

no less forthright and penetrating about Froude, “the trusted son who has opened the gates to the hostile crowd.” As an apt sequel to the letters of Lady Harriet Ashburton, Wedgwood’s essay on Froude’s edition of *Reminiscences* is published below. Together, these sources provide the impetus to establish a new critical “court of appeal,” in which the original verdicts against Carlyle can be subjected to a more scrupulous and fair-minded process of “revisal and rectification.”



Mr. Froude as a Biographer.

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Reminiscences. By THOMAS CARLYLE.
 Edited by J. A. Froude. 2 vols. Longmans.

THAT we should speak only good of the dead—which means, of course, of the recently dead—is a maxim founded on respect to the best part of our nature. There is always some one on whom, at such a moment, any harsh judgment on the one who is gone inflicts a peculiarly painful wound, and if by any sad chance there should be no one, then the sense of a common humanity should replace the peculiar ties which have been loosened or broken, and demand, with an even superior claim, that we should pay so forlorn a being the tribute of a respectful silence. We hurt the sense of pity, of reverence within, when we needlessly allow ourselves to put hard judgments of one recently gone from us into words, even if they are just words. And in ordinary circumstances such words are needless. That chapter is closed—with that person our relations are ended, his faults can hurt us no more. Most people are soon forgotten, and their memory, while it lasts, may well be allowed a little undue fragrance. We should not disturb the silence of the newly-closed grave for any reason that is not weighty.

The consciousness of these truisms (as they may perhaps be considered) generally delays any attempt at the record of a life, till such time as a judgment may be expressed on it

without offence. It jars on our sense of moral fitness when those whose empty place still seems, as it were, to affect our spiritual equilibrium, are presented to us in a light which demands any moral investigation, even if this should end in acquittal. For if they are presented, the judgment must be expressed. It is not so great an evil to speak ill of the recently dead as to contribute to a false account of them. Hardly any duty of which the law takes no cognizance is more important than that of the biographer; some duties of which it does take cognizance are less important. Some kinds of dishonesty for which men were, at no distant period, condemned to the gallows, seem to us more pardonable than the careless or malignant word which diminishes an honourable reputation;—some kinds of cruelty which our more lenient penal code still regards with severity, are trifling beside the injustice which sets before thousands the calumny which can be refuted only in the hearing of a few score; or than the record, even if it be accurate, of some event or circumstance which, without throwing any valuable light on character or history, revives forgotten pain, and undoes the soothing work of time. Nor do the claims of literary decency strike us as less urgent than those of literary humanity. The duty of reticence grows with a man's audience. Much truth must be reluctantly spoken; but we do not believe that even cowardly silence does so much harm as indecent utterance, and when a wise man feels that he must choose between possibly speaking what should be withheld and possibly withholding what should be spoken, he will always choose the latter, at all events when he is speaking to the world.

These remarks apply to every kind of biographical record—to that which a man makes of himself, and to that which another makes of him. There are some very different temptations in the two cases, and some that are identical. A certain reserve should be the common aim of both: a biography or an autobiography should alike show us a man at his best. This may be thought even too much the aim of most biographers, but they would rarely gain truthfulness by losing affection. Nor would self-portraiture be more truthful if, in any self-review, a man failed to repress the faults that he has failed to overcome. It is no less desirable than it is natural that literary utterance should act as a moral filter. We are all the gainers by being made to repress the

worse half of ourselves. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things;" the evil treasure, it is implied, is left by the good man unopened. It is not that any one should desire to have a portrait of himself given to the world which is fairer than the original. It is that he and we should desire that in all self-revelation a noble ideal should give the key-note to utterance, that while unfaithfulness to that ideal should be confessed; yet in this self-revelation, as in all other actions, a man should aim at rising above himself, and setting the influence of his words on the side of that greater permanence in what is pure and lofty, which, as contrasted with the superior effectiveness of evil, forms our only hope of the final triumph. The aim, which should be included within the code of the most insignificant of us, is by no means—as at first sight it may seem—a small or easy part of duty. Much natural impulse, and perhaps some logical theory, would lead towards an impartial expression of the whole being, often the easiest, sometimes to all appearance, the more noble kind of utterance. In resisting the temptation let us not lose the mighty aid of the example of genius. We underrate the influence of such an example. Miss Cobbe has finely said of the influence of law on general morality, that it is like that of an organ on a choir. The same image may be applied to that unwritten law which the standard of great men imposes on the rank and file of humanity. If the key-note is struck wrong, if the powerful instrument is out of tune, where shall we look for connection to our own feeble voices and false ears? A biographer is a model not merely to biographers. He gives all his readers a lesson in moral judgment, especially in the discrimination of character and circumstance, one of the most important elements of judgment. Men of genius are subject to decay like their inferiors. Old age blunts the judgment, distorts the taste—above all, slackens the power of reticence. But when those who have the privilege of watching and remedying that decay give to the public what is marked by the characteristics of a time of weakness and suffering, they inflict gratuitous pain. The very accuracy of their observation is misleading. A mind in ruins is not, like a castle in ruins, a record from which we may revive, to our mind's eye, the original structure. It resembles rather some such strange confusion as might be found in the shattered *débris* left by an earthquake, where we should vainly

seek to trace the causes which have combined or separated different objects, and can only recognize that nothing has been created by the shock. The utterances of a second childhood do not, any more than the utterances of first childhood (and indeed they do it much less), reveal the man. Of the needs of age and disease such utterances have much to teach; the lesson, if we obtained it legitimately, would be a very pathetic one. But nothing is pathetic that is thrust upon unwilling eyes. Such utterances remind us that—

“From Marlborough’s eyes the tears of dotage flow;”

but a portrait of Marlborough at that stage adds nothing to the lesson, takes off, indeed, much of its impressiveness. There are truths that we enfeeble when we illustrate them. We must recognize that old age brings with it many kinds of weakness; but in the very act of such recognition we should hide its object from the gaze of indifference. To do so is our interest no less than our duty. The hope of each one of us must be that in the twilight of our day some tender hand will draw the curtain that shuts us from the world, and that it shall be the largest part of filial care to hide our weaknesses from every eye but that of love. Such books as that which all England has been lamenting do much to frustrate this common hope. To bring into the glare of full daylight that which tells of mental decay is to weaken all the resources of forbearance, of tolerance in dealing with mental decay. There is a profound connection between forbearance and reserve which we shall too surely discover if we allow ourselves to do, on our small scale, what Mr. Froude has done. But we incline to hope that these volumes will do more than the most eloquent sermon to preach the claims of a merciful and reverent silence.

