant interest in the actual translation, and little respect for those parts he illustrates. What interests him is the thought behind the play, and this obviously excites him. Marlowe's portrayal of Faust depends too much on its "gloomy and mysterious connection" with Hell and its creatures; Goethe's play depends not on "machinery" but on powerful individuals, whether good or bad. 7  

7"Faustus" was published in the New Edinburgh Review, April 1822, and is quoted from Collectanea Thomas Carlyle 1821-1855, ed. S.A. Jones (Canton, Penn., 1903), 66-69.
powerful. It is these individuals who fascinate Carlyle, and behind them their creator. He speaks of the play in general terms, praises "the matchless beauties of its diction", but he devotes his attention mostly to the ideas of the play, and their embodiment in the characters. Faust fascinates Carlyle. Like himself, he is highly educated, skilled in sciences, well-read in many fields. Like himself, he has been educated out of one set of beliefs, without adequate replacement.

There are no first indubitable principles to guide him: and still the universe, study it as he may, appears before him a dark, entangled riddle, the meaning of which, if it have any, is impenetrably hid from men. Nor is it to know only that he strives; the sensibilities of his heart have been embarked in this undertaking as well as the faculties of his intellect — he would feel as well as understand; and he cherishes vague and vehement longings for some unspeakable communion with the great powers of nature, whose magnificence expands his soul, while their mysteriousness confounds and repels it.

Here is the longing of Wordsworth in the early Prelude, the vague feelings of Gray passing through the savage Alps, to some extent the publicly displayed (and analysed) sensibilities of Mackenzie and his school. In short, Carlyle and Faust between them (and the enthusiastic review suggests Carlyle identifies himself with Faust) share feelings in the air now identified as "Romantic", feelings of restlessness and dissatisfaction with the times and specifically with their

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8 _op. cit._, 59.

9 _op. cit._, 69-70.
education. Edinburgh offered Carlyle a philosophical education, freely enquiring into the world and its conditions on a model indebted to that of the French, but based on a more secure Christian foundation. Carlyle rejected the theory behind the education, failed to grasp (as a result) the religious possibilities it offered him, and credited it with the opposite effect, that of touching him with the diseased hand of unfaith. It is this complete lack of communication which is to be regretted. The Edinburgh philosophers, far from attacking Hume viciously as a wicked infidel, preserved their Christian assumptions and attacked Hume's method and conclusions in an attempt to disprove him. Had Carlyle accepted this method, he would have been in a stronger position to attack his own doubts. However the Enlightenment philosophers proceeded by analysis, painstaking discussion, and from the start we have seen Carlyle antipathetic to this method. He sought his inspiration from lonely communication with books, novels, works of "sentiment", and in rejecting the methodology of Enlightenment Edinburgh philosophy he rejected the help it could have given him, in combating the attack on his faith from the sceptics.

Much of the complexity of what has been described in these pages arises from the strength of Carlyle's character, its instant rejection of the Edinburgh philosophers, whom although he read, he dismissed. Their position was behind much of what he scorned as "moderate"; Hume's
friends among the clergy were sincere believers, yet because they retained their faith and re-asserted their belief by argument from Hume's results, and not personal attack, they could keep company with him. This is obviously abhorrent to Carlyle, and the mainsprings of his attitude have been shown to be two-fold, one a hostility to the moderates as philosophers (and as attackers of Leslie) extending to a hostility of moderatism as an institution, the other an inherited respect for a totally committed clergy. The moderate intelligencia of Edinburgh thus failed to make contact with Carlyle's mind, although the temporary juxtaposition of their ideas during Carlyle's residence in Edinburgh in the years covered by this study made for a complex exchange of partially-accepted thought. The Enlightenment gave Carlyle a training in a fast-dying "natural philosophy" which was to sustain his interest, his power in writing and in creating fresh ideas, till the Germans provided him with a New Heaven and a New Earth.

