

*Carlyle—His Wife and Critics.** By Sir JAMES CRICHTON-BROWNE, M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.

Gentlemen,—I am not going to weary you with a catalogue—it would be a long one—of the distinguished sons that Dumfriesshire and Galloway have sent forth; I ask you to bear with me for a little while I appeal for your generous admiration of the most illustrious of all of them—I mean Thomas Carlyle. And such an appeal is not unnecessary, for this illustrious man—glorified by genius—has more than any great man of modern times been subjected since his death to detraction and disparagement. Late in securing the recognition of his claims as a writer, for it was not until he was in his forty-second year that the British public really took note of him, he rose rapidly thereafter in fame and popularity, and after his rectorial address in this University, in 1866, was the object of enthusiastic national regard. He died in universal honour, the ablest and highest of his literary contemporaries vying with each other in sounding his praises, extolling his heroic and unsullied life, and describing him as sovereign by divine right amongst the British men of letters of his generation. But a change speedily came over the spirit of the scene. Carlyle had not been a week in his grave when the *Reminiscences*, edited by Froude, appeared; these were followed within a year by the *Letters and Reminiscences of Jane Welch Carlyle*; and after these came rapidly *The Early Life* and *The Life in London*, for which also Froude was responsible. “It was these nine volumes,” says Masson, “that did all the mischief.” Full, at least as regards the earlier volumes, of slovenly press errors, and obviously very hurriedly prepared, they depicted Carlyle in his darkest and gloomiest moods, almost ignoring the bright and genial side of his nature, and gave prominence not merely to the biting judgments he had passed on public men, but also to his pungent comments on private individuals then still living. Froude was Carlyle’s most intimate friend in his latter days; he was his chosen literary executor; he was his faithful disciple in doctrine; he has, with lofty eloquence, described his extraordinary personality and gifts, and put on record his conviction that, with all his faults of manner and temper, he was the greatest

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and best man he had ever known. And yet, for all that, it has been his part to open the flood-gates of adverse criticism, and to supply all the quacks, and idiots, and sects, and coteries whom Carlyle had scourged, in his day, with nasty missiles with which to pelt his memory. Even Froude's warmest defenders are constrained to admit that he showed defective reticence and bad taste, and every impartial reader of the *Reminiscences* must, I think, perceive that in his vivid sympathy with that brilliant woman, Mrs. Carlyle, Froude has many times been betrayed into references to her husband that are unjust and almost vindictive. When Carlyle was working at the *French Revolution* "his nervous system," says Mr. Froude, "was aflame. At such times," these are Mr. Froude's words, "he could think of nothing but the matter which he had in hand, and a sick wife was a bad companion for him. She escaped to Scotland to her mother." The plain inference from this is that Mrs. Carlyle, when an invalid, was driven away from home by Carlyle's neglect and irritability. The fact is, that it was solely the state of her own health that sent her to the north, and that she had no peace or comfort till she got home again. She writes, on returning on this occasion: "The feeling of calm and safety and liberty which came over me on re-entering my own house was really the most blessed I had felt for a great while." Does this sound like coming back to a self-absorbed bear of a husband? "The house in Cheyne Row," says Mr. Froude, "requiring paint and other readjustments, Carlyle had gone to Wales, leaving his wife to endure the confusion and superintend the workmen alone with her maid." Thus Froude insinuates that Carlyle selfishly went off to enjoy himself, leaving his wife to drudgery and discomfort. But the facts are that Mrs. Carlyle was a house-proud woman, and took delight in her domestic lustrations, and that while Carlyle was in Wales at this time, on one of those excursions which were essential to the maintenance of his health and of his bread-winning labours, Mrs. Carlyle went off on a holiday on her own account to the Isle of Wight, from which she was very glad to return to her dismantled home. I could quote a dozen paragraphs like these in which Froude seems to seek, by innuendo or elision, to convey the impression that Carlyle was systematically hard and heartless in his relations with his wife, whereas the truth is that, with failings of temper and thoughtlessness—from which

few are exempted—he was a tender and affectionate spouse.

But if Carlyle's reputation has suffered at the hands of his own familiar friend, it is a nearer one still and a dearer one far than all other who has inflicted on it the deepest injury. It is Mrs. Carlyle's *Letters*, and still more the fragments of her *Journal*, that have created the strongest and most widely diffused prejudice against Carlyle, for when, in general society to-day, you press for an explanation of the aversion with which the mention of his name is received by some fashionable dames, who know absolutely nothing of him or his works, you are invariably told that he was cruel to his wife, and obliged her to go in an omnibus, while he himself was riding an expensive horse. For the publication of her *Letters* and *Journal* Mrs. Carlyle was not to blame; that was owing to the indiscretion of another. She never intended them to see the light, and if permitted still to keep an eye on current literature, caustic and damnatory must have been her observations on the day they issued from the press. But still the fact remains that this devoted wife, whose pride in her husband was the mainstay of her existence, has done more than anyone else to besmirch his memory and to derogate from his fair fame.

