

## CARLYLE'S LETTERS <sup>1</sup>

By CHARLES RICHARD SANDERS, B.Ph., M.A., Ph.D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, NORTH CAROLINA

**A**MONG the Victorians no one possessed more remarkable eyes than Thomas Carlyle. No one managed to stay in the centre of things and to enjoy an excellent point of vantage from which to observe people and events more consistently than he. No one saw more clearly or reacted more vigorously and interestingly to what he saw. No one more habitually tried to understand what he saw and to interpret it in terms of philosophical principles. Hence, perhaps an almost ideal method for making a study in depth of the Victorian period would be that which combined the perspective of distant time which we are beginning to have as that age recedes farther and farther away with the intimate on-the-scene record and commentary of Carlyle.

Yet up to now the use of such a method has been impossible because both the perspective and adequate means for observing the age through Carlyle's eyes have been lacking. The passing of time has gradually solved the problem of perspective, but the privilege of seeing Carlyle's world fully through his own eyes will become a possibility only when the complete texts of all his letters have been gathered and put in order.

The formidable but not unpleasant task of making a complete

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file of Carlyle's letters was begun at Duke University three years ago. Previously much valuable work on the letters had been undertaken elsewhere. Important pioneer work in collecting, selecting, and editing the letters was done by J. A. Froude and C. E. Norton soon after Carlyle's death. Carlyle's nephew, Alexander Carlyle, supplemented their work with excellent editions of other letters early in this century. Still other letters have appeared from time to time in magazines and newspapers. Most of these have been listed in I. W. Dyer's excellent *A Bibliography of Thomas Carlyle's Writings and Ana* (Portland, Maine, 1928). D. A. Wilson's six-volume biography of Carlyle, completed in 1934, cites, quotes, or prints whole texts of many other letters. Recently, Lady Bliss has skilfully edited additional letters by Carlyle and his wife to one another. Likewise, Lawrence and Elisabeth Hanson in *Necessary Evil*, a life of Jane Welsh Carlyle, have added other letters by the Carlyles to the list. Extremely important work is now being done by Mr. William Park, Keeper of Manuscripts in the National Library of Scotland, who is compiling a check list of the letters by both Carlyles. Mr. J. L. Slater of Rutgers University is re-editing the Carlyle-Emerson correspondence. Mr. M. H. Goldberg of the University of Massachusetts is editing the Carlyle-Jeffrey correspondence. Mrs. A. E. Beston is working on the unpublished correspondence between Carlyle and Nancie Jeffrey.

The nerve centre of the Duke University collection is a chronological file in which a card has been placed for each letter of which any trace has been found—whether it has been printed in complete form, quoted, cited, or found in the original unpublished autograph. Each card gives as much information about its letter as possible and lists not merely the date, recipient, and addresses, but also the whereabouts of the autograph if it has been found, works in which it has been printed or mentioned in print, an indication of whether or not it has ever been fully and faithfully printed, and brief notes as to its general merit, with a listing of the most interesting topics upon which it touches.

Complementing this file is the index file, which is an alphabetical list of all those who received letters from Carlyle, with the dates of letters under the name of each recipient.

In addition there is the growing collection of autograph letters themselves on microfilm or in photostats. The policy in collecting these up to now has been that of making a special effort to acquire copies of the scattered letters; that is, all those not in the great collection now preserved in the National Library of Scotland at Edinburgh. The collection at Edinburgh was in considerable part made by Carlyle himself and handed down by him to Froude, who in turn gave the letters to Carlyle's niece, Mary Aitken (later the wife of his nephew and editor, Alexander Carlyle). The Duke University chronological file and index lists all Carlyle's letters in this collection. Just to the extent that the chronological file can be made complete, will it facilitate the work of scholars in the Victorian field.

Also under way at Duke University is the task of making typescripts of the fugitive letters, both the unpublished ones and those which are only to be found scattered through many miscellaneous books, newspapers, and magazines. These typescripts are arranged by dates so that the letters can be read in the order in which they were written. Typescripts made from printed sources are always carefully collated with copies of the autograph letters when they become available. Typing copies of the letters is of course expensive; but eventually enough money may be found to make possible the ideal of a complete typescript file of Carlyle's letters arranged in chronological order. This could, in turn, lead to a complete published edition.

A special study is also being made of Carlyle's correspondence with his brother Dr. John A. Carlyle. This is a very important correspondence covering many years and involving hundreds of letters. Carlyle had particular respect for this brother and confidence in him. In this instance both sides of the correspondence are being assembled and studied as thoroughly as possible.

Although the work is still in midstream, it has proceeded far enough to provide some significant data. The master file now records 5,687 letters. Of these 4,379 holographs have been found. Unpublished letters total 3,053. Of the 2,634 letters recorded in print, 805 are in Dyer's list of scattered letters, and many of the others have not been printed in complete form.

Some of these have merely been cited or briefly quoted. Undoubtedly many letters have not yet been found. Many unpublished autograph letters still appear on the market each year, and are thus in a state of flux, as an examination of sales records of *American Book-Prices Current* from 1895 to 1950 and Maggs from 1937 to 1951 shows very clearly. One might guess that eventually at least 8,000 autograph letters will be found.

Of the 5,687 letters listed in the Duke University file, 3,340 autographs are in the National Library of Scotland, about three-fourths of the autographs and more than half of the total number of letters found. Twelve of the largest collections of Carlyle's autograph letters are given below :

1. The National Library of Scotland . . . . .	3,340
2. Victoria and Albert Museum, Forster Collection . . . . .	139
3. Yale University Library . . . . .	101
4. The Henry E. Huntington Library . . . . .	95
5. The New York Public Library . . . . .	80
6. Crewe House, London . . . . .	76
7. The Carlyle House, Chelsea . . . . .	69
8. The Pierpoint Morgan Library . . . . .	59
9. The University of Edinburgh . . . . .	53
10. The British Museum . . . . .	39
11. Carlyle's Birthplace, Ecclefechan . . . . .	33
12. Hornel Collection, Broughton House, Castle-Douglas, Scotland . . . . .	28

There are some other fairly large collections such as that of The John Rylands Library, which numbers 25, and The London Library, which has 17. Duke University does not yet possess complete data concerning the holdings of some large libraries and other depositories.