For no one is blind to the error of him who, in discharge of a responsibility bequeathed with a pathetic confession of conscious incapacity of judgment, such as ought to have delayed this vicarious decision with a sense of anxious and scrupulous caution, has flung before the world, with haste barely allowing correction of the press,¹ the utterances of a mind diseased. We never remember a book, concerning which opinion was

¹At least an important date on p. 226, vol. i, is, it would appear, given wrong; nor is this the only mark of careless editing in the volumes.

so unanimous, as concerning the Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle. That it should not have been written is the opinion of most of those whose opinion was worth having, but that it should not have been published seems to use the opinion of everybody, except those who regarded Carlyle as a preacher of mischievous doctrine, whom it was desirable to bring into disrepute. "This book will destroy the Carlyle-idol," was the gleeful exclamation, it is said, of an eminent Radical, who honestly believed Carlyle-worship to be an impediment in the way of the true Gospel.

Hoc Ithacus velit, et magno mercentur Atridae

At times we could almost imagine that this line furnishes a key to Mr. Froude's true motive. So bewildered are we by the decision, that the cloud of dotage shall eclipse a striking and interesting character, that we are tempted to ascribe to him the part of Sino towards Priam, and to believe that under a guise of meek inoffensiveness he has intentionally admitted the foe into the very heart of the citadel. But we must vary the Virgilian narrative to make it suit our purpose. It is a duteous Hector, a pious Æneas, to all appearance, who has played the part of Sino. It is the trusted son who has opened the gates to the hostile crowd.

We must try to remind ourselves of the extreme disinterestedness he has shown in this publication. Mr. Carlyle said to him, "Give the world what you think well for it to read in these papers," and he desired, surely, to present to the public only that portion of them which would commemorate what was characteristic of a large and lofty, even if a faulty personality. What ninety-nine persons out of a hundred would have done with such a bequest is plain enough. The beautiful little sketch of James Carlyle, like the autobiographic fragment prefixed to Lockhart's "Life of Scott," was the natural introduction to a Biography; and the picture of the Annandale mason might have stood side by side with that of the Edinburgh lawyer, as a frontispiece to the memoirs of an illustrious and affectionate son. The recollections of Jeffrey and of Irving would have afforded rich material for a biographer, but a portion of both would have been not only not used, but as far as possible obliterated and forgotten. The memoir of Mrs. Carlyle would have been used, but hardly quoted at all; and such papers as

that on Wordsworth, lastly, would have been neither used nor quoted, but thrown into the fire. We have vainly striven to fashion some conceivable hypothesis why Mr. Froude has not done what any one else would have done. He had here the most valuable materials for the biography of the man he wished to commemorate; he is endowed by nature with all the powers needed for a worthy commemoration; and he has so used these materials, that when the biography comes, all his great literary power will hardly prevent his work from falling flat. He has acted like the discoverer of a gold mine, who should cart away tons of the earth in which the ore is embedded before beginning to separate any. He has given wanton and reckless pain, has hurt tender recollections and sacred feelings, and he has bereaved us all of a noble ideal that was most dear and precious; but we must remember that he has not yielded to any comprehensible temptation in doing so; on the contrary, he has made the task he has yet to fulfil less interesting, both to himself and his readers. It is not as in the publication of a book to which these Reminiscences have been compared—the Greville Memoirs. They, at least, were a contribution, of a certain kind, to literature; it never occurred to the reader that any other use could be made of them than giving them with more or less revision to the public. But these Reminiscences are a drawer emptied into the printer's hands, not a book. Can Mr. Froude be ignorant that the memoir of Jane Welsh Carlyle is an exposure of mental decay? If he was really blind to its true character, he may have failed to recognize the petty slanders of ingratitude and ill-will. It is a strange, but not altogether an undesirable, conjunction by which literary acumen and common humanity depart together, and a man of ability forgets what is the effect of mere slovenly jottings, as he loses all sense of the evil in a low grudging spirit of disparagement.

We write thus with no intention of sarcasm, but in a real desire to discover that an eminent historian has not acted with reckless cruelty in giving this book to the world. If he really knew what he was doing, it was an act of literary cruelty in some respects without a parallel. Many men and a few women have had hard things said of them in print before, no doubt; far more disagreeable, in fact, than anything said in these pages, where everything is on a small scale. We deal with petty disparagement,

not libel. But in every case which we can call to mind, those who have previously suffered a similar wrong were persons who were, in a certain sense, prepared for the misfortune. Either by character, or some accidental circumstance, they stood already before the world. They, or rather their children, knew that different views must be taken of them; their position, to a certain degree, was secured; any fresh opinion had to take its place by the side of that which it could not displace; and as it was not the whole of what would have been known of them, so it was not an unwarrantable intrusion into the shadow of privacy. But the persons calumniated and depreciated here are mostly those of whom posterity will know little or nothing but what Carlyle has chosen to tell of them. They asked nothing better of the world than to forget them. They challenged no comparison with heroic natures; they demanded no space in the chronicle of resonant action; they sought only a place in the hearts of a few loved ones, and a merciful judgment, perhaps, from the only being to whom they looked for recollection when their children passed away. We cannot remember any other book from the pen of a man of genius by whom such men and women were assailed. There is a strange stirring of the heart which almost all feel, sooner or later, at the mention of those whom they can never forget, but whom they must remember alone. There was no wish in the dead to be remembered, but we are so made, that a certain dim, irrational pity mingles with our love for those whom the world has forgotten, and there is a strange glow in the most commonplace, even the most indiscriminate mention, that recalls their mere names to us, so it be only kindly. And if the thrill of expectation, stirred by the unexpected sight of their names, be followed by scorn or disparagement, a wound is inflicted on a part of the nature far more sensitive than that of self-love. Our own repute is a thing to some extent in our own hands. If it is hurt to-day, we may determine that it shall be healed to-morrow. But a slur cast on the memory of a parent leaves us helpless, and such a slur, sent down to posterity, even if it be comparatively a slight one, seems to us a more cruel wrong than the heaviest libel that man or woman may meet, and answer, or at least explain. This book enters the modest home, where fame is as little desired as slander is feared, and defaces the loved portrait, seen for

many years through a mist of tears, with splashes of mud. With splashes of mud only, for the most part, we firmly believe. This dull, pointless censure is refuted by its own monotony, its tone of unvarying peevishness. When we have read of Wordsworth—that “he was a rather dull, hard-tempered, unproductive, and almost wearisome kind of man;”² of Lamb and his sister (think of writing³ the words “of Lamb *and his sister*”), that “they were a very sorry pair of phenomena” (ii. 165); of Coleridge (i. 230), “that he was a puffy, anxious, obstructed-looking, fattish old man, talking with a kind of solemn emphasis on matters which were of no interest”—we come to hard, contemptuous words of some new acquaintance, with a habit of scepticism that undoes their effect, or perhaps inverts it. But alas! it is not only mud which has been cast on the central portrait of Mr. Froude’s gallery. We believe, indeed, that some of the ugly splashes which deface an image dear to all lovers of literature throughout Europe may be washed away. Much of the discredit which this book has brought on its winter will fade, we may hope, as men recover from the shock of its moral ugliness, and recognize that this is due, in part, to the diseased state of the mind thus uttered. But we dare not hope that we shall ever entirely recover the noble image we have lost. Carlyle was not the poor creature he has painted himself here. But he must have had the faults he betrays, there is no denying it, ugly as they are. The discovery may not be altogether new to his friends. A faulty being they all know that he was. But they thought him loyal, grateful, and generous, and with the *Reminiscences* to be brought against them, they must in future, if they can still give him credit for loyalty, gratitude, and generosity, be ready to justify their belief in the face of his own words.

