

**THOMAS  
CARLYLE**

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Thomas Carlyle by John Nichol

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**JOHN NICHOL**

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CARLYLE**



# THOMAS CARLYLE

BY

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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE following record of the leading events of Carlyle's life and attempt to estimate his genius rely on frequently renewed study of his work, on slight personal impressions—"vidi tantum"—and on information supplied by previous narrators. Of these the great author's chosen literary legatee is the most eminent and, in the main, the most reliable. Every critic of Carlyle must admit as constant obligations to Mr. Froude as every critic of Byron to Moore or of Scott to Lockhart. The works of these masters in biography remain the ample storehouses from which every student will continue to draw. Each has, in a sense, made his subject his own, and each has been similarly arraigned.

I must here be allowed to express a feeling akin to indignation at the persistent, often virulent attacks directed against a loyal friend, betrayed, it may be, by excess of faith and the defective reticence that often belongs to genius, to publish too much about his hero. But Mr. Froude's quotation, in defence, from the essay on *Sir Walter Scott* requires no supplement: it should be remembered that he acted with the most ample authority; that the restrictions under which he was at first entrusted with the MSS. of the *Reminiscences* and the *Letters and Memorials* (annotated by Carlyle himself, as if for publication) were

withdrawn ; and that the initial permission to select finally approached a practical injunction to communicate the whole. The worst that can be said is that, in the last years of Carlyle's career, his own judgment as to what should be made public of the details of his domestic life may have been somewhat obscured ; but, if so, it was a weakness easily hidden from a devotee.

My acknowledgments are due for several of the Press comments which appeared shortly after Carlyle's death, more especially that of the *St. James's Gazette*, giving the most philosophical brief summary of his religious views which I have seen ; and for the kindness of Dr. Eugene Oswald, President of the Carlyle Society, in revising my proof-sheets, and supplying me with numerous valuable hints, especially in matters relating to German History and Literature. I have also to thank the Editor of the *Manchester Guardian* for permitting me to reproduce the substance of my article in its columns of February 1881. That article was largely based on a contribution on the same subject, in 1859, to Mackenzie's *Imperial Dictionary of Biography*.

I may add that in the distribution of material over the comparatively short space at my command, I have endeavoured to give prominence to facts less generally known, and passed over slightly the details of events previously enlarged on, as the terrible accident to Mrs. Carlyle and the incidents of her death. To her inner history I have only referred in so far as it had a direct bearing on her husband's life. As regards the itinerary of Carlyle's foreign journeys, it has seemed to me that it might be of interest to those travelling in Germany to have a short record of the places where the author sought his "studies" for his greatest work.



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ERRATA.

PAGE.	LINE.			
5	1	<i>for</i>	" church "	<i>read</i> " churchyard "
71	12	"	" his character "	" " Carlyle's character "
75	23	"	" if "	" " as if "
121	20	"	" Millais "	" " Noel Paton's "
148	20	"	" left him "	" " yet left him "
181	26	"	" Hotel-du-Ville "	" " Hôtel-de-Ville "
196	3 from foot	"	" it "	" " they "
"	<i>last line</i>	"	" denominated "	" " dominated "
228	17 & 18	"	" mane "	" " Inane "
229	24 & 25	"	" purer " " nobler "	" " sweeter " " purer "