The new German influence has been shown to have occupied Carlyle for the decade leading up to Sartor Resartus, and Professor Harrold has shown how it replaced worn-out ideas in Carlyle's mind, how he synthesised new ones from elements in German literature and thought allied to existing ideas from his Scottish background and education. Carlyle's enormous reading continued unabated throughout his early period (at Craigenputtoch he devoured books in his loneliness) and the early ideas were
constantly being added to and modified. The purpose of these pages has been to show the early years and their strong basis of faith; the contact with Edinburgh and the complex reaction to it; the gradual decay of orthodox Christian faith; the re-emergence of earlier ideas in a context of new ones; finally an examination of this context. Carlyle journeyed to London in 1834 neither a citizen of Scotland's Golden Age, nor a lapsed Christian. He was again a Christian, yet he scornfully rejected the moderate Christianity which normally in Scotland at this time accompanied his combination of interests in the outside world and with ethical questions relating to his own life and character. With the help of the Germans he had re-established his early faith in a new form, and felt totally committed to his faith with the earnestness his father had shown in the pursuit of his faith. James Carlyle's belonged to the last generation: "he was in Annandale, and it was above fifty years ago; and a Gospel was still preached there to the heart of a man, in the tones of a man."\(^1\) The conditions Carlyle clearly saw to be different in his own environment, but with the confidence of a new faith established, and written out in *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle faced his mature life consciously in the shadow of his father. "I might almost say his spirit seems to have entered into me (so clearly do I discern and love him);

\(^1\) *Reminiscences*, 9-10.
I seem to myself only the continuation, and second volume of my Father." This is Carlyle's nostalgia for the peasant-class Scotland he knew, no sentimental indulgence but a proud and alert awareness that some conformity to its values, and the attempt to make himself worthy, had saved him from his own particular nightmare. The only wistfulness is for the strength in his father's faith which had prevented so much suffering.

He was never visited with Doubt; the old Theorem of the Universe was sufficient for him, and he worked well in it, and in all senses successfully and wisely as few now can do ... Thus curiously enough, and blessedly, he stood a true man on the verge of the Old; while his son stands here lovingly surveying him on the verge of the New, and sees the possibility of also being true there. God make the possibility, blessed possibility, into a reality!

In this knowledge, proud, and self-made, Carlyle left Scotland in 1834 to become "Sage of Chelsea."

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2 Reminiscences, 33.

3 op. cit., 4.
APPENDICES
Appendix One

A Checklist of principal events in Carlyle's life,
1809-1834.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1758</td>
<td>James Carlyle, father of TC, born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1767</td>
<td>Jannet Carlyle, James Carlyle's first wife, born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1771, September</td>
<td>Margaret Aitken, James Carlyle's second wife, and mother of TC, born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>James Carlyle marries Jannet Carlyle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>James Carlyle marries Margaret Aitken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795, 4 December</td>
<td>Thomas Carlyle born, in Arched House, Ecclefechan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797</td>
<td>Alexander Carlyle, TC's brother, born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799</td>
<td>Janet Carlyle I born (died in infancy).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801, 14 July</td>
<td>Jane Welsh born, in Haddington.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1801</td>
<td>John Aitken Carlyle (John II), TC's brother, born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802</td>
<td>Carlyle receiving elementary schooling in languages and mathematics, being tutored in Latin by a local minister, and reading widely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Margaret Carlyle, TC's sister, born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>James Carlyle, TC's brother, born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806</td>
<td>Carlyle sent to Annan Academy to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
continue his schooling to university entrance standard.

1808
Mary Carlyle, TC's sister, born.

1809, November
Carlyle walks to Edinburgh, aged 13, to begin his university studies. He followed a normal curriculum in Arts, this year studying Humanity and Greek.

1810
Jean Carlyle, TC's sister, born. Carlyle tutoring in his vacation to earn money.

Summer
Returns to Edinburgh for a second year, studying Greek II, Mathematics and Logic. He meets Thomas Murray who provides (in his Autobiographical Notes) the earliest description of Carlyle.

Autumn
Possibly wins class prize in Mathematics. Again tutors in the summer vacation, and returns to Ecclefechan for his holiday.

November
Commences third session at university, studying Mathematics II, Greek III, and Moral Philosophy.

1811, Summer
Spent partly in Edinburgh, partly in Ecclefechan.

November
Commences fourth session, studying Natural Philosophy, and taking the Mathematics II class a second time.

1812, Summer
Janet Carlyle II, TC's sister, born.

In Ecclefechan.

November
Returns to university, the normal Arts course complete, to take classes at Divinity Hall in preparation for six years' self-directed study towards the ministry.

1813
Carlyle preaches a trial sermon.

1814, March
Carlyle leaves university and leaves
Autumn

Edinburgh to teach at Annan Academy.

Christmas

Resumes after vacation, also undertakes private tutoring.

Preaches trial sermon in Edinburgh.

