

CARLYLE'S LETTERS TO RUSKIN: A FINDING LIST WITH SOME UNPUBLISHED LETTERS AND COMMENTS ¹

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JUST when, where, and how Carlyle and Ruskin first met has been very difficult to determine.² Ruskin read *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, a book which was to influence him profoundly throughout the rest of his life, at Chamonix in the late summer of 1842.³ The next year he read *Past and Present*, which probably made an even deeper impression.⁴ *Cromwell* (1845) he certainly must have read eagerly soon after its publication. We know that he was a devoted and approving reader of the highly controversial *Latter-Day Pamphlets* when they appeared in 1850.⁵ But

¹ My purpose here is to examine Carlyle's letters to Ruskin and to look at Ruskin through Carlyle's eyes; in a later study I hope to examine Ruskin's letters to Carlyle and to look at Carlyle through Ruskin's eyes. For help in dealing with textual problems I am indebted to Dr. Frank Taylor, Keeper of Manuscripts, The John Rylands Library; Mr. J. S. Ritchie, Manuscript Department, National Library of Scotland; Mr. Thomas M. Simkins, Jr., Curator of the Rare Book Room, Duke University Library; and Mr. Marvin Singleton, my research assistant. I also wish to thank Professor Edward Robertson, Librarian, The John Rylands Library; Mr. Robert F. Metzdorf, Curator of Manuscripts, Yale University Library; Miss Carolyn E. Jakeman and Miss Alix Hawkins of the Houghton Library, Harvard University; and Mrs. Henrietta Strong, The Carlyle House, Chelsea, for their co-operation and kindness.

² The best guess which I can make is that they met at a Rogers breakfast or one of John Forster's dinners in April or May of 1850. See Derrick Leon, *Ruskin the Great Victorian* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949), p. 134; John Ruskin, *Works*, ed. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn (London: George Allen; New York: Longmans, Green, 1909), ix, p. xxxi; and E. T. Cook, *The Life of John Ruskin* (London: George Allen, 1912), i. 283.

³ Ruskin, *Works*, iii, p. xxiv; Joan Evans, *John Ruskin* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954), pp. 83, 422.

⁴ See Ruskin's letters to George Richmond, February 1881, and 20 May 1881. *Works*, xxxvii, 341, 36.

⁵ Evans, p. 180. *Sartor Resartus*, too, Ruskin admired greatly and read many times.

had he, in the meantime, met Carlyle and begun to form a friendship with him?

When the young Duke of Weimar called on Carlyle at Chelsea in late June 1847, he saw an engraving by Dürer of the Elector Frederick the Wise which, according to Carlyle's nephew and editor Alexander Carlyle, had been given to him by John Ruskin.¹ Cook and Wedderburn, in their magnificent edition of Ruskin's *Works*, place the beginning of the friendship between Ruskin and Carlyle in the winter of 1849-50.² The first actual glimpse that we have of the two men together, however, despite circumstantial evidence suggesting earlier meetings, dates in early July 1850. On 6 July John Welsh, son of Mrs. Carlyle's Uncle George, wrote in his journal that he had recently seen Ruskin and his pretty wife at the Carlyle's and that Ruskin had tried hard to draw out Carlyle's views on religion.³ On 18 December 1850 Carlyle himself wrote to his brother John: "[We had here recently] Ruskin and Wife, of the *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, a small but rather dainty dilettante soul, of the Scotch-Cockney breed."⁴ Ruskin's diaries do not reveal a meeting earlier than the summer of 1850. The first letter from Carlyle to Ruskin that I have found dates after 1850.

Of the thirty-six letters dealt with below, nineteen are published here for the first time. Eighteen of the nineteen were written by Thomas Carlyle and one by Jane Welsh Carlyle; five of those by Carlyle are addressed to Ruskin's father, John James Ruskin. Nine of the original letters among the nineteen are in the Yale University Library, eight in the John Rylands Library, and two in the National Library of Scotland. Yale has the original of another letter, listed below, which has been published previously. The list of thirty-six letters includes two of which I have found traces but not the whereabouts of the originals.

¹ D. A. Wilson, *Life of Carlyle*, 6 vols. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1923-34), iii. 383.

² ix, p. xxxi.

³ Leonard Huxley, ed., "Letters from Jane Welsh Carlyle", *Cornhill Magazine*, n.s. lxi (November 1926), 629.