How far his words written under such circumstances reveal his character is a point on which we are glad to think that

²“*Reminiscences*,” ii. 330. If the reader study this wonderful passage he will see that it is meant as a criticism on Wordsworth’s poetry, and not his conversation.

³The reader will be grateful to us for including, at the close of this article, an extract from Carlyle’s letter to Mrs. Procter on his sketch of Lamb. It is interesting as at least suggesting a different view of Lamb from that given in the *Reminiscences*.

opinions will vary. What posterity will think of Mr. Froude's share in this book must be considered as hardly more doubtful than what the world thinks of it to-day, but what posterity will think of Mr. Carlyle's share of it is happily less clear. He was always regarded with a kind of special indulgence by his friends. "It seems to me marvellous," said one of them to the writer since his death, "how I could listen as I did to his tirades in favour of slavery; one could not have endured it from any one else, but there was something in his personality that made it different." It was not merely that he was a man of genius. There was something in him that there is in many men not specially intellectual, which seems to take the sting out of what would be intolerable in another. In some degree, perhaps, it was that a kind of pathetic feeling always mingled with the admiration of those who loved him, and now the that the last feeling is for the moment blotted out, the first comes out very strongly. It has been expressed by Mrs. Oliphant with candour and insight, and comes with much force from one who joins a warm friendship for himself to a kindly sympathy for some he has cruelly libelled. Long before there was any question of accounting for Mr. Carlyle's defects by the difficulties of age and loneliness, we well remember hearing this plea from an older friend than Mrs. Oliphant. It must be thirty years since the gentle and tolerant James Spedding expressed to a youthful hearer (in answer, probably, to some rather presumptuous criticism, but the fact is buried in suitable oblivion) what all Mr. Carlyle's friends must have felt it needful at times to revive—their sense of his need of indulgence. If the words were remembered as distinctly as those peculiar, slow, calm, selective accents, it would probably be misleading to report them, lest apart from that aroma of gentleness and respect they might seem commonplace, but their substance has always remained with the hearer as a plea for the unsuspected weakness of the powerful. "Carlyle needs always the kind of indulgence which most of us need in a fit of violent toothache" is the substance, and partly the words, of that pleading which now blends suitably with the almost dying declaration of the speaker—that the accident which caused his death was no one's fault but his own. Mr. Carlyle could not have been sixty years old when Mr. Spedding thus urged his need of forbearance, and the thirty years which was to elapse before

he and his indulgent advocate passed away together certainly did not diminish his need of that advocacy. We would give it its fullest scope, but we shall be unjust both to great men and to ordinary men if we refuse to make a certain claim on every one, whatever his excuses for not responding to it; so long as they leave him in a condition which the law would pronounce a responsible one, and we cannot make a claim which does not imply a certain judgment on one who rejects it. When we say that a man should control himself, we do not in an ordinary circumstances mean that he should control himself as long as his nerves are in good condition. It is a miserable effeminacy, which no one would have scorned more than the great man who has given so much occasion for it, to plead that when duty becomes difficult it ceases to be a duty. We must be loyal to his own lesson of endurance, even if he is not. And what we must condemn in this book, moreover, as far as we condemn the writer for its existence, is not that he let expressions of feeling escape him which he should have controlled, but that the feelings were there to be expressed. We have all accepted the fact that old age weakens the power of reticence. What each one of us is becoming day by day, he or she must, if old age is reached, betray to the world, and if there is a confirmed habit of the pen no doubt our faults must leak out that way as well as another. But surely we shall not then undergo any miraculous transformation; and we cannot see that age, and weakness, and sorrow have any natural tendency to create some of the ugliest feelings revealed here. And then, too, it seems that some of Mr. Carlyle's apologists, in their eagerness to vindicate the character of a man of genius, cheapen the privilege of genius. When the poet, in Schiller's pretty fable, flies to the throne of Jove to complain that the earth is portioned out and nothing is left for him, Jove compensates his impoverished son by the promise that at any moment he shall find a refuge from the poverty of earth in the glory and light of Olympus. It is a strange ingratitude that the guest of the Immortals should murmur that his cup is not better replenished at these poor festivities of earth. Perhaps it is not the kind of ingratitude that his inferiors are able to judge, but it is one that no human being should excuse.

However, we gladly allow ourselves to rest on the misleadingness of the utterances of disease and grief. What is

absolutely certain is that Mr. Carlyle would have condemned their publication. If Mr. Froude himself imagines that Carlyle would have desired that many pages of this book should meet the public eye (a question which we put in all sincerity), he certainly is the only person in England, with the smallest qualification for forming an opinion, who is of that opinion. We do not think Carlyle was nearly reluctant enough to give pain; but we cannot believe that he would have consented to give pain this book has inflicted; and when some years ago (about the time, indeed, that he was composing these *Reminiscences*) the private papers of a distinguished German were made public, at the cost of somewhat similar offence, he was loud in his expressions of displeasure. However, let that pass, suppose he was indifferent to the fact that his unjust words should be flung about like broken glass in a crowd; still he was, at all events, a master of letters. We do not believe that in all his voluminous works there is one slovenly sentence. He was a thoroughly literary workman. What he would have felt on having to disentangle information about a great man from some of the rubbish that encumbers it here we can easily imagine. Many of these pages resemble nothing so much as the disorderly jottings of a pocket-book diary, and we have all, to recover some forgotten date, read over memoranda that were quite as suitable to the printers' hands as much that is given here. Indeed rather more suitable. At least our private jottings are all in the indicative mood, this and that happened—trivial enough it may be, but definite and certain. But Mr. Froude has given the world much of his hero's writing that is as trivial as the memoranda of the humblest reader, and as uncertain as the speculation of a scholar on some doubtful point of early history. We will not become his accomplice in unveiling the weaknesses of a suffering old man; but let the reader, who thinks this sentence exaggerated, turn to Mr. Carlyle's account of the building of his study at the top of the house (ii. 237–239), or the journey to Edinburgh, p. 245 of the same volume, or the sentence, on p. 189, beginning "The Stanleys of Alderley," or the self-questioning, on p. 168, whether he went to Edinburgh in 1832 or 1833. Most of us would try to bring our recollections into a more dignified condition, both as to definiteness and proportion, before writing them down for our grandchildren. The truth about this memoir of