A count of the letters in relation to their recipients shows those to Jane Welsh Carlyle leading with a total of 969 letters. She received, of course, not only the majority but many of the best. The following list gives the names of others who received a large number of letters from Carlyle : Dr. John A. Carlyle (his brother), more than 834 ; Mrs. Margaret A. Carlyle (his mother, who did not die until 1853), 478 ; Jean Carlyle Aitken (his sister), 337 ; Joseph Neuberger (who helped him gather materials for *Frederick the Great*), 258 ; John Forster, 242 ; Alexander Carlyle (his brother and the father of Alexander Carlyle, editor of the letters), 117 ;

Emerson, 106 ; Mill, 91 ; the first Lady Ashburton (Harriet Montagu), 84 ; R. M. Milnes (Lord Houghton), 75 ; Henry Larkin, 80 ; John Sterling, 57 ; Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, 37 ; and Mrs. Robert Hanning (his sister Janet, who went to Canada), 32.

It is interesting to consider the 5,687 letters in the light of the extent to which they were used by Carlyle's two chief biographers, Froude and Wilson. In his life of Carlyle Froude cites, quotes from, or prints as a whole, approximately 265 letters ; Wilson approximately 513. Of course, it should be assumed that both read, assimilated, and in one way or another used many letters for which they do not give a reference. Froude was superior in style and in the imaginative power of his general conception ; Wilson was far more thorough in getting all pertinent facts and more careful in dealing with them. Surely, when one strikes a balance between the two, however, one can hardly justify Wilson's many condescending references to Froude.

The greatest difficulty encountered by those who are working on the project is that of finding the single letters or small collections of letters which are in private hands. Yet persistent following of clues and a little advertising from time to time bring in a satisfying trickle of news about scattered letters. And over a newly found stray letter as over the shepherd's lost sheep there is always great rejoicing, for it illumines the others and is illuminated by them. Occasionally, but not often, the holders of letters require full credentials before they grant permission for copying or publishing ; one or two have imposed restrictions.

Once the letters have been gathered, the study of them brings various problems and difficulties. Although Carlyle's writing as a rule is not hard to read, problems of legibility do arise at times when he wrote hurriedly, or wrote (as he seldom did) in pencil, or attempted to write in the years between his wife's death in 1866 and 1870, when his niece Mary Aitken, who wrote a lovely round hand, became his amanuensis. In these years his right arm refused to function properly and he wrote very shakily. Some few letters have no dates on them and the envelopes carrying postmarks have been lost ; but, as the file grows more

complete, it becomes easier to establish the dates of these letters. Other letters do not carry the names of the recipients but simply begin with "My dear Sir", or something similar. Here again the context of the letter in the chronological file may provide helpful clues. In one instance, that of the fine letter which Carlyle wrote Leigh Hunt in praise of his *Autobiography*, 17 June, 1850, the question of authenticity has arisen. Three autographs, each assumed to be the original of this letter, have been preserved in separate places; in addition, two institutions own excellent photographic facsimiles.

The question arises as to when a complete edition of Carlyle's letters should be brought out. It would be expensive, but certainly in the course of time money can be found for such a purpose. With this faith, those at Duke University who are making the typescripts exercise the utmost care to provide texts of absolute integrity for all letters added to the file.

The collection reveals much concerning Carlyle's habits, techniques, and purposes as a letter-writer. Of approximately 6,000 letters now recorded, 64 were written in the period from 13 April 1814 (the date of the first letter preserved) to 1820; 513 from 1820 to 1830; 691 from 1830 to 1840; 1,487 from 1840 to 1850; 1,481 from 1850 to 1860; and 1,317 from 1860 to his death in 1881. Carlyle did not spare himself, whether he was maintaining the correspondence with his many relatives and friends or answering a letter of query or request from a pure stranger. Sometimes he would go a week or two without writing a letter; on other days he would write as many as five letters. On 2 March 1842 he wrote five, all dealing with the death of his wife's mother, Mrs. Welsh: two to his own mother; one to his wife, who was in Liverpool on the way to her mother's bedside when the news came; one to John Forster; and one to R. M. Milnes. On 27 August 1843 he wrote from his mother's home in Scotland to his wife, Emerson, John Forster, and the actor Macready.

It would be unlike Carlyle, however, not to grumble about having to write some of the letters, as he grumbled about having to write most of his books. The real greatness of Carlyle probably lay in the amazing richness, depth, force, and integrity

of his picturesque humanity ; and humanity always has faults. Carlyle at times seemed vexed at having to write a letter and would write " In haste " apologetically at the end. Often too, he would get hold of a bad pen or bad paper and scold them, perhaps more than once, in the letter. What a blessing a good modern fountain pen would have been to him ! He was not as careful as he could have been, even in his early and middle period, about his handwriting. Practically all his *K*'s seem to be upper case. His *e*'s often close and look like undotted *i*'s. His lower-case *r*'s also usually look like *i*'s without dots. The second *t* of *tt* and the second *l* of *ll* fall away and are about half as high as they should be. The *a*'s are often not properly closed at the top. In old age Carlyle often used various symbols to indicate omitted letters, such as *c<sup>a</sup>* for *could*.

It is extremely doubtful whether Carlyle usually thought of his letters in terms of a literary art form as he composed them. Many of them are either hastily thrown together or contain unpleasant emotional spasms, wordy passages, or tedious expressions of complaint—about the weather, about the work he was trying to do, about his poor health and inability to sleep, and about the way blockheads seemed to have filled the ranks and assumed control in the world around him. Some of the letters, moreover, particularly in the long period when he was working on *Frederick the Great*, deal with technical details of interest only to those rare, pure minds which delight in the very processes of research—in the location of points on a map showing one of Frederick's battlefields, in the exact time when the battle began, the exact nature of the weather in which it was fought, etc.

Yet many of the letters are, from the first sentence to the last, excellent ; and in many others one may read through an inferior passage to find a rich reward in sudden sentences or whole paragraphs of great literary splendour. Brilliance of metaphor and vigour of expression are the rule rather than the exception in Carlyle's correspondence as in his books. Just as consistent as these is his gift of imaginative insight—his quick, sure thrust into the heart of the matter being discussed. Sight also in the physical sense, the seeing power of Carlyle's remarkably observant eyes, together with his equally remarkable skill in describing

what he saw, makes his letters an extremely important record of the changing Victorian scene. And in the long, varied, and picturesque procession that slowly moved forward before Carlyle's eyes, the scenes were not merely seen and described, everything was evaluated, whether it was growing prosperity after the repeal of the Corn Bill, Jenny Lind's farewell concert in London, the funeral cortège of the Duke of Wellington, or the advent of Bismarck. Wrong-headed though some of these evaluations may appear to us, they are always sincere and intellectually stimulating.