⁴ From the original letter in the National Library of Scotland, 513-65.

Letter 1. Chelsea, 9 March 1851. Published.¹ Praises *The Stones of Venice* (Vol. I) and *Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds*.

Between Letter 1 and Letter 2 lies a gap of almost four years, suggesting that other letters may have been written in this period which have not been found. Certainly the Carlyles were taking an active interest in the Ruskins and their somewhat turbulent affairs. On 12 August 1852 Carlyle in Scotland wrote to Lady Airlie that a letter from Jane had contained a rumor of two robberies on the Continent: Thackeray had lost a purse containing £100, and valuable jewels had been stolen from Mrs. Ruskin in Venice, stolen, in Carlyle's words, from "pretty Mrs. Ruskin, one of the daintiest Scotchwomen married to a 'Prince of Criticism', and I doubt not valuable jewels, for they are rich and she is bright and gay." The newspapers, he adds, are mischievously heading the story "The Stones of Venice".² Both Carlyles were naturally interested when the Ruskin marriage was annulled in July 1854.³

Letter 2. Original in the John Rylands Library, English MS. 1191/1. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 23 Jan^y 1855

Dear Ruskin,

It has been a thousand times a sorrow in my thoughts that I have not seen you all this time; and the worse as I partly had to give myself the blame of it. I got your sumptuous and excellent Gift (Stones of Venice II and III to add to Vol. I); and never had the grace to utter one word of acknowledgement (I do suspect and believe) manifold thoughts and emotions to that effect as I necessarily had! Sinner that I am,—heavyladen bewildered sinner; not willing one, no;—whom, in your goodness, and candour of merciful judgement, you cannot but forgive!—

The truth is, I have been eclipsed into nearly utter darkness this long while, by Prussian dust and other sore [?] sufferings hard and tender; and have done very little except diligently hold my peace, in hope of better days,—wh^h in some matters takes a good deal of doing.

If you will really come and see me any evening or day (especially after half-past 3,—or otherwise giving warning before), it will be a chosen mercy to me, I

¹ In W. G. Collingwood, *The Life and Work of John Ruskin* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1894), i. 151-2. (References to Collingwood below are to this edition unless otherwise indicated.)

² From the unpublished original in the Houghton Library, Harvard.

³ The best comment is that of Mrs. Carlyle in her letter to Dr. John Carlyle, 9 May 1854. *New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, ed. A. Carlyle (London and New York: John Lane, 1903), pp. 76-7.

can answer you. The view of a sincere human soul, even without thought in it, is like music to me ; how much more if there is an opulence of human thoughts and cheery ingenuities and socialities in it !

We have tea every ev^g (hardly ever out) about half past 7. If I had a horse,—nay if I had not a lame foot at present (thanks to the genus Sutor citra crepidam, with quack Sutor powerless to make a real shoe !) I w^d come to Denmark Hill myself, in a hurry, and seek you out.—Manage to come, speedily, if you will do me a most welcome kindness.

Yours truly
T. Carlyle

Carlyle's next letter, written just a few months later, reflects his disapproval of the Crimean War. He favoured the Russians and disliked the Turks.

Letter 3. Original in the John Rylands Library, English MS. 1191/2. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 23 May 1855

Dear Ruskin,

There is clearly nothing to be made of that Grampus Wake.¹ The leather jerkin of George Fox has buttoned him up from the sight of Sun and Moon. We (that is, you) fairly offered him human help, if he would have had it.

I am very sorry to hear of your coughing and continued sickliness. Be patient, quiet ;—this is a monition to you to take more time ! My impression generally has been that you go too fast ; in many senses, this ;—and that you will have to learn the other side of the business too,—what infinite profit there occasionally is in sitting absolutely down (were it even in a desperate mood, on hest of inexorable necessity), and doing nothing. This is very true ; and I hope you will learn to believe it :—at all events, act upon it at present, on trust ; and be loyal to the idle Summer Air, till that has set you on your feet again.²

Some afternoon, were you once home, you must come out hither, and take me to your place ; I will wander about with you till night ; and not fail to make my way back on my own resources. That, I suppose might answer ? To myself it would be a pleasant half holiday ; a pause in the sandy wilderness on reaching some convenient stopping-place. Keep it in your eye.