his wife we fancy must have been something of this kind. In the forlorn wretchedness which followed her death the one anxiety of his friends must have been to procure him some sort of occupation, and they felt, probably, that they had no chance unless they suggested occupation directly connected with his grief. "Write down your recollections of her," they may have urged; "she deserved to be commemorated, and you may revive much in trying to transcribe it." We can fancy that he may have taken up the pen in a sort of desperation of forlorn misery, and poured forth his longings for her as a sort of atonement to her memory, with actual tears blotting the paper. We have seen these poor maunderings called pathetic. Nothing that spoke of great suffering ever seemed to us further from being pathetic, but they certainly are piteous. They tell of great wretchedness, great loneliness, and very great impatience. We do not consider that anything which we thus describe is suited for the public, and we are absolutely certain that the author of "Sartor Resartus" would have emphatically condemned its publication. He did in his dotage take the first step to their publication, no doubt. But he has left it on record that his own impulse would be to burn the blotted page; and, however our opinion of him must be modified by the fact that such judgments as he chronicles were ready to be chronicled, we may be sure that the act which gave them, as they are, to the public, would be one that he would have condemned no less severely, though possibly from a different cause than would those whom the publication has most insulted and wounded. Let us enforce our belief on the reader's mind in his own words, as they are given in his will, with all their febleness and repetition.

"My manuscript, entitled 'Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle,' is to me naturally, in my now beareaved state, of endless value, though of what value to others I cannot in the least clearly judge; and, indeed, for the last four years am imperatively forbidden to write further on it; or even to look further into it. Of that manuscript, my kind, considerate, and ever faithful friend, James Anthony Froude (as he has lovingly promised me), takes precious charge in my stead. To him, therefore, I give it with whatever other furtherance and elucidations may be possible, and I solemnly request of him to do his best and wisest in the

matter, as I feel assured he will. There is incidentally a quantity of autobiographic record in my notes to this manuscript; but except as a subsidiary and elucidative of the text, I put no value on such. Express biography of me, I had really rather that there should be none. James Anthony Froude, John Forster, and my brother John, will make earnest survey of the manuscript, and its subsidiaries there or elsewhere, in respect to this, as well as its other bearings; their united utmost candour and impartiality, taking always James Anthony Froude's practicality along with it, will evidently furnish a better judgment than mine can be; the manuscript is by no means ready for publication: nay, the question, How, when (after what delay, seven, ten years) it, or any portion of it should be published, are still dark to me; but on all such points, James Anthony Froude's practical summing up and decision is to be taken as mine. . . . Many or most of these papers I often feel that I myself should burn; but probably I never shall after all."

As we consider how Mr. Froude has executed the bequest here so touchingly confided to him, the two hypotheses between which we are forced to oscillate, of disloyalty and of ignorance, become alternately the most incredible. It is as difficult to believe that he wished to present to the world, in an unlovely light, one who regarded him with the love and trust here expressed as that he should be ignorant of the way men regard dull and needless censure, cruel slander, hard unfeeling reference to misfortune, careless misstatements where misstatement gives poignant pain, ingratitude, and unmanly whining. All these things are made known to the world within a few weeks of Mr. Carlyle's death by the man whom he trusts as his own son. With what object, we cannot but ask in utter bewilderment?

Let us recall to the reader a few specimens of the information which Mr. Froude has provided for him. One lady, for instance, known to Mr. Carlyle's readers only by her Christian name, but quite sufficiently indicated to her children or grandchildren, if she has any, by even the few words which accompany it, is mentioned merely to give a disagreeable and ill-natured nickname by which he and his acquaintance were wont to speak of her, and to state that he would not have married her on any account. The man whom Romilly chose as guardian to his children is described as a "puffy, vulgar little dump of

an old man," with "nothing real in him but the stomach and the effrontery to fill it." A family of whose kindness we well remember hearing in former days from Mrs. Carlyle may read of their constant hospitality as having seldom given "much real profit or even enjoyment for the hour." We come to the mention of one of her particular friends, where we naturally look for some kind words, but we, and this lady's children also, may reader that she was admirable to Mr. Carlyle "as a highly-finished piece of social art, but hardly much otherwise." Another lady, named and elaborately described, was, it is hinted, quite ready, had he been willing, to have become his wife. The most cruelly treated of all his victims, who was also the wife of his dearest friend, and who, though she was his hospitable hostess, had some natural dread, we believe, of his influence on her husband (a more natural explanation of his dislike to her, to our mind, than that suggested by Mrs. Oliphant), has already found one defender. An interesting letter from Mr. Kegan Paul, in the *Athenæum* of April 16, embodying the protest of Mrs. Irving's sister, Miss Martin, against the slanders which this book has circulated respecting all her family, will startle the reader with its revelation of the strange recklessness of the man who would spend days in ascertaining a date or a genealogy concerning some hero of the past, but did not care, apparently, to ask a question before stabbing those who sought no place in history, with slanders concerning their dead that appear to have been utterly baseless, and in some cases the very opposite of the truth. Of all that relates to the Martin family Mrs. Oliphant declares that it is "disagreeable, painful, and fundamentally untrue."⁴ Another lady, the daughter of the man

