THE CORRESPONDENCE AND FRIENDSHIP OF
THOMAS CARLYLE AND LEIGH HUNT:
THE LATER YEARS

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THE year 1838 was a somewhat turbulent and mixed one for the friendship between Carlyle and Leigh Hunt. It involved, among other things, the usual asking and doing of favours. Count Carlo Pepoli in the following letter was an Italian nobleman who was one of several foreign protégés whom Jane Welsh Carlyle had gathered around her. In 1839 he married Elizabeth Fergus, sister of Carlyle's old Edinburgh friend, John Fergus.

Letter 31. Carlyle to Hunt. ²
[c. 1 January 1838]

My dear Sir,—

Count Pepoli, who is at present Candidate for a Professorship in the London University, wishes much for a sight of your Book Le Imprime di G. Ruscellai; meaning, I think, to testify that he is properly of British descent, connected with King John Lackland, and therefore entitled etc.! Can you let him have it for a while?—Also for me, is the Repository out?

T. C.

Letter 32. Carlyle to Hunt. ³
[c. January 1838]

My dear Sir,

You will do us a real favour if you can consent to come over and take tea with us tonight. Two violets are coming (in a voluntary manner): great friends of yours: Miss Martineau; and Mrs. Marcet [?] whose works I do not know, but whose face pleases me much. There are only these two; perhaps even these may not come.

¹ This is the second of two articles on the subject, the first of which appeared in the March 1963 issue of the Bulletin.
² MS. note in the Cornell University Library.
³ MS. letter in the National Library of Scotland, 3823.269. Violets are "Blue Stockings", ladies who make a considerable show of being intellectual. Carlyle refers to Hunt's "Blue-Stocking Revels; or, the Feast of Violets", (Monthly Repository, July 1837), pp. 33-57. "Miss Martineau" is Harriet Martineau (1802-1876), who at this time had published books on economics. Mrs. Jane Marcet (1769-1858) was a writer on science and political economy who influenced Miss Martineau.
Now your plan would be, if you had the proper audacity, to let us see your face about six, to tea with ourselves: we should then have our own talk, independently of all people. When the *Violets* come, you could take a look of them; and, if you did not like them (which is infinitely improbable, for Harriet too is really an excellent creature), leave them to their fate!

Finally, my dear Sir, if you cannot come, scruple not for a moment to refuse. Alas, I know too well the moods one gets into; the engagements one may have, unseen save to oneself; and how impertinent a thing Speech may be, tho’ otherwise said to be cheerfuller than light itself.

I am held very busy with Printers Devils. I remain always,

Most heartily your’s,

T. Carlyle

Harriet Martineau wrote in her journal early this year: “Leigh Hunt tells Carlyle that his troubles will cease at five-and-forty; that men reconcile themselves, and grow quiet at that age.” ¹

Carlyle himself wrote to his brother John on 1 February: “Hunt is in the sere and yellow leaf; has not been seen here above once since my return.” ²

Beginning 30 April, Carlyle gave two lectures a week over a period of six weeks on the history of European literature. Leigh Hunt attended most of the lectures and reviewed them in the *Examiner*. It soon became clear to his readers that despite considerable praise which he accorded the lecturer he was far from being uncritical. In the 6 May number he said:

He again extemporizes: he does not read. We doubted, on hearing the Monday’s lecture, whether he would ever attain, in this way, the fluency as well as depth for which he ranks among celebrated talkers in private; but Friday’s discourse relieved us. He “strode away”, like Ulysses himself; and had only to regret, in common with his audience, the limits to which the one hour confined him. He touched, however, in his usual masterly way, what may be called the mountain-tops of his subject—the principal men and themes.... and last, not least startling, Socrates, whom, though Mr Carlyle did him credit as to good life and intention, he beat about the head and ears as Mr Hazlitt once did a plaster-cast of the Emperor Alexander, and as though he was the representative of all the logical and moral *twaddle* that takes a masculine success out of nations. We confess we cannot take this view of the admired of Plato, and of Milton, and all ages; nor think any such “foremost men of all the world” (to use a favorite term of Mr Carlyle’s) have such little “significancy” in them, or were so little intended to affect the improvement of coming time. Mr Carlyle was heartily greeted with applause at the close of his first week’s eloquence; and we doubt not

² MS. letter in the National Library of Scotland, 523.55.
has now found the secret (whatever it is) of speaking with like triumphant volubility to their conclusion.

In the *Examiner* next week Hunt seized upon Carlyle's word *thrift*, used in praise of the Romans in the fourth lecture, and subjected it to a close examination and evaluation. It was not, he said, in the conquest-loving Romans altogether a virtue.

Mr. Carlyle described the earliest character of Rome as consisting in a spirit of steady agricultural *thrift*, a quality which he considered "the germ of all other virtues"; meaning, we presume (for he sometimes gives his auditors too great credit for making the most of his sententious brevity), the inclination to turn every little power we possess to its utmost, in a right direction; but his allusions to the Dutch and Scotch hardly tended to do justice to the higher part of his inferences on this point. This thrifty faculty in the Romans became turned into the "steady spirit of conquest," for which they soon grew famous,—all "by method" and the spirit of "the practical"; and the lecturer made some striking remarks on the vulgar objection to the early Romans, as thieves and robbers. He said they were only a tribe of a superior character, gradually, and of necessity, forcing the consequences of their better knowledge upon the people around them. The Carthaginians, he considered, in comparison with the Romans, as a mere set of money-hunters, with "a Jewish pertinacity" affecting their whole character.

Hunt also took exception to other ideas in this lecture and suggested that Carlyle had scarcely done justice to such writers as Ovid, Tacitus, Lucretius, Plautus, Catullus, and Cicero.

Carlyle quickly sensed the questioning spirit of Hunt's reviews and on 15 May wrote in his journal: "Hunt's criticism no longer friendly; not so in spirit, though still in letter; a shade of spleen in it; very natural, flattering even. He finds me grown to be a something now. His whole way of life is at death-variante with mine. In the 'Examiner' he expresses himself afflicted with my eulogy of *thrift*, and two days ago he had *multa gemens* to borrow two sovereigns of me. It is an unreasonable existence *ganz und gar.*" 2 A week later he discussed Hunt in the same vein in a letter to his mother. 3

Hunt's reviews of Carlyle's other lectures in 1838 continued in the tone of his earlier reviews. In the *Examiner* for 20 May he approved of Carlyle's praise of Shakespeare but said that he over-rated the kindliness of Dante, in whom spleen was the ruling

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1 For an excellent discussion of Hunt's reviews of Carlyle's lectures, see Wylie, *Carlyle*, pp. 165 ff.
3 MS. letter of 22 May 1838 in the National Library of Scotland, 511.51.
habit. He liked very much Carlyle's comments on Cervantes, who "ended with being in good heart and hope with everything," and on Mahomet, who was no imposter but a sincere religious teacher attempting to substitute a higher religious faith for a lower one. On 27 May he treated favourably Carlyle's praise of Luther and Alfred the Great but questioned his enthusiasm for John Knox and suggested that Carlyle's comments on Erasmus and Milton were inadequate. On 3 June Hunt said that Carlyle was inclined to underrate both the French people and "their great litterateur Voltaire". He was inadequate in dealing with Montaigne and neglected Molière, Marot, and Claude Lorrain. He underrated Steele and Hume and overrated Dr. Johnson. But his remarks on Johnson, Hume, and Boswell were nevertheless delightful. Hunt's review of 10 June was short, rather general, and more purely critical. He spoke ironically of Carlyle as a denouncer of disbelief in society who was himself, "at any rate, in high eloquent condition of belief of some sort; though what that is, most of his hearers will perhaps wait with some anxiety to be told; since at one minute he seems to think that morality, or doing that which we think right, is sufficient for all social purposes; and the next (in the confidence of his virtue, which we most heartily believe in) he startles unmetaphysical listeners with ridiculing the notion that virtue is sufficient to make men happy. What then, it will be asked him, is the object of society itself, or the existence of anything?" On 17 June Hunt summarized the teaching which Carlyle had got from Goethe and Christ that "happiness was not the right thing to seek; that man has nothing to do with happiness, but with the discharge of the work given him to do" and then, without explicitly objecting to it, said: "The two highest qualities we admire in a man are lovingness and sincerity; and if the former of these appears to be occasionally obscured a little in Mr Carlyle by impatience with those whom he thinks not hearty enough in any good cause, or opposed to it, it is his bile that speaks in him, and not his heart, which in all his final judgements is sure to find him in a state of the largest-minded kindness towards all men." In all his disagreements with Carlyle through the years, this was a note to which Hunt returned again and again.
The two notes which follow from Carlyle to Hunt are difficult to date, but a passage in Mrs. Carlyle's letter to her husband of 10 September 1838 may at least suggest the general period to which they belong. She wrote: "Baron von Alsdorf [sic] came here the other night, seeking your address, to write to you for a testimonial. I was obliged to give him Sandy's, having then no other, which will probably cost you a postage. 'Such is the lot of celebrity i' the world.'" Since the notes appear to have been written earlier, when Carlyle and Hunt were first becoming acquainted with Alzdorf, possibly they were written in the early summer of this year.

Letter 33. Carlyle to Hunt.²

[? July 1838]

My dear Sir—

I saw Baron Alzdorf last night, and made a kind of conditional promise to him that I "would go if I could." The meaning of the subjunctive mood is that I am to be out (what is very unusual with me) tonight too and on Saturday, and am like to have my poor nerves shattered all to shreds. I cannot yet be indicative. The prospect of your company up and down is my greatest or almost only chance. But be not guided by me. Be indicative for yourself; and think that I shall regret much if I cannot go with you. He seems a very good fellow the Baron.—Adieu!

Ever yours
T. C.

Letter 34. Carlyle to Hunt.³

[? Early July 1838]

My dear Sir—

Do you go to Baron Alzdorf's? If you go, I go; if not, not. My only condition is that we set off soon; for I must start homewards again before 10 o'clock. He said "any time after six." There is Tea here five minutes hence if you will come over.

T. C.

¹ Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle, i. 108. Carlyle's notes on this letter state that the quotation is parodied from Schiller. On 12 October 1838 Carlyle wrote to Mrs. Anna Jameson: "Baron Alzdorf got a Testimonial from me, as he, so backed, was doubly and trebly entitled to do: but whether it and all the rest did him any service I have not yet learned. I saw him in Regent Street the day before yesterday, but he would not see me or my signals, and the vehicle had to drive on." (MS. letter in the Gerald E. Hart Collection, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston). Just as Alzdorf finally eluded Carlyle, he has eluded the present editor of these letters, who has made considerable efforts to identify him without success.

³ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa.
It has been assumed that Hunt wrote his delightful rondeau "Jenny Kissed Me" in 1838 after, having been ill for a long time, he had one day suddenly appeared at Jane Carlyle's front door to announce in person that he was now much better, and had been rewarded with a kiss from the surprised Jane, who had sprung up with delight at seeing him.\(^1\) She was not given to kissing men other than her husband and close relations, but she enjoyed a flirtation and unquestionably found Leigh Hunt, like Tennyson, an extremely attractive man. Three years before she had been greatly amused when her friend Susan Hunter, daughter of a professor at St. Andrews and later Mrs. J. H. Stirling, on a visit to her in Chelsea had been completely swept off her feet by Hunt's masculine charm. Hunt had not failed to respond to what Carlyle called "Susan's mild love . . . sparkling through her old-maidish, cold, still exterior".\(^2\) Jane had described in detail the behaviour of the two in a letter to her husband:

> Our visiting has been confined to one dinner and two teas at the Sterlings and a tea at Hunts!! You must know Susan Hunter came the day after you went and stayed two days. As she desired above all things to see Hunt I wrote him a note asking if I might bring her up to call. He replied he was just setting off to town but would look in at eight o'clock. I supposed this as usual a mere off put but he actually came—found Pepoli as well as Miss Hunter was amazingly lively, and very lasting; for he stayed till near twelve—Between ourselves it gave me a poorish opinion of him to see how uplifted to the third Heaven he seemed by Susans compliments and sympathizing talk. He asked us all with enthusiasm to tea the following Monday. Susan came from town on purpose and slept here—Mrs Hunt behaved smoothly and looked devilish and was drunkish. He sang, talked like a pen gun [Scottish for a gun with a quill barrel for shooting peas], ever to Susan, who drank it all in like nectar; while my Mother looked cross enough and I had to listen to the whispered confidences of Mrs Hunt—But for me, who was declared to be grown "quite prim and elderly" I believe they would have communicated their mutual experiences in a retired window seat till morning—"God bless you Miss Hunter" was repeated by Hunt three several times in tones of everincreasing pathos and tenderness as he handed her down stairs behind me. Susan for once in her life seemed of apt speech. At the bottom of the stairs a demur took place: I saw nothing but I heard with my wonted glegnesi what think you? a couple of handsome smacks! and then an almost inaudibly soft God bless you Miss Hunter! Now just remember what sort of looking

\(^1\) Wilson, Carlyle, iii. 30. The poem first appeared in the Monthly Chronicle for November 1838 with the title "Nellie Kissed Me".

\(^2\) Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle, i. 16.
woman is Susan Hunter and figure this transaction! If he had kissed me it would have been intelligible, but Susan Hunter of all people!¹

Mrs. Carlyle and Hunt both had quick-witted, playful minds which took great pleasure in light combat. Their relation was in general highly congenial. The spirit of banter governing it is reflected in the two following undated letters which could belong to the year 1838.

**Letter 35. Mrs. Carlyle to Hunt.²**

My dear Sir

My Husband is just gone out leaving orders with me to write you a note inviting you to come to tea—I said it was of no use, you were predetermined not to come, especially if I asked you—He answered I could try at least, and write you he had finished his day's work and was really very desirous you would come. So behold I try! and what can I do more? I cannot annihilate you your laziness, or dislike, or pet, or caprice or whatever it is that makes you so obstinately stay away—I cannot make you as happy to come to us, as we are to have you come. I can but (as Edward Irving commands in all such emergencies) "pray to the Lord"¹ and assure you, that in your solitary instance at least, I break thro my established principles of liking, in throwing away a very large quantity of affection on you which you seem totally insensible of and of course ungrateful for—Mrs Hunt also takes but a [moth]erless charge of me—Bless you all nevertheless

Yours sincerely

Jane W Carlyle

**Letter 36. Hunt to Mrs. Carlyle.³**

Dear clever & querulous,

(For I will not call you "Madam" lest I should appear solemn, nor Mrs. Carlyle lest you should think me ceremonious, nor Jane or Jenny, lest I should take a liberty which may be deemed presumptuous,—so I take refuge, between familiarity & fatherliness, in two epithets of manifest truth,—the second, I own, somewhat daring, but my zeal must protect me)—you misconstrue me very much throughout the whole of that list of causes, to which you are pleased to attribute my remaining so much at home of an evening. The simple truth is, generally speaking, that the badness of my health, which is worse than my natural

¹ MS. letter in the National Library of Scotland, 601.34. Mrs. Welsh, Jane's mother, also seems to have been very much impressed by Hunt's masculine charm.

² MS. letter in the British Museum, Add. 38,523, fol. 207. The Carlyles' old friend Edward Irving had had like Hunt an expansive, glowing mode of utterance. Jane Carlyle enjoyed chuckling over the phrase "good joy", which one of Hunt's children had used at the sight of flowers (Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle, i. 104).

³ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa.
spirits make it appear, conspires with my work & my household cares to render me too often unfit for anything of an afternoon but to sit, as patient as I well can be, in the arm-chair in which I find myself after my morning's walk; & just now, I am suffering under a cold & fever, of nearly a fortnight's duration. I have not been from home after dinner, since I saw you. As to any want of consideration for kind friends who honour me with their good opinion, I hope I am not very capable of it in any instance, & I am sure the charge would not be just against me in this. I often think of both of you, when you do not see me; & never without wishing that I could cram you both full of health & contentment. Believe me indeed truly your grateful friend

L. H.

P.S. I am so unwell just now, that the writing this letter has brought all the blood up in my cheeks & head.

Hunt undoubtedly had great admiration for Mrs. Carlyle and did much to spread her reputation as an extremely clever woman and talker. That there was some dissent to his high opinion of her is indicated by the following undated manuscript note which seems to have been written by Carlyle's brother, Dr. John A. Carlyle:

A few years ago Tom's wife was getting into reputation as a rapid & great talker. I never had much patience with her Galloway Doric, & not then knowing her, could very well contrive to keep out of ear shot. Leigh Hunt took to saying that she was really an eloquent woman, & Hunt's disciples ([] of whom he had always a considerable number) repeated the dictum, & as usual, going further than their master, began to speak of her as quite a woman of genius. One night, at Creik's [Craig's], L— said that Mrs Carlyle was a Scotch Madame de Stael. "Yes" rejoined W— [Wordsworth], "& a very Scotch one."¹

Mrs. Carlyle, for her part, never permitted her sense of Hunt's personal charm to paralyse her critical faculty. Hunt, like Dickens, greatly respected her as a literary critic, but she did not always tell him what he wanted to hear about his own writings. In September 1838 she wrote to her husband:

Leigh Hunt wrote me a gracious little note inviting me to come and hear his play read and "stand by him with some new friends," the said new friends turning out to be of the Taylor set,—Margaret Gillies and her sister, etc., etc., etc. As for the play, it is plain as a pikestaff why Macready would not play it—it is something far worse than "immoral," "anti-conventional,"—it is mortal dull—a beautiful insipidity reigns throughout—and for the regenerating truths it is calculated to teach the conventional heart, they would need to be shot at it (as we do our truths) from the mouth of a cannon, not timorously, pleadingly tendered to it, before it were fair to expect that they should take the least effect.²

¹ What is apparently a copy of Dr. Carlyle's note is preserved in the British Museum, Add. 39,776, fol. 65v.

² Bliss, Jane Welsh Carlyle, p. 82. "The Taylor set": probably the friends of Sir Henry Taylor, whose play Philip van Artevelde (1834) had been a great
"As we do our truths—". Mrs. Carlyle usually agreed with her husband. She knew that a strong bond uniting her husband and herself with Leigh Hunt was the fact that all three refused to accept the platitudes of conventional thinking. But her preference for Carlyle's thundering vigour and her own intensified sprightliness over Hunt's graceful gestures with a lady's fan in the effort to get unconventional truths accepted is definite and clear, and the contrast of methods is a significant one. It is the difference between a powerful unblinded Polyphemus and Shelley's gentle, long-suffering, but persevering and confident Prometheus.

The year 1838 had been a full and interesting one in the history of this friendship. Toward the end of it Carlyle appropriately wrote to Emerson: "Leigh Hunt, 'a man of genius in the shape of a Cockney', is my near neighbour, full of quips and cranks, with good humor and no common sense." ¹

In May 1839 Hunt reviewed Carlyle's new series of lectures "On the Revolutions of Modern Europe" in the Examiner.² There was no change in the critical tone which he had established in his reviews the year before. He asserted that Carlyle was too ready to condone Dante's almost diseased bitterness and gloom and to forget the fact that to unhealthy eyes 'the blue of the firmament itself would turn yellow'. He added, "We are recommended to become as 'little children,' not as jaundiced great men". In commenting on one of Carlyle's usual attacks on logic, Hunt said that there was much truth in Carlyle's position but that logic, "if of little use in establishing the best of things", was "a helper towards saving them from the worst,—from corruption and superstition". He praised the convincing manner in which Carlyle spoke his hearty convictions from the lecture platform and testified as to its effectiveness with the fashionable London audience. But he believed that Carlyle in dealing with English Protestantism was much too kind to Cromwell.

success on the stage. Margaret Gillies (1803-87), miniature and water-colour painter. W. C. Macready (1793-1873) was manager of Covent Garden Theatre in 1838. A friend of Carlyle and John Forster, he produced Browning's Strafford (1837).

¹ The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1834-1872, ed. C. E. Norton (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1894), i. 199.
² See numbers for 5, 12, and 26 May.
and much too hard on "poor decapitated Charles". Concerning Cromwell Hunt asked, "In what did he succeed, except in making himself for a short time an unhappy prince?" And why did Carlyle neglect such master spirits as Vane and Milton? Carlyle's treatment of the eighteenth century did not do justice to Voltaire, Hunt said; he was considerably more than a "mere scoffer" deficient in sympathy, as Carlyle had declared; and to call him a "Frenchman all over" was assuredly not to condemn him since Frenchmen have "infinite social virtues" and are "no small constituent part of the great human family". But in dealing with some of the evils resulting from the revolution begun by Arkwright and the spinning jenny, Carlyle spoke eloquently and unforgettably of "the melancholy spectacle of a human being willing to labour but forced to starve". On the other hand, Carlyle's moral judgements concerning many important figures in the French Revolution were "more like the talking of his Scottish ancestors than his own candid philosophy". Moreover, he admired Cromwell too much and was too hard on Napoleon. Hunt definitely preferred Napoleon to Cromwell, with his "dreary, bad blood".

Probably there was further frank discussion of Dante among the two friends. Carlyle was to give considerable attention to Dante in his lecture "The Hero as Poet" the following May. An undated letter from Carlyle which belongs to this period reflects the common interest which the two had in that poet.

_Letter 37._ Carlyle to Hunt.¹

My dear Sir,

The Italians have a saying "round as the O of"—some Painter, who dashed one off very round indeed at one stroke of his brush. Can you tell me the Painter's name? I need it in some scribble I am doing.

Likewise, and for a like reason, can you send me the passage of Dante you mentioned to me one day, where he speaks about the toil of his Divine Comedy having made him grey?—I have a notion to borrow that Copy of Dante again, and go fairly thro' it; having made unexpected way when I had it last.

¹ MS. letter in the Columbia University Library. Giotto demonstrated his skill in the presence of Pope Boniface VIII by drawing a perfect circle with one stroke. See Browning's "Old Pictures in Florence", lines 133-5. In "The Hero as Poet" Carlyle emphasizes Dante's saying that writing his poem made him "lean [not grey] for many years." 12 May 1840.
Do not trouble yourself much or at all about either of these questions; I can manage without the answers very well, if they do not lie ready.