¹ This seems to be a reference to Henry T. Wake, an engraver at the East and West Indies Docks, with whom both Carlyle and Ruskin corresponded (a letter to him of 27 April 1857 with the name on the envelope written by Carlyle and the address written by Ruskin is preserved at the Carlyle House, Chelsea). In Carlyle's five other letters to him which I have seen I find no hint of his being a Quaker or of any difficulty which would have caused Carlyle to call him a Grampus (fish of the dolphin family). He designed Carlyle's bookplate in the autumn of 1853.

² A favourite doctrine with Carlyle, to be considered along with his dynamic doctrine of work. He gave John Sterling the same advice in the years before his death.

My Prussian affairs are as bad almost as Balaklava ; and indeed resemble that notable Enterprise of the Turk War in several respects,—in this especially, that I had no business at all to concern myself in such an adventure, with such associates ; and that a good result to it does not seem (for most part) so much as possible ! “ The longer you look at it,” as Sir John Burgoyne says, “ the less you see your way through it.” Really my own experience ought to teach me pity and some touches of forgiveness towards the poor Noodles who are professing to lead armies out there, and publishing the shame of England, at home and abroad, in too sad a manner ! They too are willing to die mutely in the mud, and so expiate their Noodlism in some small degree. A thing worth being laid to heart, by certain others of us !—

Don't quarrel with Tunbridge ! I remember it as a place of airy expanses and respectable chalk-hills ; where at least the winds blow free about one. Take thankfully what it offers ; and let us see you home again, soon, and in sound worthy condition.

Yours ever truly,
T. Carlyle

The genuine pleasure which Carlyle found in Ruskin's company is shown in a letter written a little over a month later. This letter also gives interesting details about Carlyle's daily routine.

Letter 4. Original in the John Rylands Library, English MS. 1191/3. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 29 June 1855

Dear Ruskin,

The wife when consulted says Thursday or Wednesday ; let it therefore be Wednesday or Thursday, at your discretion, next week.

Of the times etc. I say nothing ; only put down, by way of guidepost, on my side of the Border, the following facts :

1. Work ceases with me about 3-1/2 in the afternoon, so that if left till towards that time, an adventure does not cost me anything ;—tho' I am willing to spend, too, on a good adventure.

2. I taste no food between breakfast and dinner ; dine, with convenience (provided it be with simplicity, on something like a mutton chop), at any hour between 5-1/2 and 7-1/2.

3. We should like to be home not later than 11 ; and are capable of shifting easily in that particular.

Arrange all these things as seems good on your side of the Border ; and please send us a line to say how they are settled,—I mean what the hour of your appearance here is.

[Signature cut out]

Carlyle's letter to his brother John of 27 November 1855 contains both an appraisal of Ruskin and hearsay about the former Mrs. Ruskin :

Ruskin was here the other night :—a bottle of beautiful soda-water,—something like Rait ¹ of old times, only with an intellect of tenfold vivacity. He is very pleasant company now and then. A singular element,—very curious to look upon,—in the present puddle of the intellectual artistic so-called “ world ” in these parts at this date. His wife, I hear, with her new Husband, is or was at William Stirling's, enjoying the hospitalities of Keir,—more power to them. Ruskin is as cheerful as if there had been no marriage invented among mankind.²

Carlyle's next letter to Ruskin concerns a fund which the two men, with Macaulay, John Forster, Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, and others, were raising by subscription in order to rescue from poverty two old ladies, the Misses Lowe, one of whom was the goddaughter of Dr. Samuel Johnson, always a hero of literature to Carlyle. Ruskin had agreed to make an annual gift in addition to the income from the subscription fund.

Letter 5. Original in the National Library of Scotland, 1796/93. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 6 December 1855

Dear Ruskin,

Many thanks. This is abundantly all that could be wished,—for certain, all that I ever did wish,—and I think it must satisfy Forster himself; to whom I now send your announcement, with charge to make it known in the way most advantageous and least offensive. And may the Heavens reward you (as I have no doubt they will, in their own fashion) for your piety to the Manes of Turner, and compassion for the straits of those old women.