It was not like Carlyle, furthermore, despite his lowly origin, to allow himself to be subdued, much less overwhelmed, by high people, momentous events, or difficult ideas. The habit of social and intellectual dominance was one that he acquired long before *The French Revolution* made him famous in 1837. He was a free subject of the Crown and a free citizen of the world of mind, and when he chose, as he often did, he could use words of condescension in speaking of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, The Great Exhibition, Turkey, Margaret Fuller, Macaulay, John Stuart Mill, Disraeli, France, or the North in the American Civil War. In the early days of her reign the Queen was to Carlyle "the poor little Queen", and the young Prince Consort was "the poor lad". Disraeli was almost always "Ol' Clo'", a shortened form of the street cry of the Jewish dealer in old clothes. The slavery question was the "Nigger" question.

Yet in Carlyle, as in F. D. Maurice, the feeling of intellectual mastery was combined paradoxically with a feeling of genuine humility and a strong determination to avoid personal and intellectual pride. Both men walked and talked and formed friendships with people on all social and intellectual levels. Carlyle, with all his glorification of the Hero, was such a democrat as Burns would admire, equally at ease with Lord Ashburton and with the tailor at Dumfries.

This paradox in Carlyle, everywhere exemplified in his letters, which are addressed to people in all ranks of life, reminds one of other paradoxes. One of these was his life-long thunder in praise of silence. He had a genius for selection and brevity which again and again flashes out from his long speeches in



conversation, from his many essays and books, and from hundreds of letters. At his best, he was a master of the swift, bold, telling stroke. His words were often like meteors—heavy, but rushing brilliantly, forcefully, and surely to their mark. Still another paradox, possibly the most significant one to be found in Carlyle, has to do with fire. It may be fairly maintained through masses of evidence coming from his books and letters that the metaphor of fire was the grand central one in his thinking. The imaginative process was to him one by which, as in his *French Revolution*, the mind of the literary artist became a kind of furnace which burned out all impurities and left only the precious yellow metal. Likewise it was simultaneously a warming up, an intensifying, and an illumination of a subject. Carlyle never felt that he was really ready to write until the cauldron had begun to boil. But the tragic irony of his life was that he detested heat in the weather or in other forms, and was fully as susceptible to it as to noise. Hence his many flights northward to Scotland during summers to escape the “Nebuchadnezzar’s Furnace” of London. And when the cauldron did boil while Carlyle was writing his works, it boiled, as his letters tell us, not merely in his mind but in the wretched man’s stomach.

Quite obviously, future biographers of Carlyle will find a reasonably complete chronological file of his letters very helpful. Without such a file their task is replete with awkwardness and difficulties. For instance, the Duke University file now has twenty letters which Carlyle wrote from Ireland during his tour there in July and August 1849. The table below shows the dates of the letters and the extent to which they have been scattered.

- |          |                                                                                                                           |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4 July.  | ALS. National Library of Scotland. Unpublished.                                                                           |
| 6 July.  | ALS. National Library of Scotland. (Printed in Trudy Bliss’s <i>Letters to His Wife</i> .)                                |
| 8 July.  | ALS. Huntington Library. Unpublished.                                                                                     |
| 11 July. | ALS. National Library of Scotland. Printed in incomplete form in the <i>New Letters</i> , ed. Alexander Carlyle, vol. ii. |
| 12 July. | ALS. Huntington Library. Unpublished.                                                                                     |
| 13 July. | ALS. National Library of Scotland. Unpublished.                                                                           |
| 17 July. | ALS. National Library of Scotland. Printed by Bliss.                                                                      |
| 17 July. | (to another correspondent.) ALS. Pierpoint Morgan Library. Unpublished.                                                   |
| 18 July. | ALS. National Library of Scotland. Printed by Bliss.                                                                      |

- 21 July. ALS. National Library of Scotland. Unpublished.  
 24 July. ALS. National Library of Scotland. Unpublished.  
 26 July. ALS. Huntington Library. Unpublished.  
 27 July. Cited by Dyer and quoted by Froude. Autograph not found.  
 28 July. ALS. National Library of Scotland. Printed in incomplete form  
 in *New Letters*, ed. Alexander Carlyle.  
 29 July. Printed in incomplete form in *New Letters*, ed. Alexander Carlyle.  
 Autograph not found.  
 2 August. ALS. Yale University Library. Unpublished.  
 5 August. Cited by D. A. Wilson in his biography, IV. Autograph not found.  
 5 August. (to another correspondent.) ALS. Huntington Library. Un-  
 published.  
 6 August. ALS. Pierpoint Morgan Library. Unpublished.  
 6 August. ALS. National Library of Scotland. Unpublished.

Once the letters have been found, copied, and put in order, they become autobiography, not written years later, but at the time of the experiences. They yield information about places, dates, topics of conversation, antipathies for certain people, the cultivation of friendships (a particular gift with Carlyle which explains much in his career), modes of relaxation, the espousal of causes, the engaging in controversies, the ways in which Carlyle worked (not merely his habits of composition but his methods in selecting a subject and the degree of thoroughness with which he did his research), the effort to cope with problems in his private life, and the mistakes, failures, and triumphs of his life. They are the very stuff of biography from the pen of an unusually truthful, honest, and trustworthy biographer. His letters describing Coleridge at Highgate in 1824 agree perfectly with details in the splendid portrait of Coleridge which he composed for his *Life of Sterling* in 1851. He had an unusual memory which rarely tricked him even after many years, and he refused to practice deception, even in dealing with himself, when recording in his letters the observations and impressions of each day.

Carlyle's letters reveal accurately, therefore, not only himself but the events of the time. The appearance of Halley's Comet in 1835, the repeal of the Corn Laws, the rise and fall of Prime Ministers, the passing of the great reform bills, the steps taken to improve the lot of women and the working man, the coming of railroads and of penny postage, the growth of Empire, the discoveries of scientists, controversies in religion, progress

toward the education of the masses—the letters teem with such matters, always accompanied by penetrating, intelligent and often picturesque comment.