1815, Whitsun

The Carlyle family moved from Ecclefechan village to the farm of Mainhill, several miles away.

Summer

Carlyle holidays in Mainhill.

Autumn

Resumes Annan teaching.

Christmas

Preached trial sermon in Edinburgh.

Also meets, for the first time, Edward Irving.

1816

Carlyle continues to teach at Annan Academy.

Summer

Offered teaching post in Kirkcaldy. His friendship with Edward Irving, who also teaches there, deepens.

November

Commences teaching in Kirkcaldy.

1817, Spring

Carlyle breaks off his connection with the Divinity Hall, and renounces his intention of entering the ministry.

Summer

Severe illness of Carlyle's mother.

August

Carlyle, Irving and friends make a tour of The Trossachs and Western Scotland on foot during their holiday.

Carlyle is mentioned in Professor John Leslie's *Elements of Geometry* for having provided a solution. He writes a magazine article (not accepted) and for several years has been an occasional contributor to the *Dumfries and Galloway Courier*. He has also been writing poetry.

1818, February

Carlyle reads Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, and attributes to this the collapse of his Christian belief.

July

Walking holiday with Irving in the Scottish
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Return to Kirkcaldy. The affair with Margaret Gordon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Carlyle resumes schoolteaching, but faint-heartedly, and resigns soon after.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Carlyle moves to Edinburgh, where Edward Irving has now established himself in preparation for entering the ministry. Carlyle lives off his savings, earning a little by tutoring and looks for literary employment. At university, he takes Natural History classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819, Spring</td>
<td>He is learning German, mostly self-taught. He has some employment, principally in the translation of scientific papers by Berzelius, Mohs, etc., published in the <em>Edinburgh Philosophical Journal</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Carlyle in Mainhill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Jane Welsh's father dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>Carlyle returns to Edinburgh, and continues his work of translating and tutoring. He enrols in Scots Law classes at the university, but does not persevere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820, January</td>
<td>Writes his first review (of Pictet's theory of gravitation) and offers it to Jeffrey's <em>Edinburgh Review</em>, but it disappears without acknowledgement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Final break with Margaret Gordon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Final letter from Margaret Gordon, which marks the end of their friendship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>Carlyle in Mainhill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Carlyle travels to Yorkshire to be interviewed for a resident tutorship. He refuses the post, however.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Carlyle spends it in Edinburgh, visiting borders, particularly Peebles and St. Mary's Loch.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Irving in Glasgow occasionally. He is at work on the biographies and articles which appeared in Sir David Brewster's *Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*. He is also translating part of Schiller's *Thirty-Years' War*.

1821

His translations and literary articles continue.

May or June  **Carlyle meets Jane Welsh**, in Haddington, during a walking holiday with Edward Irving in the Edinburgh area.

October  Carlyle's first original article published in the *New Edinburgh Review* (a review of Joanna Baillie).

At the end of the year, Edward Irving severed his connections with Scotland (though not with Carlyle) and moved to London to begin a brilliant career as preacher and public figure.

1822, January  Carlyle offered editorship of a Dundee newspaper, but refuses.

Spring  Tutoring Charles and Arthur Buller in Edinburgh. The salary he earned gave him financial security and independence for the first time.

April  Carlyle's first publication on German literature, a review of *Faust* in the *New Edinburgh Review*.

Summer  Completes his translation of Legendre's *Elements of Geometry* for Sir David Brewster. In Leith Walk, Edinburgh, Carlyle has a spiritual "conversion" which is described as the "Everlasting NO" of *Sartor Resartus*.

August  Visit of George IV to Edinburgh. Carlyle,
in disgust, leaves the jubilant city and holidays in Mainhill.

Autumn

Offered mathematical teaching post at Sandhurst; declines.

1823, Spring

Carlyle begins his life of Schiller, and his translation of Goethe's Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre. Moves to Kinnaird, Perthshire.

July

Spends holiday in Dumfriesshire.

October

Marriage of Edward Irving.

December

In Edinburgh. Consults doctors about his health, which is now seriously affected by overwork, digestive upsets.

1824

Schiller published serially, well received.

Spring

Holidays in Mainhill.

June

To London. Severs connection with Bullers, and lives freelance literary life in London. Meister published; sends copy to Goethe.

July

To Birmingham for health treatment.

September

Moves with Irving and friends to Dover.

October

Goethe writes Carlyle, and the correspondence between them inaugurated. Carlyle spends brief holiday in France, returns to London.