For the rest you must undertake the bestowal of your Annual Bounty yourself: the sole reward I claim in reference to these poor Misses Lowe is that, after this unblest bother is once all down, I may never in this world or the next hear more of them;—that is a reward I cannot dispense with, nor must you grudge it me! God knows I had no need of new weight thrown upon my poor back just at present; and I have often asked myself, why in the devil's name I, of all mortals, got connected with such a thing? I will take better heed another time!—

With regard to Miss Erdman,³ and the £10 towards washing⁴ purposes (for

¹ Unidentified by Froude or Wilson. The first letter of the name looks like *R* in the manuscript, but surely this is Willian Tait, the Edinburgh bookseller, who encouraged Carlyle in the 1820s. “Tait, the bookseller, is loud in his kind anticipations of the grand things that are in store for me.” Carlyle's letter to his brother Alexander, 5 December 1820, in J. A. Froude, *Thomas Carlyle* (London: Longmans, Green, 1882, 1884), i. 93.

² Quoted from the original letter in the National Library of Scotland, 516/20. The judgment of the Carlyles on the Ruskins at the time of the annulment was not as severe and puritanical as it has sometimes been represented as being.

³ Who appears to have acted as custodian of the funds at Deptford, where the Lowes lived.

⁴ The London subscribers to the fund had received reports that the living quarters of the Lowes badly needed cleaning.

now I see it must have referred to that), there came to me a distracted scratch of writing from the elder Lowe some time since, very high and defiant of the said Erdman, but otherwise quite Sybilline and unintelligible,—for the rest, of no worth whatever :—I have looked for it this morning to read ; but I suppose it is gone into the fire. Whither may all nonsense soon go. Amen, Amen !—

I am longing for your Book, the feeling you have about matters is altogether my own ; and you have not yet hacked your sword blunt is striking at the stony head of Human Stupidity, but rush in upon it as if it were cleavable or conquerable,—more power to your elbow. It is and will be incumbent . . . [part of letter cut away] . . . our whole soul, till we die ; . . . [part of letter cut away] . . . that it cannot be cleft, but is unconquerable by the very gods (according to Schiller), and lasts till the Day of Judgement at soonest.

We go into Hampshire for a month (17th Dec^r, that is, Monday week), and return on the 17th Jan^y; observe these dates and remember that you are due here,—payable the sooner the better.

I find a Misses—Lowe annuity of £25 will come rather cheaper than was expected ; in spite of the weather [other ?] symptoms, we can still hope to achieve some approximation to that. That, with your five pounds, solves the problem, therefore,—or at least absolves me from it.

[Signature cut away]

When Carlyle received a gift copy of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, volume three, he wrote the following letter full of praise and encouragement for the author. At the same time he gave his reason for refusing to lecture at the new Working Men's College.

Letter 6. Original in the John Rylands Library, English MS. 1191/4. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 18 Jan^y 1856

Dear Ruskin,

Last night your beautiful Book was handed in to me ; a very handsome welcome indeed on one's return home. I have already galloped extensively up and down over it ; find that it will be excellent reading for me in the coming nights. That is the real Sermon of the season and Epoch ; Sermon " meaning many things," by the most eloquent Preacher I have heard these 20 years, and who does mean wholly what he says. A beautiful enthusiasm is in him, a sharp flashing insight and very potent melody of utterance ; a noble audacity and confidence in Truth's gaining the victory,—much sooner than it will do ! For the odds are terrible against it, in these utterly decadent and indeed quite rotten times. I wish you long life ; and more and more power and opportunity of uttering forth, in tones of sphere-harmony mixed with thunder, these salutary messages to your poor fellow creatures,—whom (including us) may God pity. I also am, for my own particular share of the booty, grateful, as I may well be,—beyond what shall be written at present.

You will do us a real kindness any night you turn your steps hither, the earlier the better, for all manner of reasons. Also if you see the good Mr.

Furnival,¹ say I had his letter, but cannot possibly undertake to "talk," on any terms, to any class of creatures, my usual lodging being about the Center of Chaos (not far from that, just now), which is a very taciturn inarticulate locality.²

We wish you heartily "many good New Years." There are few whom they will suit better. I am always,

Yours with many thanks,
T. Carlyle.

A few months later Carlyle gave Lord Ashburton an appraisal of Ruskin that was considerably more discriminating and reserved.³

The next letter, written more than three years later, deals almost entirely with social matters and Jane's bad health.