At times they are much more than a record of the times provided with a running commentary. Carlyle was not content to be a mere observer of what was happening—a sort of Greek chorus who observed the action and philosophized about it. He had strong practical instincts which are reflected in his books and are confirmed by Emerson's remarks upon his very appearance. When we speak of the remarkable influence which Carlyle exerted we should bear in mind, without discrediting at all the power of his books, that his letters and conversation were practical instruments by which he sought, often with success, to impinge upon the minds and control the behaviour of people in clearly defined terms. The whole series of letters relating to the founding of the London Library in 1840 illustrate the point. Here he was completely successful, and we still rejoice at his success. He was less successful in his efforts to get Margaret Fuller and Emerson to bring *The Dial* out of the clouds and down to earth (see the excellent letter to Emerson of 19 August 1842). He was less successful too, quite fortunately, in his advising the poets of the age to give up verse and write prose. Carlyle was too forthright to be completely successful politically and too individual to create disciples in his own image. But he did, partly through his letters, shock the aristocrats and the middle class out of their smugness and moral indifference; and at his best he did for some individuals what was much better than shaping them to be like himself: he taught them how to find and how to be themselves.

Logan Pearsall Smith and others have called Carlyle the Victorian Rembrandt. Certainly, no instinct in him was stronger than that which led him to observe with burning interest and intensified powers of observation men and women in the world around him. No talent in him was more marked than that through which he skilfully delineated their features. Whatever value the world may attach to his moral and political ideas (just now his reputation as a philosopher is clearly at ebb-tide), the portraits which he drew of his contemporaries will always be too

important and too fascinating to be ignored by students of the period.

Some of Carlyle's pen-portraits are to be found in such works as *The Life of Sterling* and the *Reminiscences*. Most of them, however, and many of the best ones are miniatures embedded in the letters, many of which have been published only in part or not at all. Hence it is that we shall never be able to study and enjoy Carlyle's work as "the Victorian Rembrandt" in its entire range, variety, and richness until we can see all the portraits in relationship to one another and to the times against the context of the collected and ordered correspondence.

A particular reason why Carlyle's portraits yield most when studied in relation to the letters is that his method was that of a painter who required his subjects to sit a considerable number of times. Carlyle's portraits grow, develop, are touched up, gather depth of shadow and richness of colouring, find their true proportions and emphasis, and at times undergo organic change and readjustment of line as the artist finds opportunity to observe his subject from time to time and sends off letter after letter. Those who wish evidence for this assertion may study his treatment of Samuel Rogers, Macaulay, and Thackeray in the letters that have been published.

Despite Carlyle's scoffing at "artists" and "dilettantism" (a word to him synonymous with all aesthetic studies), he was himself greatest when he was most the artist. And he was undoubtedly an artist—a conscious artist—when he worked on the portraits. Whether studying history or observing his contemporaries, his first object always was to get an actual likeness, of undisputable authenticity, of the persons to be considered. He praised Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, for first collecting the best painted portraits of important Englishmen and later drawing brilliant portraits with his pen. In the early 1850s he showed himself strongly in favour of establishing National Portrait Galleries for Scotland and England, for which the pictures would be carefully selected and in which only the most trustworthy portraits would be found. When he wrote history, whether it dealt with the French Revolution, Cromwell, or Frederick II, he first searched for authentic likenesses of all

important characters in the story and placed these on or near his desk where he could see them as he wrote. He grieved that there was nowhere what he could believe in as a true portrait of Christ ; even the works of the great Italian masters were to him idealizations, glorifications, luminous pieces of ecclesiastical symbolism, and romantic imaginings which were to him a poor substitute for a real likeness.

On the other hand, Carlyle knew that a merely photographic likeness could never be an adequate portrait. It had to begin, of course, with the physically real or it would be completely false. But having once grasped this reality clearly and firmly, it proceeded to discover and reveal the inner and essential reality of which the physical details merely provided the outward tokens. Such a method, making much of swift evaluations, rigorous exclusion of unessentials, and a form which was compact, picturesque and bright, Carlyle believed that he had inherited from his father. One of his father's most notable gifts, he said, was that of throwing off " little sketches of Annandale biography . . . clearest brief portraiture and life-history of all the noteworthy, vanished figures whom I had known by look only, and now wished to understand . . . so admirably brief, luminous, true, and man-like ". The word *man-like* here is not used loosely. Carlyle uses the word *man* as Hamlet does in praising his father. Carlyle says that his father gave him a set of " human delineations of human life ". Thus the chief purpose of the portrait artist is to find the precious and indefinable humanity in his subject, to distil it and draw it out, through methods permitted by a rigorous economy, until it hangs like a rare, rich, and exquisite perfume over and around the portrait. Here lies the charm of Rembrandt's work, and of Carlyle's when he is most successful.

Carlyle's metaphors are merely one of the most striking means which he employs to this end, but they are often like brilliant jewels flashing out from the portraits, and they do much to render the portraits unforgettable. Bronson Alcott, with his vegetarianism, is a " Potato Quixote " ; Jeremy Bentham is a " rhinoceros—strong and clumsy " ; Coleridge is a " seventy-four-gun ship, but waterlogged, dismasted, cannot set a thread of sail ! " ;

Thomas Erskine of Linlathen was like a " draught of sweet rustic mead served in cut glasses and silver tray "; Margaret Fuller's books suggest a " *spiritual Aurora Borealis* "; she does not use words but rather expresses herself through " *symbolical* tunes on the bagpipe "; hers is a " predetermination to eat this big Universe as her oyster or her egg "; Leigh Hunt is a " talking nightingale "; Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale, is not pleasing as she " hops the twig " in her farewell concert ; R. M. Milnes " is really a pretty little robin-redbreast of a man "; Samuel Rogers has a " toothless horse-shoe mouth drawn up to the very nose "; and Southey, whose " grand bodily [characteristic] is leanness and long legs ", is when he rises " like a lean pair of tongs ".

The letters contain hundreds of metaphors such as these, both in the portraits and in other contexts. Perhaps they are the sugar-plums set in them to reward those naively confident and venturesome souls who undertake such a difficult and complex task as collecting and ordering Carlyle's letters.

The correspondence with John Forster lends itself admirably to our purpose when we attempt to select one unified group of letters with which to illustrate Carlyle's various characteristics. All except a very few of these letters in the National Library of Scotland are today preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington. They have been accessible to scholars, in accordance with the terms of Forster's will, ever since his death in 1876. They contain, counting the letters at Edinburgh, 242 letters from Carlyle and, unfortunately, only four from Forster. Although so few of Forster's letters to Carlyle have been found, Carlyle's letters reflect the other side of the correspondence with comparatively little obscurity.