⁴The present writer had intended, had space permitted it, to have inserted another letter of vindication which has appeared (in *Notes and Queries* for April 9) since the publication of these volumes, to wipe away the trace of Mr. Carlyle's pen from another blameless woman—Southey's second wife. The writer, the Rev. Edmund Tew, an intimate friend of her stepdaughter, "Edith May," gives a picture of Mrs. Southey's relations to her stepchildren, and of her whole character, entirely different from Carlyle's. Southey's daughter and her husband, the late Rev. John Warter, always spoke of the "certain Miss Bowles," whom Carlyle describes with such cruel contempt, as "one of the best and truest women that ever lived." His unwarrantable perpetuation of what he learned at second or third

who pressed on him no contemptible pension at a time when nothing could accrue to the giver but a consciousness of having given help where it was deserved and needed, is characterized, besides much else that is contemptuous, and we must add most impertinent, as “a morbidly shy kind of creature who lives withdrawn from her children,” and he concludes with almost giving her address! Imagine the shock to a sensitive woman, such as is indicated here, of seeing *any* description of herself in print, even were it a less unpleasing one! But there is a far keener pain than dispraise—even than impertinent and unjust dispraise—of oneself. The lady to whom we allude, who is remembered by others, knowing her better probably than Mr. Carlyle did, as the object of a peculiarly tender parental love, may feel too much the grudging ungracious estimate of her father to have any space left for hurt self-love. But the mentions of a public man, just or unjust, are at least natural, while such intrusion into an inconspicuous home as that of which we have, perhaps, given the worst specimen is altogether blameable even if its object were complimentary. It would have been an impertinence to describe Jeffrey’s daughter if the description had been flattering. Women who come before the world must take their chance with men: if anything is worth saying about them, good or ill, let it be said. But wait till they give the opportunity for such description even if it be favourable. Such gossip as is printed here would not perhaps be worth notice if it were not ill-natured, but it would in any case be very much to the discredit of an editor that he had let it stand. As it is, the larger fault hides the less.

The specimens of slander and depreciation which we have selected are not carefully sifted away from warm eulogy, lively character-painting, subtle analysis, or even brilliant pictures of society. None of these things would excuse slander or impertinence, but they would put into a very different light what might, by their side, pass almost without notice in the midst of so much that would draw attention from it. In character proportion is as important as it is in chemistry. If much is said

hand has, we learn from this letter, “touched to the very quick” one of her surviving kindred, at whose instance Mr. Tew comes forward in her defence.

of any one, some ill must be said, and it takes its place naturally as a part of the character of an imperfect human being. But Mr. Carlyle has not, in any single case that we have cited, attempted a portrait. He has given an account of the persons mentioned which would have been justified if he had been obliged to mention whatever he could recollect about them, and that is all we can say. Some faint attempt has been made to find an excuse for this disparagement in its universality. But it is a poor comfort for the pain we feel at finding that a great man could bequeath sneers and morose censure to posterity, to find that he made his portraits of his equals quite as ugly as those of his inferiors. It is a poor vindication for our complaints of his grudging estimate to be told that it was universal. He was, we fully allow, impartial in his dispraise. High and low, rich and poor, well known and little known, all alike suffer for the honour of being mentioned in these pages. He remembered slights, but benefits made but a feeble impression on him. A certain dislike for humanity is evident everywhere—at least, excepting his own and his wife's kindred, we can hardly mention a name that comes the brighter from his pen. The natural and blameless desire to attract the attention of genius receives a curious inversion from the records here presented to us. The children of those he has passed over in silence congratulate themselves on their escape. Those whose parents were thought worthy of being described by him are all stung by a sense of injustice and cruelty, sometimes—we must write the word—of ingratitude.

We must add the hateful word in introducing to the reader what we would gladly consider as a little supplement to the *Reminiscences of Thomas Carlyle*. The daughter of one of the many women disparaged or caricatured by a man they may have considered their friend, has printed some letters from him, in reading which the reader is enabled to judge of the true character of these *Reminiscences* as a revelation of their writer, and to substitute, in one case, the impressions of his maturity for those of his dotage. No part of these memoirs (except perhaps the account of Mrs. Irving) seems to us more discreditable than that which deals with Mr. Carlyle's friendship for the Basil Montagus. Basil Montagu is a name little familiar to the reader of our day, except through the famous article of

Macaulay, confuting his partial view of Bacon, but he deserves to be associated with the name of Bacon in a more honourable light than that of an easily confuted apologist, and, indeed, the respectful tone of the confutation must have suggested to more than one reader a wish to know something more of the antagonist thus answered. His “valuable edition” of Bacon’s works, as Macaulay calls it, formed indeed the first step towards that study of the great thinker which has distinguished our own century; and the frequent citations which ornamented his pleadings in the law-courts, made the thoughts of Bacon familiar to some who were not his students. We learn from an affectionate eulogy contributed by Montagu to the *Memoirs of Mackintosh*, that their friendship originated in the successful attempt of the elder—himself a recent and reluctant convert—to convert the younger from the principles of the French Revolution, and also that it was to these friendly warnings that Montagu owed his first introduction to the philosopher, with whom his name was to be thus honourably connected. He seems ever after to have retained for his friend (for whom, though only five years his senior, he professes an almost filial reverence) that warm and lively interest felt for one who directs our convictions anew. Indeed, he would appear from his own account to have been influenced by Mackintosh not only in doctrine but in practice, a “morbid wish to seclude himself from public life,”⁵ which however could never have really prevailed against so many endowments for it, being earnestly combated by Mackintosh with the precept of Bacon, that “in this life God and angels only should be lookers-on;” and the tendency which Mackintosh here combated showed itself on its nobler side perhaps in a direction which he was wont to indicate in a playful threat, not unwelcome to its object, to spend the evening in “baiting the philosopher.”⁶ The temptation towards a life of seclusion quickly passed away. Montagu became an active and successful practitioner at the Chancery bar, and owed to his own exertions the wealth which enabled him to exercise a liberal hospitality, enjoyed by many eminent

⁵ “*Memoirs of Sir James Mackintosh*,” by his Son, i. 157. *Ib.*, 158.

⁶ This name seems to have been applied to Montagu when he and Mackintosh first became acquainted in the year 1796. Basil Montagu was born in 1770.

contemporaries, and abused only by one. "There is no place that I enjoy more than Basil Montagu's," writes Charles Sumner. "I step into his house after I have been dining out, and we talk till I am obliged to say 'good morning' and not 'good night.' The Montagus have been intimate with more good and great people than anybody I know. . . . It is a pleasure to hear his quotations from the ancient English writers come almost mended from his beautiful flowing enunciation."⁷ Mrs. Montagu is one of the most remarkable women I have ever known."⁸ The impression he made on her was mutual, and in 1844 she wrote to him, "I cannot account for the strange sympathy by which in a moment my heart acknowledges a friend; but . . . I seem to hear a voice not new to me, and to meet looks and expressions so responded to by every fibre in my frame that it is no stranger who stands before me, but a lost friend recovered. I do not attempt to solve this problem, and say why I sat down with you at once and could have said anything that I thought. . . . I knew — for years, admired his talent, was most confidentially entrusted with his inmost thoughts, would have been his hostess for months or years, his nurse in illness, or his adviser in common things where advice was needed; but his friend, after my fashion, never! I loved Edward Irving with all the tenderness of a friend and mother. I dare not tell you of my antipathies."⁹ We give this extract from a letter of Mrs. Basil Montagu's in introducing those which she received from Mr. Carlyle, to show (as we think the extract does show) that she was a woman eminently formed for friendship; her distinction of it from goodwill, admiration, and warm interest, even in their highest manifestation, proves her to have felt what many women pass through life without finding out—that there are relations other than those of kindred, and equally real, which we rather discover than create, and which, once discovered, remain a perennial source of moral refreshment, less encumbered by anxious care than ties of blood, and not much less fruitful in the influences that soothe and cheer our path through life. She

⁷The reader will recall a tribute of greater weight and equal purport from Macaulay cited above.