Letter 7. Original in the National Library of Scotland, 1796/97. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 19 April 1859

Dear Ruskin,

We are in great misery here: my poor wife, after escaping all winter, has fallen into the worst cold I have ever seen her have; and suffers very much; weak too as an infant,—tho' I strive to flatter myself, not growing worse, but contrariwise. I caught a cold on the same occasion (last paroxysm of July—December weather),—or rather renewed a cold I have always obscurely had since a "bathe in the Baltic" last autumn: but I try to keep it at the staff's end, and do not hithermore allow it to interfere with business. Absolute silence being the rule here just now.—I will come riding out to Denmark Hill, on Thursday (day after tomorrow): and call you over the coals for half an hour, if you will be at home. Near 5 p.m.—no, let us say "4.20 or so", and be away before 5 again. Don't write, unless you have something to object.

That heaving about, and circling among the eddies, is not a pleasant process; but you will (to your astonishment perhaps) have various bouts of this kind in your wide voyage; and they are not unsalutary, still less can be dispensed with, tho' so disagreeable to the natural man.

If the Natural Man is totally at a loss for a career, let him read with attention this American Letter wh^h came this morning;—surely that opens a career talens qualens! As the Letter is & not to be answered, you can burn it for the poor young Lady's sake.⁴

Yours always,
T. Carlyle.

A gift of cigars and the enjoyment of Dürer's pictures are the chief topics discussed in Carlyle's next letter.

¹ F. J. Furnival (1825-1910), philologist and Shakespeare scholar, active with Maurice, Kingsley, and Ruskin in teaching at the new Working Men's College.

² Carlyle was writing his *Frederick the Great* and finding the work extremely difficult and unpleasant.

³ See Wilson, v. 222.

⁴ I cannot identify the sender of this letter, which Ruskin *may* have burned.

Letter 8. Original in the John Rylands Library, English MS. 1191/5. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 15 March 1860

Dear Ruskin,

The door had no sooner closed on you than the maid brought in her Cigar Box,—the third that I have had from that cornucopia of a House : a shame to think of ! This is what may be called cigarring a man for his difficult adventure, as they talk of “ corking ” a Steamer to go thro’ the seas. Truth is, I am not yet half way thro’ the First Box, tho’ I carry something of it daily in my pocket ; and the Horse of himself pauses at the fit places, inviting me to smoke and be thankful. I can only say, and think, you are very good.

The new Dürer is hung up in fine light, and I study to make acquaintance with it before it return home. The invincible grave simple Ritter, industriously riding on his way, with such a load of sorrow wh^b he makes not the least complaint of, pleases me more and more ;—less and less am I pleased with his two detestable companions ; who, I incline to think, lie beyond and below the real domain of Art, tho’ they are very true to Nature too, and attend any man, tragically visible to him, if not to others. The Picture I guess to have no other meaning than that universal symbolical one.—Of the other Dürers which you showed us, the Scarlet Woman, with the flames bursting out, and the universe all going to live rubbish (like a cheese to mites) under her guidance,—is his most vivid in my memory ; but by far the most pleasant there is Sr. Hubert in the primeval woods of Liège, is beautifully sculptured out, he and they, and what they contain for a devout simple heart. Excellent pious Dürer, who made himself an ornament to this world, in his day and generation !—

I wish you were not going off in May to paint pine needles ! Are there not plenty of unpainted needle-woods and beautiful umbrageous creatures nearer home ? “ The finest trees that grow in the Temperate Zone ” stand all about, not far from Denmark Hill, I am told ! Cor inquietum est.

I expect to ride out again, in the interim, some day soon.

Yours most truly,
T. Carlyle.

Letter 9. Chelsea, 29 October 1860. Original in the Yale University Library. Published.¹ This is the well-known letter in which Carlyle in commenting on Ruskin’s *Unto This Last*, which was appearing as essays in the *Cornhill Magazine*, praised him for his attack on “ those unfortunate Dismal-Science people ” in the face of the general hostility to Ruskin which the essays were provoking.

The next letter, written a few weeks later, suggests a plan for a social evening with Ruskin during the Christmas season.

¹ In *English Illustrated Magazine*, ix (November 1891), 105-6 ; by M. H. Goldberg in the *London Times Literary Supplement*, 16 May 1935, p. 313 ; and in *Wilson*, v. 406-7.

Letter 10. Original in the Yale University Library. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 24 December 1860

Dear Ruskin,

I am very sorry I did not write on Saturday, as it was my tho^t to do : but the old groom predicted "a thaw tomorrow," and that there w^d be riding for an unroughened horse. Hence—these unpolite phenomena ! I much regretted my bright Sunday ; but in fact it w^d have been at night,—and, please Heaven, there are others coming.