Although this correspondence has been easily accessible for a long time, it has never been as such thoroughly studied. Froude ignored it when he wrote Carlyle's life. Alexander Carlyle printed a few letters from it in *New Letters of Thomas Carlyle* (1904). D. A. Wilson examined it carefully and drew illustrative materials, chiefly extracts, from it. Others who have found it valuable as a source of materials include Lawrence and Elisabeth Hanson in their *Necessary Evil: The Life of Jane Welsh Carlyle*

(1952), Edgar Johnson in his *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* (1952), and R. H. Super in his *Walter Savage Landor: A Biography* (1954).

The nearest approach to an examination and analysis of this correspondence for the sake of itself was that made by Francis Espinasse when he was preparing to write his extremely valuable and readable *Literary Recollections and Sketches* (1893). Delighted with the riches which he thus discovered, he wrote :

A very interesting memorial of their [Carlyle and Forster's] friendship lies all but unknown, and, so far as I am aware, thoroughly inspected by no one save myself, in the manuscript and other matter relating to Carlyle bequeathed, with a great many other valuable things, a fine library among them, by John Forster to the South Kensington Museum. The Carlyliana of the collection include a long series of letters written to Forster by Carlyle, covering a period of some forty years, from the beginning of their acquaintance to the end, only with Forster's death, of what became their friendship. With the exception of his letters to his own family there are none so interesting as these of Carlyle to Forster, and a well-edited selection from them would be an extremely valuable contribution to Carlyle's biography. . . . As relatives and old friends sank one after another into the grave Carlyle clung more and more to Forster, his ally of forty years, who remained indefatigable in his attentions. . . . Those later letters of his to Forster abound in records of his varying moods, some of them mournful enough, but they are seldom marked by the bitterness which disfigures his *Journal* and still more his *Reminiscences*, and there is often a beautiful pathos in his wail not merely over himself, but over friends departing and departed, especially Dickens.

Espinasse, himself one of Carlyle's younger disciples, was a skilful reporter whose opinions on the subject were valuable.

The correspondence begins with Carlyle's letter dated 17 January 1839 and ends with his letter of 6 December 1875. About forty of the letters are brief notes without dates, often merely accepting or declining invitations to dinner or to the theatre. Most of the letters are written from Carlyle's home in Chelsea to one of Forster's homes, 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields, 46 Montagu Square, or Palace-Gate House. One may reflect with some misgivings concerning the efficacy of science to promote literature that if London had then had telephones most of Carlyle's letters to Forster would not have been written.

What was there about Forster in 1839 and 1840 that drew Carlyle to him and provided a foundation for the friendship? Forster was about seventeen years younger : he had been born

at Newcastle on 2 April 1812. He had been well educated, particularly in law, largely through the generosity of an uncle. His lifelong interest in the theatre, to which Carlyle was in the main indifferent, began in early childhood. He had also determined at an early age to cultivate the love of literature. Legend said that for a time he had even been engaged to the famous poetess Letitia Elizabeth Landon. He had been for a time chief critic for the *Examiner* under Fonblanque. And, very important in his relation to Carlyle later, he had almost finished his *Lives of the Statesmen of the Commonwealth*. The last two volumes, dealing with Cromwell, were published in 1839. He had also demonstrated a remarkable talent for friendship—with Leigh Hunt, Charles Lamb (whom Carlyle had met and detested), Dickens, and the relatively unknown Browning. He had been one of the first to recognize the merits of Browning's poetry.

What sort of man was he? Carlyle was repelled at first by what he called his rough, noisy ways and found in him a certain laxity of mind. Of course, Carlyle himself had a somewhat rough exterior and could easily become noisy. In the initial stage of the friendship the men were like two large male lions from time to time roaring at one another and then retreating. Forster's manner, moreover, was decisive, and his countenance stern and authoritative. His delight in the theatre had led him sometimes into dramatic posing in his private activities, it was said in imitation of his friend W. C. Macready; and Lady Bulwer found it easy to make him appear ridiculous as the character "Fuzboz" (the source of Carlyle's nickname for him, "Fuz") in her novel *Cheveley*. On the other hand, Forster was as firm, stable, and substantial as Gibraltar, and underneath his rough exterior were to be found unusual sympathy, tenderness, gentleness, and generosity. The practical side of his mind was highly developed. He knew the world and its ways. He had a good head for business, and his knowledge of law served him well in attending to it. All in all, he was a good fellow, warm-natured and human, who delighted in doing favours for his friends and whose noisy presence could become a comfort.

Three things brought the two men together. One was their common interest in the Civil Wars of the seventeenth century



and in Cromwell. Another was the great interest which Forster took in attending Carlyle's lectures of 1839 and 1840 and reporting on them favourably. Third, and perhaps most important, was their work together in founding the London Library in 1840.

Carlyle's letter of 17 January 1839 mentions both the Prospectus for the library and Forster's *Cromwell*. It lists among others the names of Samuel Rogers, Henry Hallam, Sir James Clarke, and Sir Henry Inglis as supporting the plan. "If we can withal engage you and your resources in our behalf! what might not a right manifesto of your promulgating do." And he adds in another paragraph: "I have just finished your *Cromwell*, and am in zealous search of the foregoing *Lives*." Forster then characteristically gave him the whole set of his *Lives of the Statesmen* and fell in vigorously with the movement to establish the library. When Carlyle was at work on his own *Cromwell* (1845) Forster graciously supplied him with books and other materials. He even yielded on an important question of opinion. After he had maintained in his book that Cromwell was too dictatorial in closing Parliament, he came round to Carlyle's opinion that Cromwell was on all points justified. On his side Carlyle had high praise for Forster's *Stafford* as well as his *Cromwell* at a time when John Sterling and Browning also found *Stafford* a fascinating subject.