Finally will you lend me the last Repository? There is no use in giving me one; for really the loan of it till I read what you write is altogether equivalent,—especially as I know every copy, and setting of a letter, costs you somewhat.

I have a great deal of cold, have grown half deaf, altogether stupid, and am in a poor cowering way. 'The rule is, as the Scotch say, to "jook (duck), and let the jaw (rushing wave) go by." An excellent rule. I will see you soon; and hear you, were it with an ear-trumpet.

Ever most heartily Yours,
T. Carlyle.

After many vain attempts, Hunt finally wrote a play, A Legend of Florence, which was successfully produced and well received by the audience. It opened at Covent Garden on 7 February 1840. Queen Victoria went to see it more than once. Hunt was elated and thought that he had now found his calling. But he could not get his later plays produced. Carlyle saw the play and praised it in a letter to his brother John of 11 February 1840: "Hunt's Play was what they call successful; it really seemed to me as if here and there the audience did feel it in their heart;—as if the Play might run for some time, which is the grand result. The account in the Examiner is not favorable enough, written in a negatory spirit. Heraud sat behind us in the Box; as dirty and joyful as ever. I have not seen Hunt since."¹ Actually, whatever merits or deficiencies Heraud may

¹ MS. letter in the National Library of Scotland, 523.73. John Abraham Heraud (1799-1887), journalist and critic who edited the Sunbeam, 1838-9, and the Monthly Magazine, 1839-42, was something of an authority on German literature. On 6 February Carlyle had written to his brother John: "Tonight, as we learn suddenly, Hunt's play is to come out; and we have (alas for it!) to go and assist. I augur little certain except a headache: you shall hear how it turns" (New Letters of Thomas Carlyle, ed. Alexander Carlyle (London and New York: John Lane, 1904), i. 185). Carlyle may have heard Hunt read this play or another one from his pen at a private gathering in 1838. Hunt wrote to Robert Bell in October of that year that he was inviting Knowles, Procter, Dickens, and him to the reading and added: "I expect Carlyle, who is looked for every day from Scotland" (Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, ii. 322). On 27 February Carlyle commented further on The Legend of Florence in a letter to his brother John: "I spent the evening [of the day before], in grateful silence; reading two extremely bad tragedies of Landor's: Giovanna of Naples and another; all cracked to tatters by a barren bitterly spasmodic spirit of exaggeration and perversion; calcined, in no kindly fire, into mere cinders and incoherency; among the worst writings I have ever seen by any man of talent.—Hunt's Play still goes on; but I hear whispers that it will not altogether last. Hunt himself we have
have had as a critic of drama, he did not have a chance with two such formidable opponents as Carlyle and Hunt, who together impaled him like an insect with their phrases. A few months later Carlyle wrote to Emerson: "Heraud is a loquacious scribacious little man, of middle age, of parboiled greasy aspect, whom Leigh Hunt describes as 'waivering in the most astonishing manner between being Something and Nothing'." ¹

Early in 1840 another of Carlyle's friendships had its beginning, that with Robert Browning. Both Carlyle and Browning testify that they first met at Leigh Hunt's. Through the years to come Carlyle found much to admire in Browning and he steadfastly encouraged him when the public was slow to receive him. But he believed that he was too susceptible to Hunt's influence as well as to other influences from which he did not gain strength. Some years later he wrote of him: "He has decidedly a good talent; but is unluckily, and now bids fair to continue, in the valley of the shadow of Man George-Sandism, Mazzini-ism, Leigh Huntism: one cannot help it; tho' it is a pity!" ²

Probably the most significantly revealing and dramatic account of a debate between Carlyle and Hunt is that which an Edinburgh lawyer, John Hunter, entered in his diary in 1840. Hunter, the brother of the Carlyles' friend Susan Hunter, whose affection for Hunt Mrs. Carlyle has described, had known Carlyle many years. He was a discriminating disciple of Hunt's, had read him for a long time, and in the words of Carlyle was "often actually subventive" ³ to him. It was not Hunt's "rose-water philosophy", however, that he admired but his poems and "the sunny, loving spirit of the man". On professional visits to London he saw Carlyle and Hunt together more than once. Although he found in Carlyle "what Coleridge wanted, great power of concentration and vigor of talent", he also observed never seen since it came out. His piece is thin, almost filmy; but worth a hundred of Landor's, two hundred of Bulwer's; and may last as long as it can (National Library of Scotland, 523.75).

¹ Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson, i. 302.
³ Froude, Letters and Memorials, i. 16.
what seemed to him "one singular defect in Carlyle's mind...the entire want of all perception of grace and beauty in outward form or expression". This explained, Hunter said, his depreci­ation of such poets as Petrarch, Milton, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. Carlyle, despite "bursts of laughter which made his 'lungs crow like Chanticleer'", was not a happy man, and his "powers were not in harmony with each other". On the other hand, Hunter delighted in the way the conversation became livelier and happier and turned to the sunny side of things the moment that Leigh Hunt entered the room. He and Carlyle both enjoyed Hunt's singing, particularly the marching song from *The Beggar's Opera*. But the most dramatic debate between Carlyle and Hunt described by Hunter is that which took place at George L. Craik's on Wednesday, 8 April.

Carlyle and Hunt were in great force, and came out in the course of the evening in their full strength. They form decided contrasts to each other in almost every respect, and the occasional collisions that took place between them drew out the salient points and characteristic powers of each in the most striking manner possible. I never saw Carlyle in such vigor, and was delighted, even when I most differed from him, with the surging floods of his sonorous eloquence which he poured forth from time to time, illuminated, as they always were, by the coruscations of a splendid fancy, sometimes lurid enough, to be sure, and heated to boiling fervor by the inextinguishable fire of deep emotion that is forever gnawing his heart and brain. Hunt again was all light and air, glancing gracefully over all topics, and casting the hues of his own temperament on every subject that arose. I do not mean to make any attempt at giving an account of the conversation. That is out of the question in the present instance. It lasted without interruption from five till near twelve o'clock, and embraced the most multifarious subjects. We had the Scottish Kirk, Wordsworth, Petrarch, Burns, Knox and Hume, the Church of England, Dante, heaven and hell, all through our "glowing hands"; and strange work was made with most of them. I gave some offense to Carlyle, but he recovered from it so swiftly, and redeemed himself so generously, that it heightened my admiration of him. He had been declaiming against Wordsworth, whom he represented as an inferior person to Cowper, adding that from the débris of Robert Burns a thousand Wordsworths might have been made. We laughed at all this, especially when we found that he had never read, or, at least, had no recollection of "Laodamia" and various other things in which Wordsworth's finest powers are exhibited. We next came to Petrarch, whom he crushed to sapless nothing in his grasp. I stood out a good while on this subject, as did Hunt and Craik. At last Carlyle said—"All I have to say is, that there is one son of Adam who has no sympathy with his weak, washy twaddle about another man's wife. I cast it from me as so much trash, unredeemed by any quality that speaks to my heart and soul. And now you may say whatever you like of him or of me." I answered hastily—"Then I would say of you that you
are to be pitied for wanting a perception which I have, and which I think, and the world in general will think, I am the richer for possessing; and I would just speak of what you have now uttered in these words:—

Say, canst thou paint a sunbeam to the blind,
Or make him feel a shadow with his mind?"

A slight shade passed over his face at this, and he said—"Well, I admit you are right to think so, whatever I may think of the politeness of your saying it as you have now done." Hunt interposed to the rescue with, "Well, that's very good. Carlyle knocks down all our idols with two or three sweeps of his arm, and having so far cleared his way to us, he winds up by knocking down ourselves; and when we cry out against this rough work, he begins to talk of—politeness!" This was followed by a peal of laughter, in which Carlyle joined with all his heart; and then addressed me cordially and kindly—"I believe, after all, you are quite right. I ought to envy you. I have no doubt you have pleasures and feelings manifold from which I am shut out, and have shut out myself, in consequence of the habit I have so long indulge of groping through the sepulchral caverns of our being. I honor and love you for [the] lesson you have taught me." This was felt to be very noble. "There is Carlyle all over," said Hunt; "that's what makes us all love him. His darkest speculations always come out to the light by reason of the human heart which he carries along with him. He will at last end in glory and gladness."

Towards the conclusion of the evening we had a regular discussion between Carlyle and Hunt, involving the whole merits of their several systems, if I may so call Hunt's fantastic framework of agreeabilities, which Carlyle certainly shattered to pieces with great ease (though without disconcerting Hunt in the slightest degree) in order to substitute his eternal principles of right and wrong, responsibility, awe of the Unseen—the spiritual worship of the soul yearning out of the clay tenement after the infinitely holy and the infinitely beautiful. Hunt's system, I told him, would suit nobody but himself.¹

R. H. Horne in his New Spirit of the Age tells a somewhat different story of a debate over optimism and pessimism which also took place at G. L. Craik's about this time or a little later.

The conversation rested with these two—both first-rate talkers, and the others sat well pleased to listen. Leigh Hunt had said something about the Islands of the Blest, or El Dorado, or the Millennium, and was flowing on in his bright and hopeful way, when Carlyle dropped some heavy tree-trunk across Hunt's pleasant stream, and banked it up with philosophical doubts and objections at every interval of the speaker's joyous progress. But the unmitigated Hunt never ceased his overflowing anticipations, nor the saturnine Carlyle his infinite demurs to these finite flourishings. The listeners laughed and applauded by turns; and had now fairly pitted them against each other. . . .

The contest continued with all that ready wit and philosophy, that mixture of pleasantry and profoundity, that extensive knowledge of books and character, with their ready application in argument or illustration, and that perfect ease and good-

nature which distinguished each of these men. The opponents were so well matched that it was quite clear the contest would never come to an end. But the night was far advanced, and the party broke up. They all sallied forth and leaving the close room, the candles and the arguments behind them, suddenly found themselves in [the] presence of a most brilliant star-light night. They all looked up. "Now", thought Hunt "Carlyle's done for! He can have no answer to that!" "There!" shouted Hunt, "look up there, look at that glorious harmony, that sings with infinite voices an eternal song of hope in the soul of man."

Carlyle looked up. They all remained silent to hear what he would say. They began to think he was silenced at last—he was a mortal man. But out of that silence came a few low-toned words, in a broad Scotch accent. And who on earth could have anticipated what the voice said? "Eh! It's a sad sight!" Hunt sat down on a stone step. They all laughed—then looked very thoughtful.¹

In the spring of 1840 Hunt moved from Chelsea, where he had been Carlyle's neighbour for about six years, to 32, Edwardes Square, Kensington. Carlyle's feelings about losing such a neighbour were mixed and he wrote as follows to his brother:

Leigh Hunt has left this quarter, for Edwardes Square, Kensington; we are decidedly rather sad of it. Our intercourse lately had reduced itself altogether to the lending of sovereigns. Poor Hunt had great difficulty to get away at last; had to prowl about, borrowing etc. etc. He has dissatisfied all his friends by his late behavior during what he reckoned his theatrical success, which proves to be no success either, for they do not now act his play. He is a born fool. His son has got out of the Glasgow Argus, and is here too. They are a generation of fools. They are better in Edwardes Square.²

Letter 38. Hunt to Carlyle.³

32, Edwardes Square
Kensington—Feb. 4 [1841]

Is dear Thomas Carlyle master of a strange sum of three pounds in his treasury, for a fortnight to come?—I sigh, rather than blush, to ask it,—knowing the man to whom I speak; & at all events he knows that I am punctual in my repayments.