Now, let us examine for a moment Mrs. Carlyle's one great grievance against her husband which gave rise to most of her depreciatory and reproachful remarks—his friendship with Lady Harriet Baring, afterwards Lady Ashburton, a subject which many of his critics evade as delicate or obscure. There is, I think, no delicacy or obscurity about it. Leave out of account Mrs. Carlyle's feelings on the subject, and there is nothing in that friendship from first to last—from 1844 till 1857—that is not to Carlyle's credit. Lady Harriet was one of the most brilliant women of her day, and Mrs. Carlyle herself wrote of her on their first introduction—"The cleverest woman out of sight that I ever saw in my life; moreover, she is full of energy and sincerity, and has, I am sure, an excellent heart." Was it a sin that Carlyle admired this fascinating woman, and took pleasure in her society and in that of her noble and accomplished husband, and of the men of wit and genius whom she gathered round her? She opened bountifully to this reserved, fastidious man and to his wife the highest literary circle, where he could meet on equal terms those most distinguished in rank and learning.

Was it flagitious in him to avail himself of the opportunities thus offered to him—opportunities almost essential to his advancement in his career? She and her husband lavished on him and his wife innumerable kindnesses and attentions. He would have been worse than ungrateful had he, at a woman's caprice, thrown over such generous benefactors.

Mrs. Carlyle's bosom female friends allow that she never had an iota of a ground for jealousy ordinarily so-called, and on such a question such testimony from such witnesses is, I take it, irrefragable. But, say they, Mrs. Carlyle was sensitive and exacting beyond other women, and the consciousness that she who had clung to her hero through the long days of obscurity was now, when the sun of prosperity shone upon him, to be superseded in his supreme regard by any other woman, was gall and wormwood to her soul. That she was so superseded even for an instant there is not a tittle of evidence; indeed, all the documents go to prove not only that she never had a rival in her husband's heart, but that his fealty to "that most queen-like woman," as he called Lady Ashburton on her death, was not incompatible with a far deeper devotion to the intellectual sovereignty of his wife. "Any other wife," says Miss Jewsbury, "would have laughed at Carlyle's bewitchment with Lady Ashburton; but her it made more intensely and abidingly miserable than words can utter."

Well, it seems to me that the true key to Mrs. Carlyle's frame of mind at the time of the Ashburton episode is to be found in her state of health. I have no doubt myself, and I have bestowed some attention on the facts of the case, that she then passed through a mild but distinct and protracted attack of climacteric melancholia, and that all her accusations against her husband were but expressions of morbid feelings.

Mrs. Carlyle was hereditarily predisposed to nervous disease. Her mother died of an apoplectic brain seizure and a maternal uncle was paralysed. She boasted of a strain of untamable "gipsy blood" in her veins, derived from one Baillie, who suffered at Lanark, and was, according to Foster, "a cross between John Knox and a gipsy," and she was, moreover, of intensely nervous temperament, keen to feel and quick to react to feeling. Although a doctor's child, she was brought up under hot-bed conditions; her naturally active brain being stimulated by ambition. She learnt Latin like a boy, and read Virgil at nine years of age; would sit

up half the night over a mathematical problem when a girl of twelve, and wrote a tragedy when fourteen ; and as the consequence of all this she grew up into a highly neurotic woman. Throughout her married life she was subject to frequently recurring and severe sick headaches, lasting for days together, brought on by worry and excitement, and even by the effort of talking and being witty, and sometimes instantly dissipated by a strong mental impression. She had several pronounced attacks of influenza, which we now know has often a far-reaching and deleterious effect on the nervous system. She was as hyperæsthetic to noise as her husband, and like him a victim to persistent insomnia. For several years before the date at which I would fix the climax of her mental trouble, she had been occasionally taking morphia, which is apt to induce depression and suspicion in those who indulge in it, and besides being addicted, like her husband, to excessive tea-bibing, she smoked cigarettes at a time when that practice was less common amongst English ladies than it is to-day. She was, in short, the very woman in whom the physician would expect a mental breakdown at a critical epoch in life.

As early as 1841 Mrs. Carlyle complains of low spirits, due, as she then correctly surmised, to some sort of nervous ailment, and from that time onwards she had periods of gloom, such as all nervous people are liable to, attributable for the most part to external events ; but it was not until 1846, when she forty-five years old, that her despondency assumed a morbid complexion. Then, however, there enveloped her a cloud of wretchedness, an emanation of her own brain, which deepened and darkened until 1855, when that excruciating *Journal* was begun ; which lightened up in 1856, and was almost completely dispelled in 1857, leaving behind it, however, shattered bodily health and the seeds of serious evils in the nervous system, which afterwards developed and brought renewed depression, but of a very different nature from that previously experienced.