Once the friendship was firmly established, it flourished henceforth on a basis of mutual helpfulness and respect, a hale and hearty love of life and literature, and the frank exchange of complaints, advice, compliments, and honest criticism. The letters reflect a manly relationship, with some good-natured jostling of one another. They plan dinners together with their favourite meat, pork chops, "May it please the pigs!" They also plan horseback rides and are bitterly disappointed when one fails to come off. Carlyle rejoices when Forster is happily married and henceforth makes a great ado over Mrs. Forster. He praises Forster's work as editor of the *Examiner* (1847-56), although he never considered him quite as good an editor as Rintoul of the *Spectator*. He showed an active interest in Forster's work as Lunacy Commissioner (1855-61) and in

Forster's books, his *Goldsmith* (1848, enlarged 1854), *Walter Savage Landor* (1869), and *Charles Dickens* (1872, 1873). Forster, on his side, followed the publication of Carlyle's books with enthusiastic approval. He gave him all the help possible while they were being written and the best kind of frank, friendly criticism after they appeared in print. With Mrs. Carlyle, too, Forster was a great favourite. When she died in 1866, while Carlyle was in Scotland, it was Forster who took control of affairs and prevented the coroner's inquest which he knew would cause Carlyle too much pain. Carlyle leaned on Forster's advice heavily in June 1867 when he drew up the bequest giving Craigenputtoch to the University of Edinburgh.

The causes for which they fought together, usually winning, did much to increase the strength of their friendship. Not merely that of founding the London Library, but the fight for a new Copyright Bill to lengthen the period in which an author could enjoy all rights relating to his books, the collection of a fund for the relief of Burns's sister, the Widow Begg, the defeat of Gladstone's effort in 1852 to place a man on the staff of the London Library whom the two considered poorly qualified, and the effort to raise money for Miss Lowe, Dr. Samuel Johnson's god-daughter, and for her sister.

Carlyle's letters to Forster express his opinions with characteristic force and intensity. In the early 1840's he denounces George Sand and her school of literature.

The French literature of G. Sand and Co., which many people told me was a new-birth, I found to be a detestable putrefaction—new life of nothing but maggots and blue-bottles.

Just as detestable to him was the Irish leader Daniel O'Connell, "the big blustering blarneying *Demagogos* of an O'". Carlyle's distrust of democracy is expressed many times throughout the letters. He leaves no doubt about his low opinion of Macaulay's *History of England* as it began to appear in the late 1840s :

I did not hope *very* much of Macaulay's History ; and even under these terms I was disappointed. Flat, flat, without a ray of *genius* from beginning to end ; all dead, as the Gospel of Holland House ; and as for story, Lord bless your honour, there is no story, and the Devil himself couldn't make one. Stuart Kings and their fetid *canaille*, what story is in them, or ever can be ? Oblivion,

zero, and eternal Silence, that is *their* story,—appointed for them from the foundations of the world. Let Macaulay sell his twenty editions, therefore; for that is all he will ever get by the job.

He was equally vehement in his disapproval of *The Nemesis of Faith* (1849) by his future disciple and biographer J. A. Froude :

Froude's Book is not, except for wretched people in white neckcloths . . . worth its paper and ink. What on Earth is the use of a wretched mortal's vomiting up all his interior crudities, dubitations, and spiritual agonizing belly-aches, into the view of the Public, and howling tragically, "See," . . . Epictetus's sheep, *intending* at least to grow good wool, was a gentleman in comparison.

In a much later letter, 26 October 1874, he was fully as severe in criticizing J. S. Mill's views on religion :

John Mill's Book on what he calls Religion is come, but I have already seen what you saw in the Newspaper and it has completely satisfied me that probably never since the world began was there heard any feebler or more futile gasp of utterance on that subject, comparable to the last *mew* of a drowning kitten; worthy of being forgotten by all creatures. Poor M's notion of a proper God Almighty would be that of an indulgent Nurse, male or female, giving his children perpetual lollipops by way of building them up to heroic action in this world of his.

But Carlyle could praise as well as denounce. For instance, in the late 1840's he had come to have great admiration for Sir Robert Peel and faith in his political leadership. When, in July 1850, news came that Peel had died after being thrown from his horse, Carlyle was very much shocked and expressed his feelings in a letter to Forster :

Poor Sir Robert,—alas, alas. No public event, for many years, or ever in my life, has seemed to me more tragical. I will not quarrel with you now for defending even Russell: God only knows what course things now will take, if there be not below decks wisdom of which one sees no symptoms above.

Emerson, too, he loved and could approve, with important reservations. The friendship with Emerson Carlyle shared with Forster, Sterling, Milnes, and other British friends. When Carlyle visited Stonehenge with Emerson in July 1848, he duly kept Forster and others informed. Emerson published his account of the experience in *English Traits*.

In at least one important instance, Carlyle's letters to Forster show how his long-established, stubborn opinions could be conquered. His taste in music had confined itself almost

entirely to the simple Scotch tunes which he had sung as a boy and which Mrs. Carlyle sometimes played for him on the piano. When Chopin was in England in the summer and autumn of 1848 and Mrs. Carlyle and others were enthusiastically promoting a concert which he was to give, Carlyle reluctantly and with some misgivings yielded to their request that he seek Forster's support for the enterprise and wrote :

I myself know nothing of the famed M. Chopin ; but here is a criticism upon some performance of his, and two very excellent friends of mine (much interested in Chopin, whom they consider a man of great modesty and moral worth as well as talent) are very anxious to see it in some Newspaper, next Sunday,—in the Examiner, before all other Newspapers. I have undertaken to introduce it to you ;—and for the rest, only that you will decide *honestly*, Yes or No, as your real judgment on the case is.

The writer of it I am also (under seal of secrecy) permitted, on my suggestion, to name to you : the Reverend A. Scott ; a very superior man, and very well known to me this long while.

Soon after, however, he saw Chopin, heard him play, and learned something of his story. He dispatched another note to Forster :

This is to go along with the continuation of the Critique on M. Chopin, by the same hand, brought to me by the same parties. Pray insert it. I myself have since seen Chopin ; and can testify that he is really a wonderful Musician, and what is far better, a truly delicate, interesting and excellent looking character. Sensitive, alas, tremulous as aspen-leaves, and evidently familiar enough with suffering,—poor Chopin.

When Carlyle was at Amesbury, with Emerson on 7 July 1848, just after visiting Stonehenge, he wrote to inquire of his wife : “ I wonder how your Chopin prospered ; how your concert tickets etc. ! ” The fact that his surrender to Chopin was complete is confirmed by a letter to the Reverend Alexander Scott, 5 August 1848 :

If you see M. Chopin, pray offer him my hearty regards. I hope we shall get some language to speak in by and by, and then get into more plentiful communication : an excellent, gentle, much-suffering human soul, as I can at once see without language.