Plays are delicious things to write & lovely in their proceeds!—but alas for some of the struggles in the intervals to those who have not a halfpenny worth of certainty to retreat upon.

On Sunday next I read to the managers—I hope, finally—some alterations which have given me a great deal of trouble & anxiety; but they bring Farren &

¹ Wilson, Carlyle, iii. 211-12. See also Wylie, Carlyle, pp. 236-7.
² MS. letter to Dr. John A. Carlyle of 22 June 1840 in the National Library of Scotland, 523.88.
³ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa. William Farren (1786-1861) was an English actor and manager. Madame Vestris (1797-1856), actress and opera singer, married Armand Vestris in 1813 and Charles
Madame Vestris into the play, in the place of actors of less pretension, and I trust will be of great service.

Dear Sir, if you are unable to do what I ask, you know you are thoroughly understood by the heart of yours ever truly,

Leigh Hunt.

For a few years after Hunt moved away from Chelsea the friendship and correspondence between the two men seems to have been comparatively inactive. There is no evidence that they continued the long walks and talks which they had enjoyed earlier. Perhaps they felt that they had already said all that could be said in their debates and that further discussion would simply have meant tiresome repetition. Probably Hunt was weary of Carlyle's moral earnestness and gloom, always associated with an unrelenting habit of dominance. Certainly Carlyle was weary of Hunt's borrowing habits, always associated with radiance and blue skies. This was by no means, however, the end of the friendship. It simply came to rest and was the better later for having done so. The one sure way to do permanent damage to a friendship is to force it.

In June 1847 Hunt finally got his pension, a gratifying one of £200 a year granted by Sir Robert Peel's government. Carlyle had been one of those most active on his behalf, just as he had been active on behalf of Tennyson a few years before. He drew up the petition to the Government which summed up the reasons

James Mathews, actor and playwright, in 1838. The following story told by Augustus Hare in The Story of My Life is probably spurious but in spirit it is close to the truth: "One day when Mr. [James] Hannay went to the house [Carlyle's], he saw two gold sovereigns lying exposed in a little vase on the chimney-piece. He asked Carlyle what they were for. Carlyle looked—for him—embarrassed, but gave no definite answer. 'Well, now, my dear fellow,' said Mr. Hannay, 'neither you nor I are quite in a position to play ducks and drakes with sovereigns: what are these for?—' 'Well,' said Carlyle, 'the fact is, Leigh Hunt likes better to find them there than that I should give them to him.'" Quoted in Blunden, Carlyle and His Circle, p. 257.

A letter discussing Goethe and Mantegna of 14 May 1841 from Carlyle to an unknown correspondent, probably Samuel Carter Hall (then editing the Art Union Monthly, later the Art Journal, and preparing his Gems of European Art, the Best Pictures of the Best Schools, 2 vols. 1843-5), shows that he continued to keep a friendly eye on Hunt's children when he could: "You provided for young Hunt, I think—tho' the lad himself never came to tell me of it. You did a charitable helpful act." From the MS. letter in the collection of Professor Frederick W. Hilles.
why he and other friends believed that Hunt should be given the pension. Though fitted to Hunt's special case, it is in some sense a forceful statement of the claims upon society's respect and wealth which any competent and courageous man of letters has the right to make.

Memoranda concerning Mr. Leigh Hunt.¹

1. That Mr. Hunt is a man of the most indisputedly superior worth; a Man of Genius in a very strict sense of that word, and in all the senses which it bears or implies; of brilliant varied gifts, of graceful fertility, of clearness, lovingness, truthfulness; of childlike open character; also of most pure and even exemplary private deportment; a man who can be other than loved only by those who have not seen him, or seen him from a distance through a false medium.

2. That, well seen into, he has done much for the world;—as every man possessed of such qualities, and freely speaking them forth in the abundance of his heart for thirty years long, must needs do: how much, they that could judge best would perhaps estimate highest.

3. That, for one thing, his services in the cause of Reform, as founder and long as editor of the Examiner newspaper; as poet, essayist, public teacher in all ways open to him, are great and evident: few now living in this kingdom, perhaps, could boast of greater.

4. That his sufferings in that same cause have also been great; legal prosecution and penalty (not dishonourable to him; nay, honourable, were the whole truth known, as it will one day be): unlawful obloquy and calumny through the Tory press;—perhaps a greater quantity of baseless, persevering, implacable calumny, than any other living writer has undergone. Which long course of hostility (nearly the cruellest conceivable, had it not been carried on in half, or almost total misconception) may be regarded as the beginning of his other worst distresses, and a main cause of them, down to this day.

5. That he is heavily laden with domestic burdens, more heavily than most men, and his economical resources are gone from him. For the last twelve years

¹ Published in "Leigh Hunt's Poetry", Macmillan's Magazine, vi (July 1862), 239; Richard Herne Shepherd, Thomas Carlyle (London: W. H. Allen, 1881), ii. 2-4; and in many other places. Shortly before, on 8 October 1846, Carlyle had commented not too favourably on Hunt's Stories from the Italian Poets (1846) in a letter to his brother John, who was then completing his translation of Dante's Inferno and seeking a publisher: "I have just been reading Hunt's Labour on that same matter (Italian Poets, which the Bookseller's [sic] sent me a while ago): his Translation, where he restricts himself to that, seems wonderfully felicitous, and much in the style I should like for you; but his commentary is little other than a shriek at once lamentable and ridiculous. I certainly do not think that this precludes a farther work on Dante for the English! You will have a great deal of trouble if the business go on; but I have no doubt you will strenuously front it, and doing your very best produce something good. Brevity and clearness: these are the two poles of the enterprise; the cardinal qualities both of version and commentary" (National Library of Scotland, 524.69).
he has toiled continually, with passionate diligence, with the cheerfulllest spirit; refusing no task; yet hardly able with all this to provide for the day that was passing over him; and now, after some two years of incessant effort in a new enterprise that seemed of good promise, it also has suddenly broken down, and he remains in ill health, age creeping on him, without employment, means, or outlook, in a situation of the painfulllest sort. Neither do his distresses, nor did they at any time, arise from wastefulness, or the like, on his own part (he is a man of humble wishes, and can live with dignity on little); but from crosses of what is called Fortune, from injustice of other men, from inexperience of his own, and a guileless trustfulness of nature:—the thing and things that have made him unsuccessful make him in reality more loveable, and plead for him in the minds of the candid.

6. That such a man is rare in a nation, and of high value there; not to be procured for a whole nation's revenue, or recovered when taken from us, and some £200 a year is the price which this one, whom we now have, is valued at; with that sum he were lifted above his perplexities, perhaps saved from nameless wretchedness! It is believed that in hardly any other way could £200 abolish as much suffering, create as much benefit, to one man, and through him to many and all.

Were these things set fitly before an English minister, in whom great part of England recognises (with surprise at such a novelty) a man of insight, fidelity and decision, is it not probable or possible that he, though from a quite opposite point of view, might see them in somewhat of a similar light; and, so seeing, determine to do in consequence? Ut fiat!

T. C.

No doubt the Hunts enjoyed their new prosperity. "The Hunts give splendid soirées", wrote Mrs. Carlyle to her husband on 9 October 1847.¹

It will be recalled that early in their friendship Carlyle and Hunt had shown great interest in the question of sexual morality. An entry made by Emerson in his journal, 25 April 1848, while he was on a visit to England, records a discussion of the question, with particular reference to incontinence in males, at one of John Forster's dinners where Carlyle, Dickens, and others were present and took part in the talk. Leigh Hunt was not there, but Dickens conveyed his interesting opinion.

There were only gentlemen present and the conversation turned on the shameful lewdness of the London Streets at night. "I hear it," he [Forster] said, "I hear whoredom in the House of Commons. Disraeli betrays whoredom, and the whole House of Commons universal incontinence, in every word they say." I said that when I came to Liverpool, I inquired whether the prostitution was always as gross in that city as it then appeared, for to me it seemed to betoken

¹ Froude, Letters and Memorials, ii. 16.
a fatal rottenness in the state, and I saw not how any boy could grow up safe. But I had been told it was not worse nor better for years. Carlyle and Dickens replied that chastity in the male sex was as good as gone in our times; and in England was so rare that they could name all the exceptions. Carlyle evidently believed that the same things were true in America. He had heard this and that of New York, etc. I assured him that it was not so with us; that, for the most part, young men of good standing and good education, with us, go virgins to their nuptial bed, as truly as their brides. Dickens replied that incontinence is so much the rule in England that if his own son were particularly chaste, he should be alarmed on his account, as if he could not be in good health. "Leigh Hunt," he said, "thought it indifferent." 1

When Carlyle toured Ireland in the late summer of 1849, Charles Gavan Duffy was his guide much of the time. The notes made by Duffy on his conversations with Carlyle include the following account of a discussion concerning the comparative merits of Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt as talkers:

I inquired if I might assume that Wordsworth came up to this description of him as the best talker in England.

Well, he replied, it was true you could get more meaning out of what Wordsworth had said to you than from anybody else. Leigh Hunt would emit more pretty, pleasant, ingenious flashes in an hour than Wordsworth in a day. But in the end you would find, if well considered, that you had been drinking perfumed water in one case, and in the other you got the sense of a deep, earnest man, who had thought silently and painfully on many things. 2

In 1850 Hunt's excellent Autobiography appeared. It contained a long passage on Carlyle in which Hunt attempted to provide somewhat the same kind of balanced critique of his friend as Coleridge had provided for Wordsworth in the Biographia Literaria. He gave, among other things, his final statement of the arguments dealing with the main issues which he and Carlyle had been debating through the years.

