

Carlyle's house  
at 5 (now 24),  
Cheyne Row,  
Chelsea

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Corner in  
Drawing-room at  
5, Cheyne Row

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The Garden at  
5, Cheyne Row

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The Sound-proof  
study at Cheyne  
Row

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The garret study  
in 1857

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sleeps! very touching art thou to me when I look on thy image here." In this lonely spot, cut off from all social intercourse, the Carlyles remained until 1834, when, after "six years' imprisonment on the Dumfriesshire moor," they moved to Chelsea and took up their residence at No. 5, Cheyne Row, in the house which was to be their home until death.

After a week's wearisome house-hunting in London under the guidance of Leigh Hunt, Carlyle sent a long description of the proposed new residence to his wife, of which the following is an extract:—"We are called 'Cheyne Row' proper (pronounced Chainie Row) and are a 'genteel neighbourhood,' two old ladies on the one side, unknown character on the other, but with 'pianos' as Hunt said. The street is flag-pathed, sunk-storied, iron-railed, all old-fashioned and tightly done up. . . . The house itself is eminent, antique, wainscoted to the very ceiling, and has been all new painted and repaired. . . . On the whole a most massive, roomy, sufficient old house, with places, for example, to hang, say, three dozen hats or cloaks on, and as many crevices and queer old presses and shelved closets as would gratify the most covetous Goody—rent £35! I confess I am strongly tempted."

The brightest and happiest part of Carlyle's day was the early evening. "Home between five and six, with mud mackintoshes off, and the nightmares locked up for a while, I tried for an hour's sleep before my (solitary, dietetic, altogether simple) bit of dinner; but first always came up for half an hour to the drawing-room and her; where a bright, kindly fire was sure to be burning (candles hardly lit, all in trustful chiaroscuro). . . . This was the one bright portion of my black day. Oh, those evening half-hours, how beautiful and blessed they were!"

The garden at Cheyne Row was much appreciated by the Carlyles, who turned to the best advantage this "poor sooty patch." Mrs. Carlyle writes: "Behind we have a garden (so called in the language of flattery) in the worst of order, but boasting of two vines which produced two bunches of grapes in the season, which 'might be eaten,' and a walnut tree, from which I gathered almost sixpence-worth of walnuts." Here stood the quaint china barrels she often referred to as "noblemen's seats," but Carlyle generally used one of the kitchen chairs by preference. He found the garden "of admirable comfort in the smoking way," and sometimes in summer would have his writing-table placed under an awning stretched for that purpose, and with a tray full of books at his side would work there when the heat drove him from his garret study.

The construction of this sound-proof study was proposed as far back as 1843, but not until ten years later was the enterprise put into practical execution. On August 11th, 1853, Carlyle wrote to his sister: "At length, after deep deliberation, I have fairly decided to have a top story put upon the house, one big apartment, twenty feet square, with thin *double* walls, light from the top, etc., and artfully ventilated, into which no sound *can* come; and all the cocks in nature may crow round it without my hearing a whisper of them!"

The scheme looked promising on paper, but the result was "irremediably somewhat of a failure." Although the noises in the immediate neighbourhood were excluded, sounds in the distance, "evils that he knew not of" in the lower rooms, became painfully audible; nevertheless he occupied the room as his study until 1865, and here, "whirled aloft by angry elements,"