Did time permit, I could trace out step by step from her own writings the progress of Mrs. Carlyle's mental malady, which, be it observed, was emotional throughout, and never in the slightest degree involved her intellectual faculties. Her marvellous will power enabled her to a great extent to suppress the outward manifestations of it, but not altogether, for some of her friends remarked on her haggard and careworn look ; but what she could conceal when abroad flowed

forth freely when in the privacy of her own room, and the *Journal* bears the unmistakable marks of cerebral disorder. "My constant and pressing anxiety," she says, "is to keep out of Bedlam." "That eternal Bath House!" she exclaims. "I wonder how many thousand miles Mr. C. has walked between there and here, putting it altogether, setting up always another milestone and another between him and me." "Dear, dear!" she goes on, "what a sick day this has been. Oh, my mother, nobody sees what I am suffering now." "It was with a feeling like the ghost of a dead dog that I rose and dressed and drank my coffee." "To-day has been like other days outwardly. I have done this and that, and people have come and gone, but all in a bad dream." "How I keep on my legs and in my senses with such little snatches of sleep is a wonder to myself." "I was no more responsible for what I wrote than a person in a brain fever would have been." "To-day I walked with effort one little mile and thought it a great feat." "I am weaker every day and my soul is sore vexed. Oh, how long?"

In these and many passages to a like effect the medical psychologist will recognise the cerebral neurasthenia which is so often accompanied by profound dejection and delusional beliefs. And that Mrs. Carlyle really suffered from cerebral neurasthenia her subsequent history makes abundantly apparent. In 1863 she suffered from violent neuralgia, which deprived her of the use of her left hand and arm, and two years later the same malady, after internal manifestations rendered her right hand and arm powerless, at the same time partially paralysing the muscles of the jaw and causing difficulty in speech. Along with this neuralgia there was acute mental distress, which did not, however, assume any delusional phase, and there were frequent temptations to suicide. Mrs. Carlyle died in 1866 from failure of the heart's action, caused by the shock of seeing her little dog run over and injured by a carriage in Hyde Park.

Up till the date which I have fixed for the incursion of her illness, Mrs. Carlyle's letters to her husband are like those of a belated lover, overflowing with ardent affection. "God keep you, my own dear husband, and bring you safe back. The house looks very empty without you, and I feel empty too." "She (your wife) loves you, and is ready to do anything on earth that you wish, to fly over the moon if you bade her." And so on, and on until 1843, when we read— "Oh, my darling, I want to give you an emphatic kiss rather

than to write. But you are at Chelsea and I at Seaforth, so the thing is clearly impossible for the moment. But I must keep it for you till I come, for it is not with words that I can thank you adequately for that kindest of birthday letters and its small enclosure—the touching little key.” And so on, indeed, until 1846, when the glimmerings of distrust first appear. “Yes,” she then writes, “I have kissed the dear little card case, and now I will lie down a while and try to get to sleep. At least to quiet myself I will try to believe, oh, why cannot I believe once for all? that with all my faults and follies I am still dearer to you than any other creature.” But after this the correspondence cools. The letters have no amatory introduction, are subscribed “faithfully yours” or “yours ever,” and contain sometimes sharp taunts and cruel reproaches, sometimes acknowledgments of her own infirmity. “God knows,” she tells him in 1850, “how gladly I would be sweet tempered and cheerful hearted and all that sort of thing for your single sake if my temper were not soured and my heart saddened beyond my power to mend them!” It was not until the lapse of years had brought healing and soothing, and convinced her that his strange humours had never arisen from real indifference towards her, that the old tenderness returned; but it is pleasant to know that it did return, for in 1864 we find her beginning her letters to him with all a girl’s fondness—“Oh, my own darling husband!”

Throughout the whole duration of Mrs. Carlyle’s illness—covering the Ashburton jealousy—Carlyle’s attitude towards his wife was singularly noble. Those slighter forms of mental alienation such as I maintain Mrs. Carlyle suffered from are really much more trying to those who have to deal with them than downright madness, and few positions more painful and difficult can be conceived than that of Carlyle, who, while struggling with a herculean task, his *Frederick the Great*, and himself harassed by hypochondria, had to live with an ailing woman, possessed by groundless jealousy and with the wit to give poignant expression to her supposed wrongs. But whatever he may have had to endure, no angry retort or impatient protest ever escaped his pen. We have no record of his personal intercourse with his wife at this time; perhaps he gave way to gusts of anger, but his letters are uniformly gentle and affectionate, full of encouragement and good cheer. And this, indeed, is characteristic of all his communications to and about his wife—not only at this

period, but during their whole married life. The portrait he has painted of her is a masterpiece of its kind, abounding in bold and harmonious colour, pre-Raphaelite in the truthfulness of its minute details, and so suffused by tenderness that all harsh features are lost sight of. No Madonna was ever painted with more reverent touch or genuine inspiration. It speaks volumes, I think, for Carlyle's magnanimity and whole-heartedness that there is not to be ferreted out of his most private lucubrations one word or phrase reflecting unfavourably on his wife. From first to last he has nothing but praise and blessing to bestow on her. Testy and arbitrary in his personal communication with her he no doubt often was; stinging words sometimes darted from his tongue, or overwhelming objurgations rolled from it, but the moment he took pen in hand he did her more than justice. Unsparing in his own self-reproaches for his irritability and unreasonableness, he was indulgent to her beyond measure, and never set down aught in accusatory condemnation of the trials and vexations which she caused him. His gratitude was unbounded for the protection and help she rendered him, and during the fifteen years for which he survived her, his main occupation was to arrange the material for the most impressive and sorrowful cenotaph that has ever been erected to mortal woman.

