

INTRODUCTION

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WHETHER or not it is true, that the noblest prospect a Scotchman ever sees is the highroad that leads him to England, many a man of the north country has acted as if it were, ever since James the First set the fashion, and has taken, for good and all, the southward way. In three centuries, the band of exiles has grown large and numbers many famous names, but none more illustrious than Thomas Carlyle. In 1834, in the summer that saw the death of Coleridge and the completed publication of *Sartor*, after a sequestration of six mystic years at Craigenputtoch, Carlyle, on his wife's advice, burnt his ships and flitted, with bag and baggage, to the great Babylon, from which, although he railed against it incessantly, he could no more tear himself away than his hero Johnson. In the suburb of Chelsea, in an old-fashioned house that had stood since the days of Addison, he made his home. There he was destined to pass the remaining seven and forty years of life allotted to him, and to make that humble lodging a point of light in the great murky city, whither, for years to come, the eyes of earnest men and women were to turn with interest, with eagerness, with reverence. There, he did the work appointed him, the building of his three great histories; there, he thought and wrote and triumphed and suffered. That house is known, room by room, from kitchen to sound-proof study, by thousands who never saw it with their bodily eyes. Like the two lives passed within it, that house lies open and