In the late summer and early autumn Chopin gave concerts at Manchester, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. Jane Carlyle wrote in glowing terms about him to her old friend Jane Stirling of

Edinburgh, who with the help of her friends saw that the composer was royally entertained. But Chopin was ill and depressed nearly all the time that he was in Great Britain. In January 1849 he fled back to France, and in October he died. The Carlyles and their friend Forster could at least have the satisfaction of knowing that they had been kind to him when he was in their country.

Scattered through Carlyle's letters to Forster are many such glimpses of well-known contemporaries, with interesting comments upon them. The names of Froude, Mill, C. G. Duffy, Browning, Tennyson, Macaulay, Emerson, Landor, Milnes, Fitzgerald, and Dickens, who were friends of both men, appear many times.

The most interesting passage concerning Browning is that written 17 August 1861, after news had come that Mrs. Browning was dead :

I return Browning's Letter ; which we have read, naturally, with great interest. The poor Lady seems to have passed away in a state of perfect peace, unconscious altogether of what was coming ; the mildest end that could have been provided to a gentle Human Life. Which is a great consolation to survivors in their sorrow.—I know not whether Browning has yet come to you ; I partly expected or hoped to see him here ; but had no right either,—not having written, tho' I did not want for matter, or even for intention, but only for a few minutes of composure ; which you know are seldom if ever mine, in these sad months and years. Tell him from me to gird himself together out of these [two words uncertain] of the Past (as indeed I see he is manfully doing) ;—and that I expect a *new epoch* for *him*, in regard to his own work in this world, now that he is coming back to England at last ; and that, in my poor opinion, which I have never changed, a noble victory lies ahead for him, if he stand to it while time yet is. This is my fixed thought ; and often my greatest sorrow over the "woes of Italy" has been that a soul like R. B.'s was kept weltering, in a *hobbled* condition, amid such a mass of thrums and hopeless cobwebs. Assure him of my deep sympathy and true regard, at any rate.

Carlyle's relation to Landor was complex. Each man could find something to admire in the other, but Landor found less than Carlyle did. Despite Carlyle's pleasant visit to Landor at Bath in July 1850, and Landor's later gift to Carlyle of a portrait of David Hume by Allan Ramsay, Carlyle never quite succeeded in breaking down the old man's reservations. Landor is reported to have said from time to time that Carlyle's *French Revolution* was a wicked book and that he had worn out one volume tossing

it on the floor at startling passages ; that Carlyle's *Frederick the Great* convinced him that he wrote two dead languages—Latin and English ; that Carlyle was “ a vile writer, worse than Bulwer ” ; and that Carlyle could make a few ideas go farther than any man he had ever known. Carlyle, on his side, was critical of this “ honorable, angry-tempered old literary gentleman ”, particularly of his laugh—“ a dry sharp laugh not of sport but of mockery ”, and yet he was in the main generous to the “ proud and high old man ”. The following passage from his letter of 5 April [1856] to Forster, Landor's future biographer, may fairly represent him here :

Pray put into *The Examiner*, if you have not done so this week, a Sentence of Landor's about our thrice-detestable English word “ pluck ” (pah ! viler word was never coined by dogs). Landor's utterance is in the last *Fraser* ; and did my heart good. See the first of those two “ Imaginary Conversations ” ; which really is as good as anything I ever saw from Landor. Do you think the grand old Pagan wrote that Piece just now ? The sound of it is like the ring of Roman swords on the helmets of Barbarians. An unsubduable old Roman ! Also make my loyal respects to him the first time you write.

Carlyle's references to Tennyson are much fuller in some of his other letters than in those to Forster. His famous descriptions of Tennyson the tobacco-smoker have been quoted many times. A particularly interesting series of letters is that describing Tennyson and his bride on their honeymoon, October 1850, when Carlyle encountered them at Monk Coniston, Ambleside. But the passages on Tennyson yielded by the letters to Forster are not altogether without value and interest :

[21 March 1849]

Alfred, I think, has left his umbrella here ; tell the oblivious Son of Apollo that comfortable truth.

1 June (?) [1855]

If Alfred do come to you, remind him that there is an old inhabitant living here, whom he ought not to have been so long without seeing.

2 January 1856

[From The Grange, one of the Ashburtons' country houses] : The agreeablest phenomenon at present is Alfred Tennyson, who came two days ago and is still to hold out a little while. He has a big mustache carefully cultivated, and with his new wide-awake looks flourishing. Good company to smoke with in the Conservatory of the place,—tho' he often loses his pipe :—more power to him.

17 September 1875

[From Keston Lodge, Beckenham, after the publication of Tennyson's play *Queen Mary*]: Alfred Tennyson's, so-called, Shakespearian Tragedy I had read before leaving home. With little *disappointment*, but with a dismal inclination to exclaim, Scene after scene, "Did you ever?"

Particularly full and significant in this correspondence, as one might expect, are Carlyle's comments on Dickens and on Forster's biography of the great novelist. Carlyle's delight in Dickens, the author and the man, though never uncritical, was almost as great as Forster's. It may be remembered that Dickens dedicated *Hard Times* (1854) to Carlyle and that *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) owed much to Carlyle's *French Revolution* and to materials which Carlyle sent to his friend. The following excerpts from Carlyle's letters to Forster give the story of Carlyle's relation to Dickens in its essentials:

[c. June, 1842]

I am very glad of Dickens's word: a happy voyage home [from America], to one of the cheeriest truest-hearted we have under the Sun at present.

15 July 1842

Dickens is come home, I observe. Congratulate him from me, and say I got his Circular, and will attend to it.

[c. May, 1843]

The last *Chuzzlewit* on Yankeedoodledodom is capital. We read it here with loud assent, loud cachinnatory approval! You may tell Dickens if you like.

6 June 1844

I truly love Dickens; and discern in the inner man of him a tone of real Music, which struggles to express itself as it may, in these bewildered stupefied and indeed very empty and distracted days,—better or worse! This, which makes him in my estimation one of a thousand, I could with great joy and freedom testify to all persons, to himself first of all, in any good way.

12 December 1846

*Dombey* we have; and almost nothing other in that department.—An Archdeacon, with his own venerable lips, repeated to me, the other night, a strange profane story: of a solemn Clergyman who had been administering ghostly consolation to a sick person (several years ago); having finished, satisfactorily as he thought, and got out of the room, he heard the sick person ejaculate: "Well, thank God, *Pickwick* will be out in ten days any way!"

[1848]

I will certainly come on Tuesday. . . . Why not get Dickens too? Emerson wishes much to see him; and I also, much oftener than falls to my lot.