Apart from the Ashburton misunderstanding, which was, as I have endeavoured to show, a mere figment of a perverted imagination, the offspring of an excited brain, Carlyle's critics and Mrs. Carlyle's lady friends have still grave fault to find with him for his treatment of her. According to them, she was incessantly craving for little marks of tenderness, for caresses and loving words, which were denied her by the cold, hard man she had married. I do not believe a word of it, and I think that those who advance such a theory have strangely misconceived Mrs. Carlyle's character and our Scottish customs. She was the last woman in the world to desire or tolerate public exhibitions of uxoriousness, or to measure the depth of a husband's love by the froth on the surface, and she was reared in a school in which effusiveness is not approved. We Scotchmen are a somewhat dour and gruff race, and do dissemble our love without actually kicking our relatives downstairs—but sometimes with gestures which a stranger might mistake for an intention to do so. With us the family affections, as I have already insisted, and conjugal fidelity are at their highest. But the temper

of our people, saturated with Calvinism, is severe and self-restraining, and they rarely indulge in those terms of endearment that are so constantly bubbling from southern lips. The head of a Scotch household is rarely heard addressing his wife as "love" or "darling." "Gude wife" he calls her, or "mither," or "Maggie," "Jeanie," or "Elsie," as the case may be. To the children he speaks in tender diminutives, but to his wife his address might sound to the uninitiated somewhat harsh, while her replies might savour of snappishness. And yet are they united in life-lasting and storm-defying love—love too well assured to need declaration, at least in company, in which indeed they have a secret satisfaction in demeaning themselves in a circumspect, distant, and almost austere fashion. A Scotchman would immediately suspect there was something wrong if he saw a husband and wife fondling or heard them "joeing" and "dearieing" each other. Mrs. Carlyle was too sensible a woman, and knew her husband's upbringing and severe turn of mind too well, to expect or desire of him blandishments or pettings. She must have remembered that his intercourse with his mother, for whom his love was profound, consisted mainly in sitting with her silently by the fireside in the evening and enjoying a tranquillising pipe of tobacco; and curiously enough she has anticipated and disallowed the plea of her apologists that he gave her cause of offence by his negligence in small matters. "In great matters," she wrote of him, "he is always kind and considerate, and now the desire to replace to me the irreplaceable (her mother, who had recently died) makes him as good in little things as he used to be in great."

But whatever his lip service, Mrs. Carlyle had overwhelming epistolary evidence of her husband's attachment. "Oh, my love, my dearest, always love me. I am richer with thee than the whole world could make me otherwise!" "The Herzen Goody must not fret herself and torment her poor sick head. I will be back to her, not an hour will I lose. Heaven knows the sun shines not on the spot that could be pleasant to me were she not there. So be of comfort, my Jeannie!" "Adieu, dearest, for that is, and, if madness prevail not, may for ever be your authentic title." This is the strain that with marvellous and beautiful modulations runs through his letters to her for forty years of their wedded life, and with it echoing in her heart she could scarcely hanker after loud-mouthed endearments or punctili-

ous attentions. She rejoiced rather in their wit combats and the banter and bickerings they exchanged in the presence of their guests in the little drawing-room in Cheyne Row. There the shuttle of persiflage sped freely to and fro. Dull guests with no sense of humour may have seen animosity in these encounters, but they were simply trials of intellectual fence, in which a clever thrust or parry gave equal pleasure to both combatants. The wounds inflicted in them, like those in a recent well-advertised duel, did not penetrate beyond the subcutaneous cellular tissue and did not take long to heal. Tennyson, with his poet's insight, discerned better than others their true relations, for he said, as reported in his recently published biography, that "Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle on the whole enjoyed life together, else they would not have chaffed one another so heartily." Browning, too, saw beneath the surface, and while expressing his affectionate reverence for Carlyle, never ceased to defend him against the charge of unkindness to his wife. He went too far in describing her as a hard, unlovable woman, but he was right in holding that for any domestic unhappiness that they experienced she was the more to blame of the two. Mrs. Carlyle, no less than her husband, was "gie ill to deal wi'." The letters written in her girlhood to Ellen Stoddart display a somewhat headstrong disposition, and caustic wit and biting sarcasm, remarkable in one still in the bright morning of youth, and who had suffered no hardships or disappointments, and are couched in language so frank and strong as to make it certain that she did not derive the expletives she used in later life from Carlyle. Then her relations with her mother reveal heat of temper and self-assertion. These two women loved each other dearly, but they were both too excitable to jog along together smoothly, and so they quarrelled daily. After Mrs. Welch's death Mrs. Carlyle suffered bitter remorse for what she regarded as her shortcomings as a daughter. She pleads guilty to "shrewing" her husband from time to time, and she certainly rejoiced in taking snap-shot portraits of him in his least happy and amiable moments, portraits which she confided to her correspondents, and which Froude diligently collected for public exhibition.