As y^r carriage horses must have got prepared before this,—the plan will now be that you come across (positively !) one of these silent evenings. No Xmas here ; perfect seclusion,—but great readiness for a visitor of luminous type.

The wife is prisoner ; I too in a sense,—but am to ride to day, and hope to recover some. Yours ever truly

T. Carlyle.

The five letters which follow in a block were all written to Ruskin's father, John James Ruskin (1785-1864), a wealthy wine merchant. Although these are mainly thank-you notes for gifts of brandy, cigars, Ruskin's newly published writings, etc., Letter 12 makes a spirited defence of Ruskin's lecture "Tree Twigs," in order to reassure the father, who knew that many members of the fashionable audience who heard Ruskin give it at the Royal Institution, Albemarle Street, in the spring of 1861 considered it a flat failure.

Letter 11. Original in the Yale University Library. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 27 March 1861

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your new Gift of Brandy : surely you are very kind to take so much trouble about that matter for me. If it do rank at present among my necessaries of life (wh^h unluckily it does in a small way for the time being), I must admit that I am now well provided. I hope to report favourably of this new specimen when we next meet.

The absence of the Junior Mr. Ruskin has of late been frequently commented upon in this house : we request you to despatch him hitherward directly on his return from Cheshire.

With many thanks & regards

Yours sincerely
T. Carlyle.

Letter 12. Original in the John Rylands Library, English MS. 1191/8. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 23 April 1861

Dear Mr. Ruskin,

The wife was not with me on Friday Ev^g last :—but if she had been ? It is a literal fact, I, for my own part, found the Discourse a genial, wholesome, welcome one,—and was very well pleased. A failure as a “Lecture” (if you will), as a Discourse tied all up into sheaves, and able to stuff itself mostly into the space of 60 minutes, filling that and no more ;—failure that way ; but otherwise, I can assure you, quite the reverse of “failure.” It did continue to tear up the subject (by explosion if not otherwise) for one’s behoof ; gave one the liveliest desire to hear that man talk for a month on “New-leaves” ;—and to me individually (tho’ you must not mention it in Albemarle Street) gave, so far as I can calculate, more such satisfaction than any the neatest of the many neat Discourses I have heard in that place. “A failure” from over-opulence (embarras des richesses) : Heaven send us many, very many, of precisely the like kind ! These are facts I can myself bear witness to. I recommend, therefore, that everybody return to “the Arms of Murphy” [pun on Morpheus] as if nothing were wrong at all or had been : indeed it never struck me that the Chief Culprit cared the least ab^t it ; or I sh^d have been distressed for the moment, in one transient particular ; wh^h I was not at all. This is my affidavit ; wh^h I could not have written except to yourself ; but I had something else to write this night for the younger Mr. R. ; & will now append it here ; viz :

That he, the said R. Jun^r is due, and overdue, for weeks back, in this House ; And that we expect to see him within two or three nights,—any night he likes.

The Glasgow Brandy was exquisite,—perfect, so far as I cⁿ judge.

Yours sincerely,
T. Carlyle¹

Letter 13. Original in the Yale University Library. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 29 October 1861

My dear Sir,

You are abundantly kind and obliging. If it please Heaven, I will come to Denmark Hill some day again, and stay dinner ! Sh^d November 17th prove favourable in point of weather,—more especially a certain paltry little “breast-cold” wh^h I have caught, be tolerably shaken off,—Nov^r 17 shall be the day. In the opposite case, I will at least be punctual to give notice the day before. So that if you hear nothing, it is all right.

Yours sincerely,
T. Carlyle.

¹ The lecture was “the kind of failure old Mr. Ruskin had always dreaded for his son. . . . Ruskin had prepared his lecture inadequately and planned it ill ; it was shapeless and over-long.” But the opinion of it which Carlyle gave to his brother John was the same that he gave Ruskin’s father : “I do not recollect to have heard in that place any neatest thing I liked so well as this chaotic one.” Evans, pp. 264-5 ; Ruskin’s *Works*, viii. p. lix.

Letter 14. Original in the Yale University Library. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 14 Nov^h 1861

Dear Mr. Ruskin,

I really am ashamed under your munificences as to cigars ! I was still two Boxes strong ; and here has another come today. All I can say is, you are very kind ; and I return you many thanks the best I have. The Flowers ¹ also are praised as "superlative",—tho' my poor wife is not able to put them in their bottles herself today, as she w^d otherwise have taken a half-holiday in doing. She has caught cold, in these inclemencies of weather ; & keeps her room, and even her bed, all day.