⁸"Life and Letters of Charles Sumner," ii. 44.

⁹*Ib.*, ii. 290, note.

is gracefully and affectionate sketched in a book which, though it may sound strange to say so, might well be set side by side with the one before us, as a contrast between the reminiscences of a far-off youth, touched by the glow of a generous tenderness, and one where the chill of old age tells in a wintry gloom reflected backwards on the objects of recollections—Fanny Kemble's "Records of a Girlhood." We have felt it refreshing to turn from Mr. Carlyle's sketch of Mrs. Montagu to Mrs. Kemble's, which is indeed superficial, but not more superficial, and which surprises us by the extent to which a totally different effect is produced by the very slight changes between two descriptions, which, were they left unnamed, we might discern as pointing out the same object. We gather from both as from all other records that have met our ears, that Mrs. Basil Montagu was beautiful, dignified, and somewhat authoritative, a certain formidableness mingling with her stateliness without interfering with its grace. Both writers give much space to the description of her dress, which was apparently peculiar. But while the one description suggests a style of attire occupying lengthy thought and care, we learn from the other that it was perfectly invariable, so it must have been an object of the minimum of attention to the wearer. There is a curious and instructive contrast even in this little touch. Mr. Carlyle, with his seventy or eighty pins,¹⁰ suggests a daily dress-fitting full of an anxious, fussy carefulness. Mrs. Kemble, in her elaborate description of the becoming and suitable costume adopted once for all, paints for us an enviable freedom from all such attention. However, they concur in putting a striking and picturesque, as well as a dignified figure before us, and one which seems to have been the centre of a group of admiring friends and acquaintances, to whom she was as strong a personality as her husband. Sir James Mackintosh was accustomed to speak of her rather the oftenest of the two. With such a household to preside over (Basil Montagu was thrice married, and she brought her own little daughter into the home), we can imagine how much effort was implied in the admission of any new claimant to her acquaintance; probably

¹⁰ Which surely cannot, as Mrs. Oliphant suggests, be due to some recollected description of his wife's. We can hardly imagine a young lady supposing that a well-fitting dress was dependent on such an appendix.

most people who have lived in London know what it is to make room for a new friend in a crowded circle, especially where the friend himself is a stranger. It was into this circle that Mr. Carlyle came as a raw Scotch youth—most impressive he was always—but at that time with his country manners, his strong accent, and his dyspepsia, the impressiveness cannot have been altogether of an agreeable kind. Nothing draws a thicker veil over all natural attractiveness than bad health, without the shelter of suitable arrangements; the habitual discomfort of the sufferer can hardly help being otherwise than self-occupied, and consequently ungracious; and there could have been little in Carlyle at this time, when he was fresh from a Scotch farm, to compensate for this ungraciousness by any external polish. At this time, in short, Carlyle had, from a social point of view, nothing to give and everything to receive. It is evident, even from his own grudging and ungenerous narrative, that he was received warmly and hospitably into a crowded and occupied circle, to which he was able to contribute nothing of the smallest worldly advantage, and his entrance on which must have been a considerable worldly advantage to him, that a certain motherly care was from the first extended to him by Mrs. Montagu, and then when he wrote his *Reminiscences*, he was still aware, in a dim feeble way, that some sort of gratitude was due from him to her. How much more strongly he felt this at the time, however, let the reader judge from the following extract from his letter to her:—

20th May, 1825.

“When I think of all your conduct towards me, I confess I am forced to pronounce it *magnanimous*. From the first, you had faith enough in human nature to believe that under the vinegar surface of an atrabiliar character, there might lurk some touch of principle and affection. Notwithstanding my repulsive aspect you followed me with unwearied kindness, while near you, and now that I am far off, and you suspect me of stealing from you the spirit of your most valued friend, you still think tenderly of me, you send me cheering words into my solitude, amid these rude moors a little dove-like messenger arrives to tell me that I am not forgotten, that I still live in the memories and wishes of some noble souls. Believe me, I am not unthankful for

this; I am poor in heart, but not entirely a bankrupt. There are moments when the thought of these things make me ten years younger, when I feel with what fervid gratitude I should have welcomed sympathy, or the very show of sympathy from such a quarter, had it then been offered me; and now that *yet* changed as matters are you shall not escape me, that I *will* yet understand you and love you, and be understood and loved by you. I did you injustice, I never *saw* you till about to lose you. Base Judæan that I was! Can you forgive without forgetting me? I hope yet to be near you long and often, and to taste in your society the purest pleasure, that of fellow-feeling with a generous and cultivated mind. How rare it is in life, and what were life without it! Forgive me if you can. If my affection and gratitude have any value in your eyes, you are like to be no loser by my error. I felt before I left you, I feel it still more deeply now.”

It seems very natural, if we may take the foregoing expressions as sincere, that Mr. Carlyle should desire such a friend for his young wife, and we find him seeking to make them correspondents before they were personally acquainted. He writes, after giving a description of Jane Welsh:

“This young lady is a person you will love and tend as a daughter when you meet; an ardent, generous, gifted being, banished to the pettiness of a country town; loving, adoring the excellent in all its phases, but without models, advisers, or sympathy. Six years ago she lost her father, the only person who had ever understood her; since that hour she has never mentioned his name; she never alludes to him yet without an agony of tears. It was Mr. Irving’s wish, and mine, and most of all, her own, to have you for her friend, that she should live beside you till she understood you, that she might have at least one model to study, one woman with a mind as warm and rich to show her by living example how the most complex destiny might be wisely managed. Separated by space, could you draw near to one another by the imperfect medium of letters? Jane thinks it would abate the ‘awe’ which she must necessarily feel on first meeting with you personally. She wishes it; I also, if it were attainable; is it not?”

We are glad to know that the friendship thus demanded

was not abused by the person for whom it was sought. "Mrs. Carlyle," writes one who knew her intimately for about thirty years, "always spoke of Mrs. Montagu in my hearing with admiration and respect, and almost reverence." These feelings seem at the time to have been fully shared by her husband. We will give another specimen of them.