Mrs. Carlyle had boundless respect and love for her husband, but still there was a void in her existence. The childless woman poured forth her pent-up affections on many pets—dogs, cats, canaries, hedgehogs, and even a leech—

but unsatisfied longings still perturbed her, and, combining with her keen sagacity, made her cynical beyond the common measure of her sex. "An infant crying in the night" at Cheyne Row might have vexed Carlyle's soul worse than his neighbour's cocks and hens, and would not have been so easily got rid of, but it would in all likelihood, paradoxical though it may sound to say so, have brought peace, hope, and felicity to the household. To say that Carlyle neglected his wife is to libel him. He had his work to do, laborious work, which he could only carry on in solitude, and so he had to separate himself from her during his working hours, but surely most working men, whether of professions or trades, have to do the same. On the whole, he spent much more time with her than the average husband is wont to spend with his wife. He did not dine at his club on dainty dishes and leave her to fare on cold mutton at home. He had no amusements or pursuits apart from her, and only left her for those visits to the Ashburtons, in which it was generally her own fault that she did not participate; or for those visits to his kindred in Scotland, which were at once a duty and a necessity of health. He never forgot some little offering for her birthday, and was ever ready to assist in her charities. In his poverty he did his best to provide her with small pleasures, and when he grew comparatively rich he pressed upon her luxuries which she was reluctant to accept. How monstrously he has been misrepresented in these respects I may illustrate by one example adduced out of many. Miss Gully writes: "In his richest days he would never have more than one servant. . . . I don't myself see that he had any right to indulge in a witty wife and yet indulge in his idiosyncrasy of only having one cheap servant." Will it be believed that it was by Mrs. Carlyle's express wish that only one servant was kept, and that after two had been employed in deference to her husband's earnest representations, she lay awake at night regretting the time when she had had but one little maid? Such matters are trivial enough, but they merit notice, for a multiplicity of them have been piled up as if of *malice prepense* to damage Carlyle's good name.

And yet this man who has been held up to obloquy as a misanthrope, as a raging, snarling egotist, as a miserable dyspeptic, as a restless Annandale eccentric, as a venomous iconoclast of other men's reputations, as "a boor and a brute"—these words have been actually applied to him—

almost as a wife-beater, was full of magnanimity and human kindness. Look at his conduct in great affairs. Mill came to announce that crushing catastrophe, the burning of the manuscript of the first volume of the *French Revolution*. He sat for three hours, and when he went the first words that Carlyle spoke were: "Well, Mill, poor fellow, is very miserable. We must try to keep from him how serious the loss is to us." Note his self-sacrifice. On the death of Mrs. Carlyle's mother he had a strong desire to retain the house and garden at Templand as an autumn retreat for himself—"no prettier place or refuge could be in the world," but Mrs. Carlyle shrank from going there, so he at once abandoned the project, cancelled the lease, and sold off everything. Mark his patience and consideration for others. He arrived in Liverpool from Ireland between five and six o'clock in the morning, and was found an hour later seated on his luggage at the door of Mr. Welch's house in Maryland Street, placidly smoking a cigar, not having cared to disturb the household so early. Notwithstanding his stern maxims he was the softest hearted of men. Thrifty and frugal in his personal habits, he was prodigal in his benevolence. Depths of tenderness lay in this rugged man. Miss Martineau said he was distinguished by his enormous force of sympathy. "No one who knew him," says Masson, "but must have noted how instantaneously he was affected or even agitated by any case of difficulty or distress in which he was consulted; and with what restless curiosity and exactitude he would enquire into all the particulars till he had conceived the case thoroughly and as it were taken all the pain to himself. The practical procedure, if it was possible, was sure to follow." If he could do a friendly act to any human being he did it, and care and personal exertion, if needed, were not wanting. Intolerant of sentimentality, he was himself a deep well of sentiment from which clear and refreshing pailfuls were drawn daily by passing events. It was really dirty surface water sentiment that stirred his ire, not the pellucid draughts that come from its hidden springs. To the strangers who pestered him with their curiosity, and to the literary aspirants who sought his aid—and few men have suffered more persecution of this kind than he did—he was as a rule not only bluntly honest, but courteously kind; and if a hard word did escape him it was not long before he made what amends were in his power. In extreme old age

his testiness was evanescent, and followed by prompt contrition.

“I shall never forget,” Mrs. Allingham writes to me, “the alarm I felt the first morning when, by Mary Aitken’s kind invitation, I made the drawings of him in 1878. I had settled myself with paper and colours ready on the old sofa in the drawing-room in Cheyne Row. Carlyle came in and eyed me suspiciously (no wonder, he had not been told I was coming); when Mary quietly remarked that I was just going to make a little sketch of him while he sat and read before he went out for his drive. He became restive, and said, ‘She tried me before, and made me look like a fool.’ ‘The very reason,’ Mary said, ‘that she wants to draw you again.’ Then he got up and marched to the door, saying, ‘I have had enough of sketching.’ I longed to fly, but Mary only laughed, and signed to me to be quiet and wait. She brought him to his arm-chair and settled him there, with his book close in front of the fire; and I with fear and trembling began to sketch him. When he shifted his position I began a new drawing; this for about an hour, when the carriage was announced. Mary had been quite right; as soon as he became interested in his book he forgot all about me, and when the time came to go all his natural kindness of heart and courtesy to a guest were present again, and, finding that I had not finished my drawing, he invited me to come again. It was the same on the subsequent visits—as to his kindness—and he complimented me on the likeness of several of my drawings. One day Browning called, and they had a brilliant talk about Michelet. Browning curbed his natural energy to listen with great deference to Carlyle till the moment came for him to reply, when he did in his usual vivid manner.”