November

1825

Schiller published in book form in the Spring.

March

Carlyle returns to Ecclefechan.

April

Carlyle in Edinburgh.

May

Carlyle, his mother, Alick and two sisters move to a quiet farm nearby ("Hoddam Hill") where Carlyle spends a year of "rustic idyll" recalled in the Reminiscences. He is translating German Romance.
September 1826

Jane Welsh visits the Carlyles in Hoddam Hill, and the marriage between them seems certain.

January

Offered publishing partnership, and editorship, in Edinburgh. Refuses both.

May

Hoddam Hill adventure ends. The Carlyle family reunited in Scotsbrig.

June

The Comely Bank home rented in Edinburgh for Carlyle and Jane Welsh to occupy.

September

Carlyle's translations of *Specimens of German Romance* completed.

October 17th

Carlyle and Jane Welsh married. They travel to Edinburgh and settle in Comely Bank.

1827, Spring

*German Romance* published.


February

Carlyle meets Francis Jeffrey, and an immediate friendship is formed.

April

Carlyle in Dumfriesshire.

June

Carlyle's first article (Jean Paul Friedrich Richter) in *Edinburgh Review*.

September

First major article, also in *Edinburgh Review*, on the *State of German Literature*. The possibility of a chair in the new London University, also in St. Andrews University, occurs this year.

Weekly tea-parties on Wednesday evenings at which the Carlyles entertain De Quincey, Jeffrey, Sir William Hamilton, etc.

1828, Spring

In Dumfriesshire.
May  Irving's sensational visit to Edinburgh, preaching to packed churches.
The Carlyles move to Craigenputtoch.

October  Visit from the Jeffreys.

December  Carlyle's article *Burns* in the Edinburgh Review.

1829, June  Carlyle's major article *Signs of the Times* in the Edinburgh Review.

October  The Carlyles on holiday in Edinburgh and district.

1830, Spring  At work on an unsuccessful *History of German Literature*.

September  Visit from the Jeffreys.

Autumn  Writes *On Clothes*.

1831, Spring  Develops *On Clothes*, which slowly becomes *Sartor Resartus*. His assets at this time are reduced to £5.

August  Completes *Sartor Resartus*.

October  Carlyle to London to try to sell manuscript. Jane follows him to London.

December  *Characteristics* appears in Edinburgh Review.

1832, January  Death of James Carlyle. Carlyle writes his memoir of him, which becomes the first part of the *Reminiscences*.

February  The Maclise portrait of Carlyle drawn, and later published in *Fraser's Magazine*.

March  Leaves London, travels widely.

May  The Carlyles return to Craigenputtoch.

1833, January  The Carlyles to Edinburgh, on holiday.

May  They return to Craigenputtoch.

August  Emerson visits the Carlyles in Craigenputtoch.

November  *Sartor Resartus* begins serial publication in *Fraser's Magazine*. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Carlyle tries, unsuccessfully, to obtain an astronomical post in Edinburgh. The failure precipitated a breach with Jeffrey which was never healed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1834</td>
<td>Publication of <em>Sartor Resartus</em> continues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>The Carlyles decide to &quot;burn their boats&quot; and move to London, where they feel the literary society is the best environment for them. Carlyle leaves to find a home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Jane follows him to London.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two class cards survive showing a "Thomas Carlyle" attending Jameson's Natural History class at Edinburgh University, one for 1813-1814, the other for 1818-1819; the common assumption is that Carlyle attended twice. Two factors, I suggest, militate against this interpretation. One is that no mention has been traced of his attending the lectures in the course of 1813; the other is that his letters abundantly show his disgust and dislike of the Professor when attending early in the session of 1818-1819. This being so, it is unlikely that he would voluntarily attend a second time. It is more likely that the attendance of 1813-1814 was the other Thomas Carlyle, advocate and follower of the Irvingite Apostolic Church, whose career is detailed in the following appendix.
Appendix Three
"Thomas Carlyle, Advocate"

This contemporary, to whom Carlyle refers as his "double-goer", was the son of a Dumfriesshire landed proprietor. He studied at Edinburgh University, was called to the Scottish bar in 1824. A friend of Edward Irving's, he became an "Apostle" of the Apostolic Church, preached widely in Britain and on the continent, and published several pamphlets. His Works were published in 1878, he himself died in Albury in 1855. A letter from him to Thomas Carlyle is in MS:NLS 1766.65; in MS:NLS 523.14 Carlyle calls him mad, and gleefully tells in 523.15 how he had been forcibly prevented by the Edinburgh police from preaching in the High Street.