Here [at Chelsea], also, I became acquainted with Thomas Carlyle, one of the kindest and best, as well as most eloquent of men; though in his zeal for what is best he sometimes thinks it incumbent on him to take not the kindest tone, and in his eloquent demands of some hearty uncompromising creed on our parts, he does not quite set the example of telling us the amount of his own. Mr. Carlyle sees that there is a good deal of rough work in the operations of nature: he seems to think himself bound to consider a good deal of it devilish, after the old Covenanter fashion, in order that he may find something angelical in giving it the proper

2 Conversations and Correspondence with Carlyle (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1892), p. 54. Most of this correspondence is preserved in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin.
quantity of vituperation and blows; and he calls upon us to prove our energies and our benevolence by acting the part of the wind rather than the sun, of warring rather than peace-making, of frightening and forcing rather than conciliating and persuading. Others regard this view of the one thing needful, however strikingly set forth, as an old and obsolete story, fit only to be finally done with, and not worth the repetition of the old series of reactions, even for the sake of those analogies with the physical economy of the world, which, in the impulse which nature herself gives us towards progression, we are not bound to suppose everlastingly applicable to its moral and spiritual development. If mankind are destined never to arrive at years of discretion, the admonition is equally well-founded and unnecessary; for the old strifes will be continued at all events, the admonition (at best) being a part of them. And even then, I should say that the world is still a fine, rich, strenuous, beautiful, and desirable thing, always excepting the poverty that starves, and one or two other evils which on no account must we consent to suppose irremediable. But if the case be otherwise, if the hopes which nature herself has put into our hearts be something better than incitements to hopeless action, merely for the action's sake, and this beautiful planet be destined to work itself into such a condition as we feel to be the only fit condition for that beauty, then, I say, with every possible respect for my admirable friend, who can never speak but he is worth hearing, that the tale which he descends to tell is no better than our old nursery figment of the Black Man and the Coal-hole, and that the growing desire of mankind for the cessation of bitterness, and for the prevalence of the sweets of gentleness and persuasion, is an evidence that the time has arrived for dropping the thorns and husks of the old sourness and austerity, and showing ourselves worthy of "the goods the gods provide us".

Mr. Carlyle's antipathy to "shams", is highly estimable and salutary. I wish Heaven may prosper his denouncements of them, whenever they exist. But the danger of the habit of denouncing—of looking at things from the anti-pathetic instead of the sympathetic side—is, that a man gets such a love for the pleasure and exaltation of fault-finding, as tempts him, in spite of himself, to make what he finds; till at length he is himself charged with being a "sham"; that is to say, a pretender to perceptions and virtues which he does not prove, or at best a willing confounder of what differs from modes and appearances of his own, with violations of intrinsical wisdom and goodness. Upon this principle of judgment, nature herself and the universe might be found fault with; and the sun and the stars denounced for appearing no bigger than they do, or for not confining the measure of their operation to that of the taper we read by. Mr. Carlyle adopted a peculiar semi-German style, from the desire of putting thoughts on his paper instead of words, and perhaps of saving himself some trouble in the process. I feel certain that he does it from no other motive; and I am sure he has a right to help himself to every diminution of trouble, seeing how many thoughts and feelings he undergoes. He also strikes an additional blow with the peculiarity, rouses men's attention by it, and helps his rare and powerful understanding to produce double its effect. It would be hard not to dispense with a few verbs and nominative cases, in consideration of so great a result. Yet, if we were to judge him by one of his own summary processes, and deny him the benefit of his notions of what is expedient and advisable, how could he exculpate this style, in which he
denounces so many "shams", of being itself a sham? of being affected, unnecessary, and ostentatious? a jargon got up to confound pretension with performance, and reproduce endless German talk under the guise of novelty?

Thus much in behalf of us dulcet signors of philanthropy, and conceders of good intention, whom Mr. Carlyle is always girding at, and who beg leave to say that they have not confined their lives to words, any more than the utterers of words more potential, but have had their "actions" too, and their sufferings, and even their thoughts, and have seen the faces of the gods of wonder and melancholy; albeit they end with believing them to be phantoms (however useful) of bad health, and think nothing finally potential but gentleness and persuasion.

It has been well said, that love money as people may, there is generally something which they love better: some whim, or hobby-horse; some enjoyment or recreation; some personal, or political, or poetical predilection; some good opinion of this or that class of men; some club of one's fellows, or dictum of one's own; with a thousand other somes and probabilities. I believe that what Mr. Carlyle loves better than his fault-finding, with all its eloquence, is the face of any human creature that looks suffering, and loving, and sincere; and I believe further, that if the fellow-creature were suffering only, and neither loving nor sincere, but had come to a pass of agony in this life, which put him at the mercies of some good man for some last help and consolation towards his grave, even at the risk of loss to repute, and a sure amount of pain and vexation, that man, if the groan reached him in its forlornness, would be Thomas Carlyle.¹

In this carefully drafted statement of his arguments the strength and weakness of his own as well as Carlyle's position were clearly indicated and were, as it were, placed on record. The sincerity of his praise of Carlyle is not to be doubted. It is consistent with what he had said before; and elsewhere in the Autobiography he also praised him. "I admire and love all hearty, and earnest, and sympathizing men, whatever may be their creed—... the Carlyles and Emersons, the Hares, Maurices, Kingsleys",² he wrote toward the end of the book; and he joined those who spoke of the wonder of Carlyle's eyes: "The finest eyes, in every sense of the word, which I have ever seen in a man's head (and I have seen many fine ones) are those of Thomas Carlyle."³ This is high praise from one who had seen the eyes of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Dickens, Emerson, and many other eminent men.

Carlyle liked the book, and the letter to Hunt in which he expressed his admiration is one of his finest.

² Ibid. p. 448.
³ Ibid. p. 256.
Chelsea, 17 June, 1850—

Dear Hunt,

I have just finished your *Autobiography*, which has been most pleasantly occupying all my leisure these three days; and you must permit me to write you a word upon it, out of the fulness of the heart, while the impulse is still fresh to thank you. This good Book, in every sense one of the *best* I have read this long while, has awakened many old thoughts, which never were extinct, or even properly *asleep*, but which (like so much else) have had to fall silent amid the tempests of an evil time,—Heaven mend it! A word from me, once more, I know, will not be unwelcome, while the world is talking of you.

Well, I call this an excellently good Book; by far the best of the autobiographic kind I remember to have read in the English Language; and indeed, except it be Boswell's of Johnson, I do not know where we have such a Picture drawn of a human Life as in these Three Volumes. A pious, ingenious, altogether *human* and worthy Book; imaging, with graceful honesty and free feli­city, many interesting objects and persons on your life-path,—and imaging throughout, what is best of all, a gifted, gentle, patient and valiant human soul, as it buffets its way thro' the billows of the time, and will not drown, tho' often in danger; *cannot* be drowned, but conquers, and leaves a track of radiance behind it: that, I think, comes out more clearly to me than in any other of your Books; —and that I can venture to assure you is the best of all results to realise in a Book or written record. In fact this Book has been like an exercise of devotion to me: I have not assisted at any sermon, liturgy or litany, this longwhile, that has had so religious an effect on me. Thanks in the name of all men. And believe along with me that this Book will be welcome to other generations as well as to ours. And long may you live to write more Books for us; and may the evening sun be softer on you (and on me) than the noon sometimes was!

Adieu dear Hunt (you must let me use this familiarity, for I am an old fellow too now as well as you). I have often tho' of coming up to see you once more; and perhaps I shall one of these days (tho' horribly sick and lonely, and beset with spectral lions, go whitherward I may): but whether I do or not, believe forever in my regard. And so God bless you,—prays heartily

T. Carlyle

Hunt knew that Carlyle could have taken exception to much that he had written concerning him in the *Autobiography* but had not done so. He was extremely grateful.

1 This letter appeared in print as early as July 1862 in "Leigh Hunt's Poetry", cited above, pp. 239-40. Wylie, Conway, and Shepherd all published it in their biographies of Carlyle which came out in 1881. It is almost the only letter by Carlyle for which I have found evidence of forgery. At least five libraries in Europe and America have facsimiles which have been mistaken for the original letter. The paper in the facsimiles has yellowed much more than that which Carlyle used in other letters written near this date, and all the facsimiles are on paper which shows the watermark "Superior Bath Vellum", which appears on none of the paper which Carlyle used. The whereabouts of the original letter is still uncertain.
THOMAS CARLYLE AND LEIGH HUNT

Letter 40. Hunt to Carlyle.¹

Kensington—June 21, 1850.

My dear Carlyle,

After having been so often flustered & rendered inoperative by pains & troubles, I have been treated in the same manner, this week past, by an incursion of pleasures; letters, to wit, from valued friends, making much of me beyond anything I had looked for, and indeed taking away, as it were, the very breath of my responsiveness, yours most of all, so that I did not know what to say or where to begin; and you may imagine how extreme the pleasure was in your instance, when it surmounted, nay, wholly drowned the very pain I felt at your giving me no pain at all, not a single word of spleen or reproof, but a very torrent of nothing but honey,—pure love, & self-forgetfulness, or only such self-remembrance as made the sweet the sweeter, and superiority to every thing but the desire of all good hearts to find some ground for humanity to rest upon between this world & the next. It did not astonish me; for I knew what honey there was in the jaws of Samson’s lion, & I have always said that of such stuff your secret inner nature was altogether made; though I confess I did not think sufficiently well of myself to suppose that I should ever be the man to awaken thus its whole manifest fountain. Nor, believe me, do I think that it is myself that has done it even now, in spite of all the kind things which you say of me, and which assuredly you therefore feel. I know not what objections you withhold, nor how far accord with my mere self has anything to do with the matter; nor reverence for you, my dear friend, apart, do I care; for I merge, as you do, the smaller thing in the greater, and only rejoice to see your great & strong spirit sitting, even if it be but to refresh yourself for new combats, in that region of peace which others have found for us, and to attain which, in some finality or other, can be the only last object of all greatness & all strength, unless combat itself under a sense of dissatisfaction & heart-discord (a very different thing, I conceive, from combat physical, or the concordia discors of the elements) be our sole human destiny & mode of being; which is what the whispers of the great Spirit of the Universe to our hearts do not seem to allow.

At all events I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your letter, and cannot but feel very proud of it, whether my pride be right or wrong. As to visits, I know all about them, & have reciprocated with you a thousand in velle: for there is a being in velle as well as in esse & posse. I know how great the distance is sometimes between ailer & ailer, however short the parish measurement. I was more than half a year the other day, without crossing the threshold even to see a neighbour; & I am only now seeing my neighbour & my very son at Hammersmith. But on Tuesday next, if you are not engaged that evening, I propose to come after

¹ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa. Printed in New Letters of Thomas Carlyle, ii. 95-97. R. H. Shepherd records a visit made to Carlyle in 1868 during which Carlyle seemed to have forgotten the memorandum which he had written to help Hunt get a pension but remembered the letter he had written to Hunt about his Autobiography and the effusive gratitude of Hunt and his wife at their next meeting with the Carlyles after reading it (Carlyle, ii. 275-6).
tea & take my good old North-British supper with you. Pray tell Vincent if I may come, & believe me, dear kind Carlyle, your ever respectful & affectionate friend 

Leigh Hunt.

P.S. Those unctuous blots you see in my letter are not quite as vile as they seem. They are honest effluences of good palm candle, used in sealing a letter. —Pray accept the book I send, however superfluous.

Carlyle received this letter and replied to it on the day when it was written.

*Letter 41. Carlyle to Hunt.*

Chelsea, 21 June (Friday Evg) [1850]

Dear Hunt,—Many kind thanks! I saw the Book, and sent thanks for it by Vincent; but I did not know, till this minute, what other pleasant thing lay in the Letter itself, which the dusk and the hurry would not suffer me to read at the moment.—By all means, Yes, Yes! My Wife is overjoyed at the prospect of seeing you again in the old good style; Courage, and do not disappoint us. We are here, quite disengaged, and shall be right glad to see you.