I have dwelt at this length on Carlyle’s conjugal relations and on his character as disclosed in private life, because it is in connection with these, as I have said, that popular feeling was stirred up against him. No sooner had Froude spoken than, as Mr. Lilly has pointed out, gigmanity was up in arms, and was speedily joined by the brougham and tandem people. All the interests that Carlyle had offended by his outspoken judgments took vengeance on his memory when he was safe in his grave. There was “an explosion of the doggeries,” and an insensate yelping has been kept up ever since. But the attacks on Carlyle have not been confined to his domestic history or personal traits. The

work of traduction has been greatly extended, and now there is nothing that he said or did that has not been ridiculed or belittled. I cannot attempt to challenge here or even to enumerate the adverse criticisms that have been pronounced on Carlyle and his writings of late years; but about the very last of them I would say a few words, and that is to be found in the biography of the late Professor Jowett, published in the spring of this year. In a letter written in 1866 Jowett says of Carlyle that he is a man "totally regardless of truth, totally without admiration of any active goodness—a self-contradictory man, who investigates facts with the most extraordinary care in order to prove his own preconceived notions." And in a letter to Lady Abercromby, dated March, 1881, he remarks that "all London is talking about the *Reminiscences* with well-deserved reprobation." "It contains," however, he goes on, "a true picture of the man himself, with his independence, ruggedness and egotism, and the absolute disregard and indifference about everybody but himself. He was not a philosopher at all to my mind, for I do not think that he ever clearly thought out a subject for himself. His power of expression outran his real intelligence, and constantly determined his opinion; while talking about shams, he was himself the greatest of shams."

Now the witticism attempted at the close of this tirade, that the denouncer of shams was himself a sham, is not original but a variant of the old story of Thackeray, who once, when congratulated on his *Book of Snobs*, replied with an air of confidential confession, "Ah, madam, I could not have written that book had I not been myself a snob." But the witticism, if not original in form, certainly contains a statement that is strikingly original, and even grotesque in its absurdity and inappropriateness; for if there is one fact about Carlyle more certain than another it is this, that he was in deadly earnest. No one can dip into his writings without being convinced of this, and no one who has written about him save Jowett, has ever accused him of affectation or pretence. Jeffrey's complaint about him was that he was "so dreadfully in earnest." Goethe recognised in him "a new moral force, the extent and effect of which it is impossible to foretell." Froude declared that he left the world "having never spoken, never written a sentence which he did not believe with his whole heart, never stained his conscience by a single deliberate act which he could regret

to remember." The late Professor Nichol, a favourite pupil of Jowett, for whose opinion he expressed much respect, said—"Carlyle has no tinge of insincerity; his writings, his conversation, his life are absolutely, dangerously transparent. His utter genuineness was in the long run one of the secrets of his success." And let Carlyle speak for himself. On finishing the *French Revolution*, he said to his wife—"I know not whether this book is worth anything, nor what the world will do with it, or undo, or entirely forbear to do (as is likeliest); but this I would tell the world: you have not had for a hundred years a book that came more direct and flamingly sincere from the heart of a man: do with it what you like, you —."

Jowett offers no evidence in support of his accusation of shammy against Carlyle. The Master of Balliol has spoken, and Carlyle is gated for evermore. He says, indeed, that Carlyle, while exhorting to serious work, would be the first to laugh at anyone who tried to embark in it. "If I were engaged," he writes, "in any work more than usually good (which I never shall be) I know that he would be the first person to utter a powerful sneer, and if I were seeking to know the truth he would ridicule the very notion of an *homunculus* discovering the truth." But this would not be a sham but sardonic derision, and the allegation is unwarrantable, for no one revered the truth-seeker more than he, who had fought his way from the "Everlasting No" through the "Centre of Indifference" to the "Everlasting Yea." It was not the honest truth-seeker, however humble, but the man who, while feigning to seek truth, had all the time a furtive eye to his own advantage, that earned Carlyle's contempt. He could be unstinted in his appreciation of good work. No doubt he was too prone to ascribe unworthy motives; but that is not characteristic of the sham, whose best weapon is wholesale and servile flattery. No doubt he was severe and hasty in his strictures on his contemporaries—an unpardonable offence in these mutual admiration and log-rolling days—but many of his proleptic remarks upon them have been justified by events; and it is rank falsehood to assert that he had never a good word to say of anyone. He has spoken with liberal approbation and esteem of scores of men, public characters and private friends, of Lockhart, Sterling, Shaftesbury, Milnes, Landor, Cavaignac, Mitchell, Graham, Redwood, Baring, Erskine, Pusey, Clough, Cockburn, Thirlwall, Foster, Tyndale, and so on.