It is a poor return for such kindnesses to say, what has been forcing itself upon me as too probable lately, that I actually must not venture on Sunday. This weather is of such a raging character ; that bosom-friend (in the windpipe) still keeps such hold ; the poor wife is so ill &c &c : in short, I will postpone it till "the Prodigal" (so let us call him in figurative language) returns from his Swiss wanderings ;—and then, I shall be seriously unwell, and things very perverse about me, if I fail ! We had a Letter from Lucerne the other day ; very kind and pleasant ; shadowing out a hermit-life among the Mountains yonder,—solitary affectionate, not without a trace of sadness, but wholesome, diligent, and leading towards good that I foresee. So soon as he returns—!—

Believe me always, Dear Sir,

Yours sincerely,

T. Carlyle.

Letter 15. Original in the Yale University Library. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 30 Nov^r 1861

Dear Mr. Ruskin,

The Publisher has sent me the Book of "Selections" ² as promised ; and it is my constant companion, these evenings, in the few leisure hours I have ;—awaking in me, seriously, the wish that every drawing-room in her Majesty's dominions were provided with a Copy, and able to read it with feelings similar to mine ! It is many a day and year since I met with any Book the spirit of wh^h (to say nothing of its lively felicitous expression) is so accordant with what I reckon

¹ On 13 June 1861 Ruskin wrote to George Allen, his principal assistant in many enterprises : "Let flowers be taken as often as possible to Mrs. Carlyle, and as soon as the strawberries are ripe and weather nice, let Lucy go over to Chelsea and tell Mrs. Carlyle, and try to persuade her to come with Mr. Carlyle to eat strawberries and fresh cream".

"Mrs. Carlyle has been very ill, and if you can all behave so as to get her to come often and sit in the garden, and Mr. Carlyle to come there and smoke after his rides, I shall be much obliged to you all." Ruskin, *Works*, xxxv. 541 n. ; see also xxxvi. 399.

² *Selections from the Writings of John Ruskin* was published by Smith, Elder in 1861.

best & truest.—The idea of the Publisher was surely altogether good ; multitudes of people, who could not get access to the big expensive book will be furnished with this as a kind of manual ; and no ingenuous soul will read any bit of it (at least any bit I have yet fallen in with) whⁿ will not have a tendency to do him good, as well as give him pleasure. The Book is well printed, unusually correct for most part ; the Portrait has a good resemblance a la Richmond :¹ it is altogether a pleasant little companion, and a profitable in these bad times ;—and I am much obliged to you for my individual share in the adventure.

My Wife continues room-fast, sometimes bed-fast (whⁿ she does not easily consent to be) ; but is never yet what we can call very ill. There has been a sad tragedy next door to us (a poor Mr Gilchrist,² a young literary man ; one of his children took Scarlet fever, the mother w^d not send it away, others of them took it ; and within 5 days illness, the Head of the House is himself lying dead of the disorder) ;—this of course has been an agitating circumstance on our side of the wall, and has done my own poor Patient a sensible mischief. I believe y^r last flask of perfect Brandy (let that be y^r Thanks for it) went across to poor Gilchrist as medicine. I do not think a nobler use c^d have been made of it, tho' it proved unavailing.—We had another Letter from Switzerl^d, with nothing but cheery news. Send my best regards when you write. Yours sincerely

T. Carlyle

All the letters which follow are written to John Ruskin.

Letter 16. 30 June 1862. Published.³ Carlyle thanks Ruskin for the first part of *Munera Pulveris*, then coming out in *Fraser's Magazine*, and encourages him further to fight vigorously in the battle against “Macculloch, Mill, and Co.”

Letter 17. Some sentences abstracted by Ruskin are copied into letters to his father, 7 and 11 April 1863, which have been published. Carlyle has seen the last part of *Munera Pulveris* in the April issue of *Fraser's* and continues his praise, “Euge! I tell you I know nothing like it for felicity of expression ; John Mill keeps not closer to this dialectics, and he but with one gift, while here are so many.”⁴

¹ The portrait was by George Richmond, Ruskin's friend.