I hope Vincent explained what a miscellaneous uproar had incidentally got about me tonight; and how for want of light as well as of time, I missed the kernel of the Letter altogether ——Tuesday, remember! We dine about 5; and tea comes naturally about 7,—sooner if you will come sooner.

One of my people tonight, an accomplished kind of American, has begged a card of introduction to you: he is a son of a certain noted Judge Story; is himself, I believe, a kind of Sculptor and Artist as well as Lawyer: pray receive him if he call: you will find him a friendly and entertainable and entertaining man.

And so—till Tuesday Evg—

Yours with all regard 

T. Carlyle

Despite his pension and the merits of his Autobiography, Leigh Hunt was not by nature one who could tread the path of smooth success for long. Toward the end of 1850 he was ready for a new journalistic venture. An enterprising young business man of Manchester, John Stores (“Turpentine”) Smith agreed to put up the capital for reviving *Leigh Hunt’s Journal.* Prospects seemed rosy to Hunt. He wrote to Carlyle to invite contributions from him but suggested, no doubt with the angry tone of Carlyle’s *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (which had been appearing

1 MS. letter in the British Museum, Add. 33,515, fol. 41. William Wetmore Story (1819-95), son of Joseph Story (1779-1845), Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, was a painter, sculptor, and musician who became the friend of the Carlyles, the Brownings, Landor, and other Europeans.
throughout the year) in mind, that they come from the benign side of Carlyle’s nature.

**Letter 42.** Hunt to Carlyle.¹

Kensington—Nov. 7th [1850].
32, Edwardes Square.

My dear Carlyle,

You may have seen the announcement of a certain “Leigh Hunt’s Journal”—for the 7th December. Is it possible that we could have the honour & glory of your name in it, and the more sequestered side of your nature? that is to say, the un-antagonistic part of it,—the more obviously loving or sympathetic portion—or anything not actually opposed to us & our pacifies,—essay, memoir, criticism, pleasantry, pathos, or what not? Our size is “Chambers” (in his late lesser shape) with the type of “Household Words,” and your articles would be leaded,—the pay (that is to say, your pay) two guineas a page, and two pages at a time? I wish it were two and twenty. Pray delight & oblige, if you can, your affectionate friend,

Leigh Hunt.

P.S. I need not say that I should hope to put you in good company, or at all events none altogether unworthy. Of my own you would have plenty.—I should like much to see your articles under one head, of your own choosing, like the Spectator or Rambler. Think of the volume they would make, when collected. The copyright, of course, would be your own.

When Carlyle responded promptly and favourably, Hunt wrote with enthusiasm to William Allingham on 22 November: “Carlyle is hearty for us, and will glorify our first number with a contribution.”² Carlyle actually had misgivings, which turned out to be well founded. He wrote to his brother John on 23 November: “Leigh Hunt, Ballantyne, little Turpentine Smith are about setting up ‘Leigh Hunt’s Journal’ again: poor little Smith (who has just married and came hither to live by Literature) investing his little fortune in the speculation,—not a good one at all, I should say! I walked up one night, and found poor old Hunt, supping on gruel and sherry, in clean linen and immense cloud of cotton nightgown, full of the old kindly follies, good soul!”³ But Carlyle did make his promised contribution:

¹ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa. Carlyle did provide a not too happy heading for his articles: “From a Waste-paper Bag of Thomas Carlyle.” ² Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, ii. 120. ³ MS. letter in the National Library of Scotland, 513.60. The journal appeared seventeen times between 7 December 1850 and 29 March 1851. See Hunt’s Autobiography, p. 495. For “Turpentine” Smith, see Blunden, Leigh Hunt and His Circle, pp. 307-8; Wilson, Carlyle, iv. 328.
"Two Hundred and Fifty Years Ago: Duelling"¹ began to appear in the first number, 7 December, and continued in the numbers for 21 December and 11 January. The Journal did not last long. Its last number appeared on 29 March 1851. Smith had been disappointed with the way in which the public had received it, had withdrawn his capital, and had returned to Manchester, where he became rich. It was a cruel blow to Hunt in his old age.

Letter 43. Hunt to Carlyle.²

2 Phillimore Terrace.
Kensington—June 30 [1851].

My dear Carlyle,

A gentleman wishes to know who wrote the communication respecting Strauss in the late luckless Journal.—May I tell him? I did not know but it might be wished to be kept secret.

I would fain have seen the whole article inserted just as it was sent; but Mr. Smith was afraid of his Manchester or his "commercial districts"—a point upon which he was always harping.

Oh how vexed & mortified I was, on finding the condition in which you and all the other friends whose pens he had encouraged me to invite into co-operation were to be left! Not that I supposed you cared anything for such poor profits as might have accrued. Indeed it was clear you did not; and "condition" is a foolish word. The sorry condition was mine, whose only excuse left me for not paying my friends, was the having ceased to receive any payment myself, on the strange plea that the last person to be paid was the first who by agreement was to receive payment, & without whose name the journal did not exist! And to this

¹ Reprinted in the Critical and Miscellaneous Essays.
² MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa. "Strauss": Hunt refers here to "Dr. David Strauss in Weimar" (Leigh Hunt's Journal, 22 February 1851, pp. 187-90). The article is signed "J. M.", and internal evidence further indicates that it is by James Marshall, Secretary of the Grand Duchess of Weimar, with whom Carlyle corresponded. Marshall acted as guide to Strauss (1808-74), author of Das Leben Jesu (1835-6), when he visited Weimar in August 1849. Carlyle had written to his mother from Chelsea on 19 June 1847: "We have here at present a little Irishman (or rather Ayrshire-man, for he was bred there), one Marshall, from Weimar; who comes down occasionally, and tells us about Goethe and old things we are interested in. An ingenious entertaining little body. He is Secretary to the Duchess of Weimar, who is here at present, one of the foreign potentates visiting our little Queen" (unpublished passage from the MS. letter in the National Library of Scotland, 521.53). Marshall was Carlyle's guide when he visited Weimar in September 1852. This Marshall is not to be confused with James G. Marshall of Leeds, whom Carlyle considered one of England's most enlightened and progressive industrialists.
compliment was added the violation of every other engagement, the discontinuance of even personal consultations, and finally the insult of bearding the minister in an article professing to be "Our" view of his politics, and then hindering me (by threats of not paying the printer) from disowning it in my own paper!! Such were the vagaries of the, I believe not on the whole ill intentioned, but uncouth, self-sufficient, & blunder-headed gentleman with whom I found myself suddenly & unaccountably linked, as if I had been walking arm in arm, in a dream, with a wild bull.—I have spirits enough to laugh again today, for my dear son & your friend Vincent, who has been alarmingly ill, I found yesterday mending; but for this week past I have been sore with anxiety. Nor is he well now: far from it; and has greatly wasted: but his amendment is in the right direction, & I can again think of something else. May God bless you & yours is ever the prayer of

Your affectionate friend,
Leigh Hunt.

Smith says that Ballantyne deceived him as to the amount of money necessary to set up the journal; & Ballantyne says he only spoke of money to begin it with, not to set up, & that Smith talked of a farm that he was to sell for the purpose. The opinion of men of business is, that they merely calculated on my name. They never told me what their funds were, and I, like a simpleton, took the substance of gesture from the "commercial districts" for granted.

The five letters which follow, all written in October 1852, are a unified sequence and require little comment. Perhaps the most interesting thing in them is Leigh Hunt’s pride in his own ingenuousness, expressed in the second paragraph of Letter 44.

Letter 44. Hunt to Carlyle.¹

2, Phillimore Terrace,
Kensington—Oct. 23 [1852].

My dear Carlyle,

I am writing, as well as illness and anxiety will let me (for Vincent is worse than he has yet been) a sort of history of Kensington; and in a book of one of its scandal-chroniclers (Lord Hervey) I meet with the word duchtich, upon the precise meaning of which the commentator says his German friends are not agreed, though he takes it to be "sly". Will you be kind enough to help me out with it?

¹ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa. Articles on Kensington by Hunt appeared in Household Words for 6 August, 20 August, 3 September, 19 November, 3 December 1853. His The Old Court Suburb; or, Memorials of Kensington was published by Hurst and Blackett in 1855. The scandal-chronicler here is John Hervey, Baron Hervey of Ickworth (1696-1743), satirized as "Sporus" in Pope's "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot". His Memoirs of the Reign of George II, ed. J. W. Croker, was published by J. Murray in London, 1848.
I take this opportunity of picking a bit of lovers' quarrel with you. In an extract from your Life of Sterling, which I met with, in a review not long after its publication, you speak of Sterling as the most "ingenuous" man you ever knew. Now I know not what quantity of ingenuousness you may have found in that excellent person, nor do I mean to dispute his superiority in any other point; but in regard to the quality of the commodity, I will venture to say, that such of it as you had from me was of the very best sort. Let me take this superbiam upon me, if I have a right to no other. I never deceived you in deed, word, or thought.

Your ever affectionate friend,
Leigh Hunt

Letter 45. Carlyle to Hunt.¹

The Grange, Alresford
24 Oct*, 1852—

Dear Hunt,

I can make nothing, or almost nothing, of Lord Hervey's duchtich. In the first place, it is certain, there is no such word in German; nor can his commentator ever have "consulted" any "German friend" on the subject, but must have simply inserted his own guess upon pure chance. So much is clear enough to me: but what word his Lordship did intend, is a question difficult to answer; and without good study of the context the answer cannot well be so much as conjectured.

Drawing a bow at a venture, I have a considerable notion he may have meant the adjective tüchtig (which is very similar in pronunciation, especially between a Hanoverian and an Englishman, the g too being gutteral and the t easily confounded with d): tüchtig signifies "effective", "solidly expert"; it is in fact fundamentally the same word as our doughty (from the Scotch word dow, "to be able"); German taugen; but it is not so high a word as doughty, nor at all exclusively applied to martial work, but it is used as a term of familiar but deliberate praise to a man of worth, who is thoroughly master of what he pretends to, in regard to work or action of any kind. Ein tüchtiger mann—a genuine, a sufficient man. Tügend (the substantive of the word) signifies virtue in German; but perhaps the meaning of tüchtig to Lord Hervey might be pretty much equivalent to "clever"—if he used tüchtig, if he intended it when he wrote duchtich.

If this makes sense of the passage for you, I think you may well stand by this; such is the likelihood of the mistake in his case.

But I am coming home in about a week; and if the point is still obscure and you will then send me a copy of the passage at large, or instruct me how to find it in the London Library, I will deliberately study it, and do my best to rede the riddle for myself and you. Tuesday next, and after that ad libitum.

Nobody was ever more in haste than I for the present; so adieu, dear Hunt; and believe me ever (without doubt or misgiving)

Yours with sincere regard
T. Carlyle

¹ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa.
My dear Carlyle,

There is plenty of context to the word in Lord Hervey, but taking it for veritable German, I would not trouble you with it. Here however it now comes. Hervey is writing to Queen Caroline:

"Tis true, great Queen, I have your dread command
No more with ink to stain these scribbling hands;
No more in duchtich verse, or teufflish prose,
To raccommode my friends, or lash my foes." &c.