Granted, as Jowett suggests, that Carlyle might scoff at some of those who were striving to give effect to his teachings, there was not necessarily any insincerity in that, for one may lay down general principles without committing oneself to approval of every well-meaning essay at their practical application. It is permissible to advocate the building of breakwaters and still to smile at Mrs. Partington's mop. The over emphasis and exaggeration of which Carlyle was unquestionably guilty were, one phrase makes me think, relied on by Jowett as indicating that he was a sham; but this is strangely to misinterpret them, for they were in his case not the trumpeting of the quack, but the wrathful denunciations of a righteous man, who sees wrong prevailing around him and can be angry and sin not. It was impossible for him to be so sluggish, indifferent, or cool. He thought deeply and felt strongly, and was by organic necessity imperative and aggressive in urging his conclusions. He had abounding humour, too, and this often led him into exaggeration, and often pulled him up in it. A friend tells us that he has seen him many times check himself in a tumult of indignation with some ludicrous touch of self-irony, wander into some absurd phantasy, and end in a burst of uproarious laughter. Carlyle gave up his best prospects in life for conscience sake—he chose toil and poverty, he was just and generous to all who had claims on him, he trampled on the idols of the market place, he never budged an inch to threat or cajolery, or fawned on the rich and powerful. He declined the Grand Cross of the Bath and a civil pension, and he is represented by Jowett as having been a sham and not in earnest. Carlyle a sham! Carlyle not in earnest! Is the lightning in earnest? Is the umbrous torrent that rushes through Crichope Lynn in earnest in its search for the sea? No more fervid and sincere man ever breathed the breath of life. And I suspect that those who charge him with lack of earnestness are not in earnest themselves, and cannot understand him.

That Jowett had a grudge against Carlyle is tolerably clear. He never forgave him the epigrammatic flash with reference to the *Essays and Reviews*. "The sentinel who deserts should be shot," and he never lost an opportunity of a thrust at him who had inflicted this sore hurt. Soon after Carlyle's death reference was made in Jowett's presence to Proctor's speculation that it was not impossible that about the year 1897 a comet might strike the sun and raise its tem-

perature just so much as to cause the destruction of all animal life on the earth. Upon which Jowett remarked: "How pleased Mr. Carlyle would have been to hear this if he had been alive." Towards the end perhaps there was some mitigation of his rancour, for in 1891 he delivered himself of a more favourable opinion of Carlyle, which does not, however, enhance one's estimation of his critical acumen. He had been reading *Obiter Dicta*. I daresay some of you recollect the reception of *In Memoriam* by one critic, who committed himself to the opinion that it was obviously the work of a widow, written in memory of her late husband, who was a military man. Well, Jowett fell into a similar error with reference to *Obiter Dicta*, informing Mr. J. A. Symonds that it was written by a lady at Clifton. What does the member for West Fifeshire say to that? "It contains," he continues, "an excellent favourable criticism of Carlyle, and many new and well-expressed thoughts. I find that my old feeling about Carlyle comes back again, and when a man has written so extremely well you don't care to ask whether he was a good husband or a good friend."

It is not for me in defending Carlyle to assail Jowett. I admire, as all must do, the simplicity of his character, his aversion to what was unreal, his power of imagination, his industry, his generous patronage of youthful talent; but at the same time I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that he was intellectually and morally immeasurably inferior to Carlyle in every respect, and had a lower and narrower range of vision. He was a gentleman who was very much at ease in Zion. He knew few or no privations, and had the finest educational advantages; while Carlyle had to wrestle with difficulties for a great part of his life, felt the pinch of poverty, and had really to educate himself. Jowett identified himself with the interests of his college, which became, it was said, an embodiment of selfishness and greed; while Carlyle embraced the universe in the magnificent sweep of conceptions, and had a passionate sympathy with human helplessness. Jowett entertained the great of the land sumptuously at the Master's Lodge; while Carlyle gave a dish of tea to a few choice spirits in the dingy little drawing-room in Cheyne Row. Jowett's name is known to a few scholars—he can never touch the masses; Carlyle's to multitudes wherever our language is spoken.

Jowett has freely recorded his opinion of Carlyle. Carlyle, as far as I am aware, never said anything about Jowett. He

received from him, I know, a copy of his *Plato*, five bright-looking volumes, but he only cut a few leaves of it. I can well conceive, however, with what scathing scorn he would have disposed of Jowett's comfortable philosophy and of his views upon many subjects. Jowett held that civilisation owed more to Voltaire than to all the fathers of the Church, that Louis Napoleon was a genius worthy of admiration, that the Commune in Paris included a number of fine fellows, that Governor Eyre ought to have been hanged, that increased facilities should be given for divorce, that when there were various readings of the New Testament the least orthodox should be preferred, that a gentleman's motto ought to be "regardlessness of money, except in great things and as a matter of duty," and the tradesman's "take care of the pence and the pounds will look after themselves."