Sources:
The Edinburgh Almanack, 1824.
Tyndall, New Fragments (London, 1892).
The Scottish Review, 21 May 1908.
The Glasgow Herald, 11 February 1911.
P. Krämer, Thomas Carlyle of the Scottish Bar (Freiburg, 1966).
Appendix Four

Comely Bank

Carlyle's first excursion into the ranks of the middle classes was fortunately carried out at a time when prices were stable, or at least not rising to any noticeable extent. The Rousseaux Price Index, for instance, shows a severe drop from 1825, through 1826 and 1827, to an absolute minimum in 1833.\(^1\) A handbook quoted in G.M. Young's *Early Victorian England*,\(^2\) shows how an average family of man, wife, three children and maid could live on £230, though the £25 for rents and taxes would obviously not be enough for the Carlyles, who paid £32 on rent alone. On the other hand Jane spent £2 a week on the household for a childless family against the manual's £2.11.7, and fresh supplies from Scotsbrig helped. On this they kept up very good appearances, and indeed it was comparative opulence. In 1825 an Aberdeen weaver kept a family of six on 13/- a week, clothes, rent, fire, shoes, education for three and church sittings included.\(^3\) With prices on the decline


\(^3\) L. Saunders, *Scottish Democracy*, 125.
(a maidservant need spend £4.1.9 on herself in 1822, but in 1829 "... many of the articles would probably not greatly exceed half the price here stated", writes one author)\(^4\) the Carlyles would manage on £200; Scott calculated that in 1826 in Edinburgh £500, well managed, "... will maintain a large family with all the necessaries and decencies of life, and enable them to support a very creditable rank in society."\(^5\)

Wilson\(^6\) stated that Carlyle's income was £200 per annum in Comely Bank, and based this on very detailed calculations he had heard David Masson perform; curiously enough, Masson\(^7\) put the figure as "... necessarily not less than about £300." It is difficult at this date to calculate what it must have been, but clues exist.

In 1827 John's education cost Carlyle £30, and a further £20 in 1828. A further £20 in 1829-1830 made the total he had spent on John's education £237. German Romance brought £200\(^8\), Richter 20 guineas, Werner £47, while he expected far less for his "far better" article on Goethe's Helena.\(^9\)

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\(^4\) Advice to Young Women on Going to Service, by the Author of Mary Johnson, &c. (London, 1829), 49-50. Pamphlet quoted by permission of John Rylands Library, Manchester.

\(^5\) W. Scott, Provincial Antiquities, I, 82.

\(^6\) D. Wilson, II, 57, and n. 1.

\(^7\) D. Masson, Edinburgh Sketches and Memories, 354.

\(^8\) MS:NLS 530.397.

\(^9\) MS:NLS 522.66.
His actual income for articles received at Comely Bank was £100-150,¹ and he must have drawn heavily on savings and on the *German Romance* income to support his wife and brother. The inescapable conclusion is that, though he came to Edinburgh to earn a living by his pen, he simply could not do so and support his wife as she expected. With all the advantages of Jeffrey's connections and a growing reputation, he was expert in a yet only slowly expanding field, and at a time when a slump was still very obvious in the publishing trade in Edinburgh. Jeffrey had longed in 1814 to leave the city for a country cottage and living on £300 a year, "... only it is rather too little, and I should like to have the means of moving about a little."² Carlyle could not even raise the £200 a year at this time to live in Edinburgh, with a home of his own, and it is for this reason, more than for all the protestations about clean air and health, that the Carlyles left Edinburgh (which they both loved) for Craigenputtoch.


Appendix Five

Sir Gideon Dunn

There is a strong case for identifying Sir Gideon
with Professor John Playfair, Professor of Natural Philosophy, who had taught Carlyle at Edinburgh University. Clearest of the several pieces of evidence is the hint Carlyle gives in referring to Playfair's work on Hutton. Playfair's Illustrations of the Huttonian theory of the formation of the earth form the first volume of his collected works,¹ and so to mention them here seems to be a clear pointer as Playfair would at the time have been associated with the controversies on the subject. In his memoir of Hutton, coincidentally, Playfair refers to the poverty of Scottish husbandry; this may have been in Carlyle's mind when he put into Sir Gideon's mouth his strictures on the subject.²

The other evidence is in Sir Gideon's appearance and manner. In physical appearance Sir Gideon resembles markedly the Raeburn portrait of Playfair,³ but more noticeably his manners are very similar to those which writers have ascribed to Playfair. Carlyle stressed Sir

¹(Edinburgh, 1822).