17 April 1851

Poor Dickens and Mrs. Dickens ! I am heartily sorry for them.

26 October 1859

When you go to Dickens, our best regards. Tale of Two Cities is wonderful !

[2 March 1868]

I think wholly with Dickens, both as to Nigger America, & President Johnson, magnanimous Taylor & Breeches Maker.

[c. 11 June 1870]

I am profoundly sorry for *you*, and indeed for myself and for us all. It is an event world-wide ; a *unique* of Talents suddenly extinct ; and has " eclipsed " (we too may say) [as Johnson had said when Garrick died]) " the harmless gaiety of Nations." No death since 1866 has fallen on me with such a stroke ; no Literary Man's hitherto ever did. The good, the gentle, ever friendly noble Dickens,—every inch of him an Honest Man !

I had thought to attend the Funeral (this one Funeral of its kind) ; but now I suppose it will be impossible for me in my present feeble condition.—God be with you all, you at Gad's Hill in these sad hours.

22 July 1870

That " Dickens sale " made even the Newspapers beautiful to me and was surely a most successful and well-managed thing. May the second at Gads Hill be equally so,—for the sake of those poor bereaved ones whom it will benefit, tho' to Him it is of no account thro' all Eternity now. How strange, how sad, and full of mystery and solemnity, to think of our bright high-gifted, ever-friendly Dickens, lying there in his silent final rest !

26 August 1870

I have heard nothing from you ; and various things . . . have come and gone on which I am all in the dark. The sale and settlements at Gads Hill, for example,—this enormous War, filling all the Newspapers to overflow, has cut me off from any details about that ; about which you were so interested, and I withal. Poor loved Dickens, how sad and strange to think that we shall never see his blithe face more. One other No. of that *Edwin Drood*, and then no more, no more forever ! The figure of him, with a strange impressiveness in it, often visits me, among the Shadows of my other Loved Ones who are gone. All vanished, gone ;—yet, of a surety, all with God, even as we are.

23 October 1870

[Forster to Carlyle :] I am at intervals turning to the inexpressibly sorrowful task . . . over poor Dickens's letters. Whether anything will come of it I do not know. Will speak later of it.

22 November 1872

Like all mankind, I have been reading your Life of Dickens, which came to me correctly, according to programme, and has gone finally to Dumfries some days ago. It is a work of wonderful diligence, friendliness and clearness of



detail ; gives us as it were, a complete Photograph of Dickens's existence, literary and other ; everything is said too with perfect neatness graceful precision and propriety : some complain that there is an *over*-minuteness of detail ; but Norton said well of it in my hearing, " That probably you wished to leave nothing for the greediest cormorant of a Hotten [?] or other volunteer Biographer to pick up after you had done." Perhaps in the third Vol. you will gather yourself more into epochs, and direct your chief force of detail in making visual the *last* American voyage, which has to me always so tragical a character ; and stands in such strange and mournful contrast to the First, and to its own external splendour of colouring, Ah me, Ah me !

16 February 1874

I am happy to say, as I can with perfect sincerity, that I have read your third volume of *Dickens* with continued interest and pleasure—and with a glad surprise, moreover, which heightens all these feelings. Surprise I say, for the narrative flows with limpid clearness, soft harmony, perfection of phrase and idea ; not a trace in it anywhere of the horrid state of pain in which I too well know you to have been all the while.

This Third Volume throws a new light and character to me over the Work at large. I incline to consider this Biography as taking rank, in essential respects, parallel to Boswell himself, though on widely different grounds. Boswell, by those genial abridgments and vivid face to face pictures of Johnson's thoughts, conversational ways and modes of appearance among his fellow-creatures, has given, as you often hear me say, such a delineation of a man's existence as was never given by another man. By quite different resources, by those sparkling, clear and sunny utterances of Dickens's own (bits of *auto*-biography unrivalled in clearness and credibility) which were at your disposal and have been intercalated every now and then, you have given to every intelligent eye the power of looking down to the very bottom of Dickens's mode of existing in this world ; and I say have performed a feat which, except in Boswell, the unique, I know not where to parallel. So long as Dickens is interesting to his fellow-men, here will be seen, face to face, what Dickens's manner of existing was ; his steady practicality, withal ; the singularly solid business talent he continually had ; and deeper than all, if one had the eye to see deep enough, dark, fateful silent elements, tragical to look upon, and hiding amid dazzling radiances as of the sun, the elements of death itself. Those two American Journeys especially transcend in tragic interest to a thinking reader most things one has seen in writing.

On the whole, therefore, I declare you to have done right well, my Friend ; and my first and last work about the Book is, *Euge, euge*.

3 July 1874

I was greatly vexed to have missed you on Tuesday ; I intended fully both that day and the day before to have been at your house myself, but both days was driven aside by interruptions, and here was the last chance missed, and not to return for at least a week. I had to thank you for that fine Gift of the Dickens in noble green morocco (a most munificent and ornamental superfluity) ; and still more especially I wanted to ascertain a little for myself how you really were and what your prospects in the improving weather. Pray send me word in regard to this.

Forster died on 1 February 1876, five years before Carlyle's own death. Carlyle's commentary on Dickens becomes richly human and impressive indeed when we add to the foregoing excerpts numerous relevant passages from Carlyle's other letters and books. The charm of ripe friendship, reflected in some of the passages above, with its suggestion of an intimacy which was mellow and beautiful, is cast like a golden light over some of the other letters belonging to the old age of the two friends. It appears as a peculiar illumination in Carlyle's letters of 1866 written soon after his wife's death; the letter of 22 July 1870 written from Craigenputtoch and describing his feelings as he revisited the place, now a holy one for him, which he and Jane had left in 1834; and the letter which he wrote on his seventy-sixth birthday.

The wise and discerning Emerson wrote to Carlyle on 30 October 1840 :

I shall be glad if you will draw Cromwell, though if I should choose it would be Carlyle. You will not feel that you have done your work until those devouring eyes and that portraying hand have achieved England in the Nineteenth Century.

It was partly in response to this suggestion that Carlyle soon after wrote *Past and Present*, one of his books most alive today. His *Life of Sterling* and *Reminiscences* add much to the picture. But Carlyle's magnificent portrait of the nineteenth century extended itself far beyond the limits of these books and some day, when all his letters have been brought together and made accessible, we shall be able to examine it in all its fullness, depth and scope.