It is to be borne in mind, too, that Jowett himself, with his "cherubic chirp, commanding forehead, and infantile smile," for thus does an enthusiastic admirer describe him, was not free from suspicions of insincerity. He was ever undecided, sitting on the rail, and sent away his hearer puzzled not only as to what his opinions were, but as to whether he had any opinions at all. No wonder that the parodist summed up his teaching in the jest which will still bear repetition: "Some men will say that this day is hot, and some, on the other hand, that it is cold; but the truth is it is neither, or rather both, for like the Church of Laodicea, it is lukewarm." And this is the teacher who said Carlyle was regardless of truth and called him a sham!

Let me tell you an anecdote illustrative of Carlyle's abiding hatred of shams in small matters as well as great. I had an opportunity lately of asking the Duke of Rutland whether there was any truth in the story which I have heard many times repeated, that in 1851 he (then Lord John Manners), Mr. Disraeli, and other members of the Young England party, deeply impressed by the *Latter Day Pamphlets*, waited on Carlyle to invite from him some practical hints for legislation, only to be met by vague but tremendous exhortations to get things mended on pain of eternal perdition. "There is no truth in the story," said the Duke. "No doubt we of the Young England party were all much struck by *Latter Day Pamphlets*, but we never supposed that Carlyle was the man to draft a Bill. It was general inspiration, not detailed instructions, that we

expected from him. I only met Carlyle once," the Duke added, "and that was in the house of Sir William Stirling Maxwell. Thinking to interest him, I told him that I had just returned from Dumfries, and was sorry to notice that the stones in the Burns Mausoleum there were crumbling away from exposure to the weather. 'Sorry!' exclaimed Carlyle, 'I am very glad to hear it. I hope they will go on crumbling till there is not one stone left upon another. To think of it, that a man whose name was Turner, and who called himself Turnerelli, should have been employed to make a monument to the greatest genius that ever lived!'"

I have bestowed some attention on the unkind things Jowett said of Carlyle, because his eminence and the deference paid to him by a select group of old pupils and admirers, some of them writers of high attainments, is not unlikely to secure to them wide currency and some acceptance. They were at once quoted in the *Times*. But Carlyle has foes fiercer and more implacable than Jowett. Some superior literary persons in London refer to him with undisguised contempt; and a distinguished member of the literary fraternity, a friend of my own, in conversation with me not long ago, utterly denied him any claim to greatness. He was, he declared, a commonplace man, who raved portentously with nothing to say, whose scholarship was meagre and inexact, whose history was untrustworthy, whose style was detestable, whose knowledge of French and German was very limited, and who twisted and distorted the English language. We must go back, my friend concluded, from the vehemence of Carlyle to the clearness and serenity of the eighteenth century.

If I might keep you till midnight, I should have something to say under each count of this indictment, but in view of the clock I must leave it as a horrid example of the lengths to which the vilification of Carlyle may go. Fortunately, those holding such extreme views are few in number, and there is reason to believe that the calumniators of Carlyle of all shades are a diminishing body. The slump is over, and a steady appreciation, if not a boom, has set in. Mr. H. D. Trail, who takes as comprehensive and trigonometrical a survey of the field of literature as anyone now living, has written this very year: "Time has been swift of despatch in the case of Thomas Carlyle. His award has been delivered within fifteen years of Carlyle's death, and it confirms the judgment of his contemporaries as

to his literary greatness. The appeal of his posthumous detractors is dismissed with costs." Mr. Augustine Birrell, too, who is quick to read the signs of the times, has written within the last two months—"Oh, young man, do not be in too great a hurry to leave your Carlyle unread." Naming the greatest historians of the day, Mr. Birrell adds: "But no one of them is fit to hold a candle to Carlyle. . . Excellent Thomas."

"Come back in sleep, for in the life
When thou are not
We find none like thee. Time and strife
And the world's lot
Move thee no more, but love at least,
And reverent heart,
May move thee, royal and released
Soul as thou art."

Mr. Arthur Balfour, speaking at Dumfries in August, while confessing that he was not of the "straitest sect" of Carlyle's admirers, was obliged to admit that he was a great genius, and had in him a force and originality which enabled him to speak to two generations of his countrymen with a power and force on some of the deepest and most important subjects which can interest us, as no other man has perhaps been able to do.

CLINICAL NOTES AND CASES.

A Case of Concussion of the Brain simulating Delirium Tremens. By J. R. AMBLER, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,
Assistant Medical Officer, County Asylum, Chester.

A man, aged 50, was admitted on 4th October and died 15th October, 1897. The medical certificate stated that he was suffering from delirium tremens.

On admission.—The left side of his face was much bruised, both eyes blackened, and there was a wound on the nose; coagulated blood was formed in the left ear. Mentally he was dazed and stupid, restless, muttering and incoherent in conversation.

Past history.—While on a voyage from London to Belfast some days previous to admission he had a serious fall which rendered him unconscious for a time. He, however, recovered sufficiently to be able to attempt the journey from Belfast via Dublin and Holyhead to London. He was found wandering about Crewe, and was ultimately taken in charge by the police and sent to this asylum.