Upon which the editor (Croker) observes, "My German friends are not agreed as to the precise import of duchtich, which, however, from its use in p. 161, seems to mean sly."

The passage at p. 161 is part of an imaginary conversation at court, which takes place on the supposed occasion of the writer's (Lord Hervey's) death:

"Princess Emily.—I am not sorry for him.
"Queen. And why not?
"Princess Em. What, for that creature?
"Princess Caroline. I cannot imagine why one should not be sorry for him: I think it very dure not to be sorry for him. I own he used to laugh malapropos sometimes but he was mightily mended; and for people that were civil to him, he was always ready to oblige them; and for my part I am sorry, I assure.
"Princess Em. Mama, Caroline is duchtich; for my part I cannot paroître.
"Queen. Ah! Ah! You can paroître and be duchtich very well sometimes; but this is no paroître; and I think you are [a] very great brute."—

Thanks for your long note on this point, and for your nullification of my fancy on the other.

Your affectionate
Leigh Hunt.

In an old Gazetteer I read the following about Alresford:—

"An ancient borough on a little river called Alre by Camden, but Itching by the country people.—On May day, 1710, this town was burnt down by a fire which spared neither the Market House nor Church; before which disaster there was not one almsman in the parish. It has been since burnt down, but is handsomely rebuilt. Part of a Roman highway, that goes from this place to Alton,

1 MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa. In The Old Court Suburb (pp. 253-4) Hunt translates dure as "unfeeling" and paroître as "seem to feel what I don’t". Duchtich he provides a not-too-helpful note for: "Disingenuous? double-meaning? I have applied to German scholars respecting this word, which is not familiar to them." German-English dictionaries today give duchtich in Middle Low German and Middle Dutch as meaning "capable, able" and further indicate that in later times, influenced by the Christian dogma of the virtues, it also means "virtuous" as a Middle Low German derivative. But Carlyle must have been right in suggesting that its use in Lord Hervey's play reflecting the speech of the English Hanoverian Court and meaning "capable of feeling sincere sympathy for" was "coterie" language.
serves for the head to a great pond, or rather a little lake near this town, on which are abundance of swans.”—

This may be old news to you, or changes may have made it curious. Being a lover of localities, especially when I take walks in imagination with friends, at all events I send it.

Letter 47. Carlyle to Hunt.¹

The Grange, 27 Octr 1852

Dear Hunt,

There is no good sense, I fear, to be made out of “duchtich” on any hypothesis: tüchtig does not answer well in the passages you give; and I can think of only one other German word which plausibly resembles duchtich; this perhaps answers a little better, but this also is by no means conclusively convincing. The word “züchtig” (pronounce tz or dz) signifies well-bred, polite, discreet, also chaste, modest, and on the whole comme il faut; this, perhaps once mispronounced “duchtich” by Hervey, may in “Coterie Speech” have become a common word in that circle—at all events, duchtich is clearly a coterie-word; and need not be sought after in dictionaries; nay who knows but the English Editor himself may have misread it (deutlich, “evident”, “clear”, wd be very like it in writing); not to say that Hervey’s own MS. does not usually spell German with propriety,—teuflisch, for example, should be teufflich etc. In short, I consider it impossible to guess what the word was, from such data as we have; and advise you not to chase it farther than into the hiding-places already indicated. “Sly” I do not believe it to have meant; nor on the whole will “tüchtig” do; “züchtig” I give you as my likeliest guess: but with certainty (unless by Pharaoh’s soothsayers, or by the writer and them) there can nothing be given.

N.B. “Coterie-Speech” is a German phrase; but I have no doubt you understand it well, and can give good account of it in an English Note. And that, I believe, will fairly help you thro’ the difficulty.

Thanks for the Note on Alresford; which is yet true enough to Nature in its geographical part, tho’ the historical (of the two burnings) has vanished from all memories that I consult. The big pond, with swans, and the bit of Roman road “to Alton” (properly from Winchester to London) are all still there; and a clean merry-looking market village as if no fire or disaster had ever been.

Adieu, dear Hunt. I remain faithfully,

Yours always

T. Carlyle

¹ MS. letter in the Lilly Library, University of Indiana. The letters of both Carlyles are spiced with “Coterie-Speech”, which editors and readers must become familiar with and recognize the precise flavour of if they are to understand and enjoy the letters fully. Many of the coterie phrases were, in the first instance, peculiar and often amusing expressions which the Carlyles had heard others use, such as the Hunt child’s “good joy”, Mazzini’s “thanks God” for “thank God” and “many wits” for “much wit”, and old Mrs. Carlyle’s “just a fluff of feathers” for “not worth a farthing”, which Jane, who did not like Browning, once applied to him.
Letter 48. Hunt to Carlyle.¹

Kensington—Oct. 30 [1852]

My dear Carlyle,

I should have written yesterday to thank you for your second long and kind note, but my poor son's extreme illness prevented me, and now hinders me from saying more.—At all times and seasons, sorrowful or otherwise, believe me ever your sincere

and affectionate friend,

Leigh Hunt.

From the time of this letter until Hunt's death on 28 August 1859, the meetings and messages between the two old friends were intermittent and infrequent. But the bond between them was never broken, and they were often in one another's thoughts when not in one another's presence. On 23 March 1853 Hunt mentioned in a letter to Dr. Southwood Smith his "beloved Chinese novel, In-Kiao-Li", which he spoke of as "a work of genius, as well as curious for its national manners, and exhibiting in passages the most exquisite refinement of heart. The notes marked T.C. are by Carlyle, to whom I lent it once, and who read it with delight."² Old as they were getting to be, both men were still quick to see the humorous side of life. In 1854 the movement to grow beards was well under way. Lord Ashburton made Carlyle promise to grow one and when he seemed to delay pressed him. Carlyle wrote to him on 30 September 1854:

But what shall I say of the grand question, the Beard? Certainly I am, and have ever been, a fixed enemy of shaving. . . . I am mindful of my promise, and even my wife assents. . . . Really, the Beard-movement does proceed, I perceive. Leigh Hunt, I heard not long since, had produced a copious beard, white or nearly so; he complained that there were two drawbacks, (1) the little boys laughed at him; (2) the beard abolished an uncommonly sweet smile he was understood to have. The latter evil will not apply to me. Nor do I think the little boys will much interfere.³

¹ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa.
² Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, ii. 162. In-Kiao-Li: apparently J. P. Abel-Remusat's Lu-Kiao-Li, ou les Deux Cousins; roman chinois, 4 vols. (Paris, 1826); translated into English and published in two volumes in London by Hunt and Clarke, 1827. See Martha Davidson, A List of Published Translations from Chinese into English, French, and German (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952).
³ MS. letter in possession of the Marquess of Northampton. A week or two later Lord Ashburton, returning from the Highlands with a beautiful beard, swooped down upon Carlyle's Chelsea home and with Jane's co-operation carried off all Carlyle's razors. On 13 October Carlyle wrote to his brother John that he had not shaved in four days (New Letters of Thomas Carlyle, ii. 166-7).
There was one further interchange of letters written in the kindliest spirit.

**Letter 49. Hunt to Carlyle.**

Hammersmith—Dec. 31 [1857].

My dear Carlyle,

Mr. Moran, an American friend of mine, and great admirer of yours, and as worthy a man withal as becomes his admiration, has asked me whether I thought you would be displeased at his begging your acceptance of a number of a new American magazine, which the post will bring you with this letter. I have ventured to say I thought you would not. Emboldened by this opinion, he would fain quash a fear which he retains of the terrible dictum which you once culminated across the Atlantic respecting certain millions of "bores", and hope that he might be permitted to deprive you of half an hour of your time some morning in Cheyne Row.

I was not venturous enough, I think, to speak with as much confidence on that point as on the other; though notwithstanding his natural Republican courage, and even his official situation (for he is Assistant Secretary to the American Minister) he says, that under all circumstances, and considering how you must have been beset by your countrymen, he "does not wonder" at the dictum. But to give your secret good nature as many reasons as I can for according with his desire, I will add what might otherwise, or to a less Catholic man, appear irrelevant to the matter, and even extravagant; namely, that he has lately undergone a great domestic sorrow; and that any momentary diversion of it such as he values, is an addition to his stock of supports.

Whether in joys or in sorrows of my own, believe me ever, dear Carlyle,

Most sincerely yours,

Leigh Hunt.

P.S. You ought to have had the book some days ago; but expecting to see Forster here, and to speak to him about it, I delayed. He came the day before yesterday; and then, in our talk, which was at once brief and full of matter, I forgot.

**Letter 50. Carlyle to Hunt.**

Chelsea, 3 Jan 1858

Dear Hunt,

I received your kind Note; which was very welcome to me,—the handwriting on the cover was like the knock of and [sic] old Friend at the door. By a later


2 MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa. Marine-stores: material from old ships often sold for junk. Taliter qualiter: "somehow or other."
post, the same day, the Magazine arrived; for which you must report me much obliged to Mr Moran.

I am crushed down with contemptible overwhelming labour this long time; scarcely able to keep alive under it at all;—at it night and day for 18 months past, cut off from the cheerful face of my fellow creatures, and almost from the light of the Sun at this season. To rummage 100 wagonloads of contemptible marine-stores, and weld out of them a malleable bar of any kind: it is such a job, now in my old days, as was never laid on me before;—and, what perhaps is worst of all, I intrinsically set no value on the beggarly enterprise; and have only one wish & hope about it, that poor I had done with it, forever and a day! There is at last fair prospect that I shall be out of the First Part, taliter qualiter, in May coming.

Mr Moran, & any friend of yours, may have half an hour of me, whenever he resolves to send up your Card. If he wait till May, he may find me (it is to be hoped) a much saner man than now:—but he may take his choice. I remain ever

Dear Hunt
Yours sincerely
T. Carlyle

Through the years they had written some other undated notes and letters for which the dates are now hard to establish.

Letter 51. Carlyle to Hunt.¹

My dear Sir,

Here is an American admirer of yours, a very pleasant gentleman, who (after requesting an autograph with your signature) requests that I would take him over, and let him see you face to face. May I bring him? Or should I send him at some other time?

Yours always
T. C.

Letter 52. Hunt to Carlyle.²

My dear Sir,

Your note was laid so quietly on the table by the servant, that I did not see it till this moment. I am forced to add, most unwillingly, that it happens to be almost the only impossible moment for receiving a friend that has occurred during the week, for I am in the double agony of running a race with time for the printer, & with ditto for an appointment by omnibus with the Strand. May I hope that your friend will find leisure to give me a look in any other day before one, or after five?

Ever yours most truly,
Leigh Hunt.

¹ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa.
² MS. letter in the collection of Professor Frederick W. Hilles.
Letter 53. Carlyle to Hunt.¹

Thanks for the Books, for the promised visit, for the corrections, for all that you have done and say! The "Sybilline" [sic] doggerel—ah me, had all the world such a conscience as Leigh Hunt!