25th December, 1826

"Indeed, indeed, my dear Madam, I am not mad enough to forget you, the more I see of the world and myself the less tendency have I that way, the more do I feel that in these my wilderness journeys, I have found but one Mrs. Montagu, and that except in virtue of peculiar good fortune, I had no right to calculate on even finding one. A hundred times do I regret that you are not here, or I there; but I say to myself we shall surely meet again on this side the wall of night, and you will find me wiser and I shall know you better, and love and reverence you more. Meantime, as conscience whispers, What are protestations? Nothing, or worse than nothing; therefore let us leave them."

How little he could have thought, as he wrote these lines, that they were to be illustrated, after his death, by unkind sneers against the woman he here addresses with so much apparent reverence and admiration! Let us read the last words by the light of the earlier ones. Surely, whatever else he was, Thomas Carlyle was not a hypocrite!

The unmanly remembrance of trivial ills which characterise these volumes receive no less forcible a rebuke from these letters than their petty sneers. His published works, of course, contain many more forcible, but the following passage, as elicited by some of the trials which in recording them he makes so much of, seems to us worthy of a place here—:

25th December, 1826

"At all events, what right have we to murmur? It is the common lot: the Persian king could not find three happy men in the wide world to write the names of on his queen's tomb, or the philosopher would have recalled her from death. Every son of Adam has his task to toil at, and his stripes to bear for doing it wrong. There is one deadly error we commit on our entrance on life, and

sooner or later we must lay it aside, for till then there is neither peace nor rest for us in this world: we all start, I have observed, with the tacit persuasion that whatever becomes of others, we (the illustrious all-important *we*) are entitled of *right* to be *entirely fortunate*, to accumulate all knowledge, beauty, health, and earthly felicity in *our* sacred person, and so pass *our* most sovereign days in rosy bowers, with distress never seen by us, except as an interesting shade in the distance of our landscape. Alas! what comes of it? Providence will not treat us thus; nay, with reverence be it spoken, cannot treat us thus, and so we fight and fret against His laws, and cease not from our mad romancing delusion, till experience have beaten it out of us with many chastisements.

“Most, indeed, never fully unlearn it all their days, but continue to the last to believe that, in their lot they are *unjustly* treated, and cease not from foolish hopes, and still stand in new amazement that they should not be disappointed—so very strangely, so *unfairly*? This class is certainly the most pitiable of all, for an action of damages against Providence is surely no promising lawsuit.”

Now if our readers will turn to the Reminiscences, they will not, it is true, find any direct evil-speaking of the lady whose friendship in his youth Mr. Carlyle sought in terms of so much respect and gratitude. He does even acknowledge that he stands “her debtor, and should be grateful for all this.” But to read his account of the whole Basil Montagu family, with these expressions of strong and affectionate feeling still in our ears, leaves on the mind an impression of treachery that is most painful, most bewildering, to connect with the great preacher of veracity to our generation. Every family misfortune is narrated in a tone of hard indifference that at times we are almost forced to believe rises into something like satisfaction, and it is difficult not to suspect, incredible as it appears, that the unconscious memory of some slight from the sons of the house sets their subsequent disasters or errors in a light that is not altogether disagreeable to him. The lady herself, for whose kindness we here see such grateful expression, is described with an amount of innuendo that is more hurtful in its general impression than a good deal of definite blame, if the

latter were not unmixed. A recollection haunts the memories of the present writer—too dim to recover through the mists of perhaps forty years with any distinctness—of having once overheard Mrs. Carlyle express with all her brisk effectiveness, obvious though not wholly intelligible to an attentive child, the annoyance with which she had once heard that her merits had been summed up by some one whose words had been to her (by an officious friend apparently) as “a very good dresser.” If the dim records of such a distant memory may be trusted, she described with much humour her mortification at discovering that the most salient fact about the wife of a man of genius was her successful toilette! The daughter of one whom that man of genius sought as his friend might be excused a certain feeling of disappointment even if the sole sting of a like piece of information about her was that it stood alone. But let us see with what sneers it is accompanied. Her few recollections of Burns, we are told, “were a jewel she was always ready to produce.” “Her father, I gradually understood, *not from herself*, had been a man of inconsiderable wealth or position” (as if she had been ashamed of her father). “Her first husband, Mr. Skepper, was some young lawyer of German extraction, and the *romance* of her wedding Montagu which she sometimes touched on, had been prosaically nothing but this;” and then Mr. Carlyle gives an inaccurate account of the matter, which, as the reader who turns to Mrs. Kemble’s account of her may see, has its romantic side, the marriage which he represents as the elevation of a governess to a coveted¹¹ position after some years of preparation for it, being the result of sudden and very lively admiration. Irving, we are told, at length discovered that Mrs. Montagu “had not so much loved him, as tried to buy love from him by soft ministrations by the skilfullest flattery liberally laid on. . . . In this liberal London pitch your sphere one step lower than yourself, and you can get what amount of flattery you will consent to.” Most of the distinguished men who

¹¹ To the present writer this innuendo appears involved in the assertion that she “succeeded well in that ticklish capacity, and better and better, for some time, perhaps some years, whereupon at length offer of marriage,” i. 229. But where every mention is disparaging we are sometimes inclined to make too much of a single one.

have frequented the house, we are given to understand, had found this out and left it; “a confused miscellany of ‘geniuses’ hovered fitfully round the establishment; I think those of any reality had got tired and gone away.” We will add to this specimens of Mr. Carlyle’s sneers at the woman for whom he professes so much admiration (and which we have not set down in full); his unworthy allusion to her letters as “high-sounding amiable things to which I could not but respond, though dimly conscious of their quality.” A letter to her, not included in this present little collection, written at a distance of three years from the beginning of their correspondence, ends with an earnest petition for its continuance. Was he then addressing her with empty flattery?—a flattery, we should imagine, most onerous to its busy recipient, if it was to be paid for in the long letters which he afterwards speaks of as if they pestered him. The years which had passed had, it is evident, not abated anything of his regard for her. However, we would cite this letter for the light it throws on his intercourse with another person to whom he was ungrateful. Jeffrey had evidently snubbed him for seeking his help in his wish to acquire a position at the remodelled Observatory at Edinburgh, and all that he writes about him seems touched by an ungenerous remembrance of the snub. But now see what pains Jeffrey did take to help him to a post that he thought suitable for him. In the year 1827, Carlyle was a candidate for the Professorship of Moral Philosophy at the London University, and had much discussion with Jeffrey on the matter, who,¹²

“Being one of the most friendly men now breathing, entered zealously into the matter, and wrote twice to Brougham about it, and, receiving no answer, besieged the great lawyer in person for a whole day, in ‘six assaults,’ I think he said, and to the same purpose.”