²J. Playfair, Biographical Account of James Hutton, in Works, IV, 41.

³In the Senate Hall, Edinburgh University.
Gideon's courtliness, his "calm adroitness", his gentlemanly handling of a prickly and argumentative young man. This surely is in keeping with Jeffrey's description of Playfair as possessing "... the manners and deportment of the most perfect Gentleman," and Cockburn's "... profound, yet cheerful; social, yet always respectable; strong in his feelings, but uniformly gentle." Playfair enjoyed immense esteem; when the infamous Chaldee Manuscript shocked the literary world of Edinburgh, the outcry was universal, but especially one pamphleteer protested against the attack on Playfair; "there is something almost parricidal in the brutal outrage which they have committed on the venerable Mr Playfair."

The real-life Playfair, then, tallies with Sir Gideon in appearance and manner. Included as he was in a novel where real-life characters were represented under false names (Jane Welsh as Jane Montagu, Edward Irving as Bernard Swane, Coleridge as Dalbrook) the evidence seems to point to Carlyle having chosen Playfair to represent the "moderate" viewpoint of the benefits of the Union, as against his own more emotionally patriotic hostility to any attempt to decry the national inheritance.

4F. Jeffrey, Contributions to the "Edinburgh Review" (London, 1853), 979.
5H. Cockburn, Memorials of his Time, 358.
6In Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, VII (October, 1817).
7Hypocrisy Unveiled, and Calumny Detected, in a Review of Blackwood's "Magazine" (fourth edition, Edinburgh, 1818), 32.
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The Catalogues of the British Museum Library and the National Library of Scotland supply details of most of the standard works on Carlyle. Some, like C.P. Harrold's edition of *Sartor Resartus* (New York, 1937), are extremely rare in Britain.

Manuscript sources are particularly rich. Half (some 4000) of the preserved Carlyle letters are in the National Library of Scotland, and there are also substantial holdings in Edinburgh University Library, in the National Trust museum in the Arched House, Ecclefechan, in the Carlyle House, Chelsea, in the British Museum, and in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. These letters, currently being prepared by the Universities of Edinburgh and Duke, North Carolina, for complete publication by Duke University Press, are invaluable to any biographical study of Carlyle.

Smaller collections also have rich sources of Carlyle material, which have made possible the compiling of a more complete picture of Carlyle's youth. Miss Mary Herdman made available to me her grandfather's recollections of Carlyle, made while he was painting Carlyle's portrait.\(^1\) Messrs. Oliver and Boyd gave access to Carlyle letters in their possession, as did Rev. and Mrs. Davidson of Juniper Green, Edinburgh. Much help, too, came from the curators

\(^1\)See my *Portrait of Carlyle*. 
of both Carlyle Museums, in Chelsea and in Ecclefechan, and from Mr. and Mrs. George Armour, present owners of Craigendputtoch. The collections to which I had access are the National Library of Scotland, the Public Library and the University Library of Edinburgh; the University Libraries of Aberdeen, St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Cambridge; the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum and London Library; Register House, Edinburgh and Somerset House, London; The John Rylands Library, and the Public Library in Manchester; and the public libraries of Aberdeen, Carlisle, Dumfries, Edinburgh, Kirkcaldy and Montrose.

Alexander Carlyle, Carlyle's nephew, spent much of his life working with Carlyle's manuscripts, and publishing those he thought best. Some are still in private hands, for though many were dispersed by public sale and presented to the National Library of Scotland, a few remained in the possession of the family, and are not now available to scholars. The outstanding example is Carlyle's Journal which, though partly published, and indeed prepared for complete publication in the late 1920's, is largely unknown, and has only been available to one writer on Carlyle since the 1930's.

2 I have described this unsuccessful project in "James Barrett and Carlyle's 'Journal'."

3 The writer in question being M. Cabau (vide supra) who was allowed to read, but not to publish, the text of the journal. He found it unsensational; "le Journal ... parle beaucoup de constipation, d'huile de ricin, de maux de tête, mais pas de sexe." (p. 103)


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