We are at home tomorrow night, and shall be right glad to see your face again.

T. C.

Letter 54. Carlyle to Hunt.²

My Dear Sir,

Your little German Annual for 1791, not uninteresting otherwise, does seem rather questionable in the part you suspect. It treats there of Father Origen's feat, in Language as good as Gibbons; but warns its lady-readers (as it well enough may) to "look only thro' their fans" at such a thing. I fear you must not send it.

How often has your kind soliloquy an exact counterpart within my own person!—I am good for nothing at all, during these late weeks; sunk in confusion of dyspepsia, dispiritment, and the impossibility to make any way in my confused work. Tonight or tomorrow night, you shall have share of my dulness since I have nothing better to impart.

God bless you!

Yours always,

T. C.

Letter 55. Hunt to Carlyle.³

Kensington—July 15 [after 1840].

My dear Sir,

The bearer of this, Mr. Whelpdale, is a gentleman desirous of being engaged in German tuition, and on that & other accounts, ambitious of being known to you. From the brief acquaintance I have had with him, he appears to me to be a man of no common capacity, with an ingenuous nature, & of the right aspirations; & his intercourse is very gentle & pleasing. You will therefore I trust, give him audience for his own sake, & I hope a little for mine.

Some time ago, & now again lately, I have been wishing to send you a book or two; but I have not the command over the copies which former arrangements gave me; & am thus obliged to sigh & be shabby. It is a consolation to me, that at all events you thus escape the necessity of thanks, & perhaps the perplexities of unwilling criticism.

¹ MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa. The note is addressed to 4 Upper Cheyne Row and therefore dates before Hunt moved to Kensington in 1840.
² MS. letter in the Brewer Collection, State University of Iowa. Addressed to 4 Upper Cheyne Row.
³ MS. letter in the National Library of Scotland, 2883, fols. 306-7. I have not discovered the identity of "Mr. Whelpdale."
Pray beg Mrs. Carlyle to accept, with yourself, my kindest remembrances. I have had the old struggles, & fluctuations of health, but they have been accompanied with the old consolations; & I can laugh heartily still, thank God, as well as sigh. The young visitor you had the other day, would have returned to you, had the occasion continued; but it passed away.

Ever your obliged & faithful
Leigh Hunt.

When Hunt died at the age of seventy-five Carlyle wrote to John Forster: “Poor Hunt, poor Stephen! The ranks are getting thin to one’s right and to one’s left:—it is an evident suggestion, ‘Close, then; rank closer, and stick to one another, ye that still stand!’” Carlyle would continue his battle until 1881, about twelve years after Hunt’s death. His comments on Hunt during these years were entirely consistent with what he had said about him while he was alive. Hunt had been one of the few people whose reading aloud he had enjoyed. His voice not only conveyed meaning effectively but was delightful to listen to in itself. Carlyle told William Allingham: “Leigh Hunt used to walk with me in the first years after I came to Chelsea. He was sweet and dignified, and his talk like the song of a nightingale.” Always a lover of nature, Hunt had delighted, as Keats knew, in the songs of real nightingales and had directed Carlyle to where he could hear them sing. When John Burroughs visited Carlyle in 1863, he was astonished by his knowledge of birds and love for them. Carlyle told him that Leigh Hunt used to send him to various places to hear nightingales sing but that he did not really hear one until there came a song which he recognized by Goethe’s description, a song like that of the poet, “sounding amid the din—touching and strong”, words which told the story. He listened to this bird for fifteen minutes but never heard a nightingale again. Some of the old differences of opinion between him and Hunt came back into his mind also.


2 Diary, p. 204. See also Wilson, Carlyle, v. 455.

3 Wilson, Carlyle, v. 215-16.
He told William Allingham in 1873: "Leigh Hunt was saying one day, what a fine thing it would be if a subscription could be made to abolish Hell; but I remarked, 'Decidedly a bad investment, that would be!'—which grieved Hunt considerably." 1

In his old age he could not keep up very well with Hunt's large family, but he continued to maintain an interest in them, especially in Thornton. "I have known little of Th'n Hunt, these many years; indeed ever since his father's death," he wrote to W. D. Christie. "I used to think him an extremely ingenious quick-witted man; of loyal dispositions and intentions;—given up to Journalism, this long while past; and grown to I know not what in that turbid element of things. Somebody told me not long since, that he was a 'Writer in the D'y Telegraph'; it is very possible he may be Editor too,—at least if talent in such matters carries the prize." 2

But the memories concerning Leigh Hunt which the old Carlyle lingered over with most delight were those which had to do with the first years which he and Jane had in London when Hunt was their near neighbour in Chelsea. They had not found him the kind of man that talk had represented him as being. He was "a fine kind of man", Carlyle told Allingham. "I used to read the Examiner with much interest when I was living down in Scotland. Some used to talk of him as a frivolous fellow, but when I saw him he had a face as serious as death." 3

And from his pleasant memories of the evening visits which Hunt made to the Carlyles' Chelsea home in these early years Carlyle with a sure art drew unforgettable vignettes in which all the old shadows

1 Diary, 30 June 1873, p. 226. Allingham also records the fact that Carlyle took note of the death of Thornton Hunt at this time.

2 MS. letter of 2 June 1863 in the Yale University Library. But Carlyle had not always approved of Thornton Hunt's conduct and had written to his brother John in a letter of 2 November 1854 (National Library of Scotland, 516.86): "Lewes, Ape Lewes, or 'hairy Lewes,' as we called him, has not only gone to Weimar, but is understood to have a 'strong minded woman' [George Eliot] with him there, and has certainly cast away his Wife here,—who indeed deserved it of him, having openly produced those dirty sooty skinned children which have Th'n Hunt for father, and being ready with a third; Lewes to pay the whole account, even the money part of it! Such are our sublime George-Sand Philosophies teaching by experience. Everlasting peace to them and theirs,—in the Cesspool, which is their home."

3 Diary, p. 172.
came into harmony with the brightness of life and the supreme beauty of friendship. In these vivid pictures, woven of the stuff of life itself, Jane Carlyle fittingly had an important part.

Still prettier were Leigh Hunt's little nights with us; figure and bearing of the man, of a perfectly graceful, spontaneously original, dignified and attractive kind. Considerable sense of humor in him; a very pretty little laugh, sincere and cordial always; many tricksy turns of witty insight, of intellect, of phrase; countenance, tone and eyes well seconding; his voice, in the finale of it, had a kind of musical warble ("chirl" we vernacularly called it) which reminded one of singing-birds. He came always rather scrupulously, though most simply and modestly, dressed. "Kind of Talking Nightingale," we privately called him—name first due to her. He enjoyed much, and with a kind of chivalrous silence and respect, her Scotch tunes on the piano, most of which he knew already, and their Burns or other accompaniment: this was commonly enough the wind-up of our evening; supper being ordered (uniformly "porridge" of Scotch oatmeal), most likely the piano, on some hint, would be opened, and continue till the "porridge" came—a tiny basin of which Hunt always took, and ate with a teaspoon, to sugar, and many praises of the excellent frugal and noble article. It seems to me, in our long, dim-lighted, perfectly neat and quaint room, these "evening parties" of three were altogether human and beautiful; perhaps the best I anywhere had before or since!

Again:

Leigh Hunt was in the next street, sending kind unpractical messages; in the evenings, I think, personally coming in... Huggermugger was the type of his Economics, in all respects, financial and other; but he was himself a pretty man, in clean cotton nightgown, and with the airiest kindly style of sparkling talk,—wanting only wisdom of a sound kind, and true insight into fact. A great want!

And again:

Leigh Hunt was here almost nightly, three or four times a week, I should reckon;—he came always neatly dressed, was thoroughly courteous, friendly of spirit, and talked—like a singing bird. Good insight, plenty of a kind of humor too;—I remember little warbles in the turns of his fine voice which were full of fun and charm. We gave him Scotch Porridge to supper ("nothing in nature so interesting and delightful"): she played him Scotch tunes; a man he to understand and feel them well. His talk was often enough (perhaps at first oftenest) Literary-Biographical, Autobiographical, wandering into Criticism, Reform of Society, Progress, etc., etc.,—on which latter points he gradually found me very shocking (I believe,—so fatal to his rose-colored visions on the subject). An innocent-hearted, but misguided, in fact, rather foolish, unpractical, and often much-suffering man.

And again:

Our commonest evening sitter, for a good while, was Leigh Hunt, who lived close by, and delighted to sit talking with us (free, cheery, idly melodious as bird
on bough), or listening, with real feeling, to her old Scotch tunes on the Piano, and winding up with a frugal morsel of Scotch Porridge (endlessly admirable to Hunt) ... Hunt was always accurately dressed, these evenings, and had a fine chivalrous gentlemanly carriage, polite, affectionate, respectful (especially to her) and yet so free and natural. Her brilliancy and faculty he at once recognized, none better; but there rose gradually in it, to his astonished eye, something of positive, or practically steadfast, which scared him off, a good deal; the like in my own case too, still more;—which he would call "Scotch," "Presbyterian," who knows what; and which gradually repelled him, in sorrow, not in anger, quite away from us, with rare exceptions, which, in his last years, were almost pathetic to us both. Long before this, he had gone to live in Kensington;—and we scarcely saw him except by accident. His Household, while in "4 Upper Cheyne Row," within few steps of us here, almost at once disclosed itself to be huggermugger, unthrift, and sordid collapse, once for all; and had to be associated with on cautious terms;—while he himself emerged out of it in the chivalrous figure I describe. Dark complection (a trace of the African, I believe), copious clean strong black hair, beautifully-shaped head, fine beaming serious hazel eyes; seriousness and intellect the main expression of the face (to our surprise at first),—he would lean on his elbow against the mantelpiece (fine clean, elastic figure too he had, five feet ten or more), and look round him nearly in silence, before taking leave for the night: "as if I were a Lar," said he once, "or permanent Household God here!" (such his polite Ariel-like way). Another time, rising from this Lar attitude, he repeated (voice very fine) as if in sport of parody, yet with something of very sad perceptible: "While I to sulphurous and penal fire"—as the last thing before vanishing. Poor Hunt! No more of him. She, I remember, was almost in tears, during some last visit of his, and kind and pitying as a Daughter to the now weak and time-worn old man.  

They were so much unlike that even the gods could not have predicted the success and quality of their friendship. But they were both wonderful men in whom differences of opinion, character, and even temperament were transcended by what Carlyle called Hunt's "purest humanity" and what Hunt called Carlyle's "paramount humanity". Hence it is after reading the story of their friendship we may feel justified in quietly congratulating ourselves that we belong to the human race with its high but at times inscrutable potential of friendship.

1 Reminiscences, i. 174-5. Hunt's superb manners, which Carlyle significantly noted more than once, are reflected in Hunt's epigram: "Theophrastus was known not to have been born in Attica by his too Attic nicety" (Wylie, Carlyle, p. 227). "Sulphurous and penal fire": see the speech of the Ghost in Hamlet, i. v. 3-4.  

2 Ibid. p. 224.