As we copy the passage recording the kind deeds which were to be forgotten, and then remember those which record the sharp words which were to be remembered, the painful conviction is borne upon us that there must have been

¹²See a very confused reference to this in *Reminiscences* (ii. 136), as some professorship, “perhaps of Literature,” which reads like a sentence of Mrs. Gamp’s; but that may be the fault of the printer and editor.

something in Carlyle's nature fundamentally ungenerous. We might never have discovered it if Mr. Froude had not shown it us, but we cannot deny that the thing he shows us, though much magnified by age and disease, was a part of character. But let us look at his spirit of grudge through his own words, as they lie before us in his characteristic handwriting:—

“Kind it is in you not to forget me; yet is a kindness not unrepaid. O why is the spirit of man so often jarred into ‘harsh thunder,’ when sweeter tones of melody may be awakened from its strings! Why do we not always love, and why is the loved soul shut out from us by poor obstructions, that we see it only in glimpses, or at best look at it from a prison grate, and into a prison grate!”

We know few things in biography much more unlovely than the contrast between the way Carlyle speaks to Mrs. Montagu and of her. It is true, there is a certain contrast between the way we speak of our dearest friend and to him, and many a little playful scoff or even severe criticism would be found in private letters associated with the name of some that are very dear to us. But surely, even in private letters, such expressions are not found alone. And secondly, these papers are not private. Carlyle had taken the first step towards publishing them. We do not believe he would ever have taken the last, but still Mr. Froude has violated no confidence in making public the papers which, if they were not written for the public, were written for nobody. While Carlyle was writing in this way of the mother, he was now and again reminded by friendly intercourse with the daughter (who was his occasional guest till the last) that whatever opinions he left on paper about the Montagus would be liable to meet the eyes of one who would be deeply wounded by unkind words of them. And though he seems to have forgotten, according to Mr. Froude's fearless information, that he had ever written the paper in which their name occurs, and the responsibility of its publication is thus brought home in a peculiar sense to his editor, we cannot feel that the responsibility for its existence is removed from himself. However, we would leave with the reader in parting one consideration which tends to put these Reminiscences in a gentler light. When Carlyle talks of the Basil Montagus flattering him, he is evidently looking back on their intercourse through the haze of his egotism. He is

thinking of himself, as he was through the greater part of his life, a person whom there was some object in flattering. He was confusing two separate selves. We often see this confusion in the memories of the old, happily not often to the advantage of a mean ungenerous spirit; but even generous natures become sometimes a little unjust in mental decay from the mere loss of an accurate power of recollection. Perhaps, indeed, it may be the one compensation for all the pain which this unhappy book has given, that here and there some valued life, obscured by what seemed a strange cloud towards its close, may receive a softening light from it, and we may be enabled to look more steadily at an image which we see now was confused by the medium through which at the last, we had to regard it. We pay a heavy price, however, for these faint touches of consolation. It was said of Lord Campbell that his series of biographies had added a new terror to Death. Lord Campbell had no victims among the lowly, but Mr. Froude has added new terrors to old age for the humblest of us. We could look forward with calmness to the hour when the "windows should be darkened, and the grasshopper should be a burden, and desire should fail;" but now that we learn how gratitude may fade with the keenness of hearing and justice with sharpness of eyesight, how with the light tread and the active hand depart the kindly will, and grudging suspiciousness assail the weary spirit as disease the weary frame—who will not tremble at the consciousness that youth is past? Let us take courage. A hundred soothing memories crowd in to our solace; images of old age that needed no sheltering shadow, of long pain and incapacity borne by those whose interests were still vivid, with cheerful reticence, of oblivion that seemed like a sponge laid on all unkindness, of all harsh things banished and held at bay, of quickened tenderness, and distaste or resentment that grew dim. If genius makes such an old age unattainable—if that interest in oneself which no doubt belongs to intellectual power fosters an expression of the whole nature which must tell after many years in an impartial development of what is best and worst within; then, indeed, we ordinary beings may find much consolation in our insignificance, and be thankful that for those whose day

has not been particularly brilliant, “at evening time it shall be light.”¹³

In conclusion, the writer may, perhaps, be permitted to describe herself as one who has received no special wound from any mention in these *Reminiscences*. None dear to her were scornfully or harshly judged by Mr. Carlyle; some were tenderly and even faithfully loved by him. His writings afforded the first glimpse of genius appreciated in early youth; his person still bears the halo worn by all who have thus been to us the revealers of a larger world, and to these strong ties is added the bond of a hereditary interest, and with many of his views an abiding sympathy. Prejudice, if it exists, is on the side of the man whose failings are here, of necessity, pointed out. But this attempt will be much misunderstood if it is regarded as a disquisition on the failings of a great man. It is meant as a protest against the action which has lifted the curtain on those failings. When a biography has to be written, give the picture of the whole man. Give his failings, in their due proportion, and with that due reserve which is indeed rightly understood only a part of proportion. But do not thrust before us writings which show nothing but those weaknesses, do not tempt us to believe that noble and inspiring words were a hollow formula; that the teaching which, to some extent, has guided and enriched many lives was mere hypocrisy. This is not to further truth; this is not

¹³ We would reinforce the lesson in Carlyle’s own words, here, as so often, appearing as witnesses against their author. “Dear Procter,” he writes to Mrs. Montagu’s son-in-law, in 1865, “I have been reading your book on ‘Charles Lamb’ in these silent regions” (a country-house near Dover), “whither I had fled for a few days of dialogue with Mother Earth, and I have found in your work something so touching, pure, serene, and pious, that I cannot but write you one brief word of recognition. . . . Brevity, perspicacity, graceful clearness, then also perfect veracity, gentleness, lovingness, justness, peaceable candour throughout, a fine kindly sincerity to all comers, with sharp insight too, quick recognition graphically rendered—all the qualities, in short, which such a work could have, I find in this, now dating, it appears, in your seventy-seventh year. Every page of it reveals to me the old Procter whom I used to talk to with forty-two years ago, unaltered, except as the finest wines and such like alter, by ripening to the full, a man as if *transfigured* by his heavy-laden years, and to whom his hoary head is as a crown.”

to teach us anything of a spirit's history. It will satisfy a certain love of vulgar gossip, and sometimes bring more evil feelings. But, judged by posterity, we have no question that it will be a blot on the literary fame of him who is guilty of it which no other achievements, however honourable, can wholly wipe out.

JULIA WEDGWOOD.

[The writer omitted to insert, in the proper place, a reminder to those few surviving friends who were hurt by the contemptuous mention of one they recalled with respect and affection—Mr. Whishaw—that a tribute was paid him that might well outweigh many such mentions,—Sir Samuel Romilly made him the guardian of his children.]