² Alexander Gilchrist (1824-61), whose *Life of Blake* was published in 1863, and whose widow Anne Gilchrist wrote *Mary Lamb* (1883). See also *The Letters of Anne Gilchrist and Walt Whitman* (1918) and *The Letters of William Michael Rossetti to Anne Gilchrist*, ed. C. Gohdes and P. F. Baum (1934).

³ In the revised, one-volume edition of Collingwood's *Ruskin* (1900), pp. 202-3 ; and Ruskin's *Works*, xvii, p. lxx.

⁴ Ruskin's *Works*, xvii, p. lxx. Carlyle was continuing to bring Ruskin's work to the attention of his friends. Of *Unto This Last* he wrote to Thomas Erskine on 4 August 1862 : “Here is a very bright little book of Ruskin's, which, if you have not already made acquaintance with it, is extremely well worth

Yet it would be an error to assume that even in this fair period all was felicitous in the relation of Carlyle to Ruskin. Old Mrs. Ruskin, still very much alive and with a mind governed entirely by Evangelical religious beliefs, suspected Carlyle as one who might be corrupting or destroying her son's religious faith. And at no time was Carlyle entirely uncritical or without reservations in his thinking about Ruskin. The following passage from a letter by Carlyle to his wife, 6 August 1864, helps to give us a balanced picture of the situation :

Last evening, out of virtue, feeling poor and desolate, I went to Ruskin, found him and his Mother,—had mainly an unpleasant evening ; bad tea, bad talk, desultory, insincere ; came uncomfortably home at a quick pace shortly before eleven. Ruskin has no real regard for one. His eye is hard, rayless, in comparison ; his face lean : tho' he says he is gathering health.¹

Yet in the next letter to Ruskin, written just a few months later, Carlyle thanks him for sending flowers to Jane and cigars to himself ; and he is quite ready to share in his passionate interest in geology.

Letter 18. Chelsea, 22 February 1865. Published.² On 1 March 1865, Carlyle wrote to his brother John : " On Monday I had engaged myself to Denmark Hill, for Ruskin's superb mineralogical collection and a free discourse upon the same :—an adventure that proved pleasant enough while it lasted." ³

The next letter is the only one I have found from Jane Welsh Carlyle to Ruskin. Abundant evidence exists to indicate that she wrote others to him, which may be lost or hidden somewhere in the Ruskin papers. Ruskin wrote a considerable number of letters to her and others to her and Carlyle jointly. Some of these have been published.⁴ What she really thought about Ruskin and what Ruskin really thought about her are questions much too reading." Froude, iv. 252. And to Lord Ashburton he wrote on 31 August 1862 : " Ruskin, in the Sept. *Fraser*, has another valiant article [part of *Munera Pulveris*] : shall I send it ; are you there to read it ? " From the original letter in the possession of the Marquess of Northampton.

¹ Trudy Bliss, *Thomas Carlyle : Letters to His Wife* (Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 370.

² In Collingwood, ii. 301-2.

³ Thomas Carlyle, *New Letters*, ed. A. Carlyle (London and New York : John Lane, 1904), ii. 225.

⁴ Chiefly in Ruskin's *Works*, vols. xxxvi and xxxvii.

complex and difficult to be dealt with adequately here. The letter which follows, written when Mrs. Carlyle was seeking at the home of one of her best friends, Mrs. Russell, in Scotland to regain her strength after the most horrible illness of the many from which she suffered. She was then an extremely weak and badly crippled woman who would die less than a year later.

Letter 19. Original in the Yale University Library. Hitherto unpublished.

Holm Hill, Thornhill, Dumfriesshire
15 July [1865]

Oh how delightful! My dear Mr. Ruskin! That nice long letter and lovely little Book¹—Imagine? They came to me the first thing on my Birthday morning! Came with all the charm of a Birthday present!—You once gave me strawberries and cream on my Birthday. Do you remember? (I have never seen such strawberries and cream since! nor have I had any such pleasant Birthday since! But all have passed in pain and sorrow!) I like the Book and letter far better, however, because these will keep! And, being superstitious a little, as a Scotch woman ought to be, I draw ever so many good omens from the Book and letter beginning a new year of Life for me. One piece of good I clearly divine therefrom; that you are not going to forget poor me in the pressure of your avocations and distractions but will care for me, and give me flowers now and then, as long as I last!

What a talent for naming you have!

“Of Kings Treasuries
Of Queen’s Gardens!”²

The names lift me already into the sphere of the Arabian Nights!

Please tell your Mother how much I am obliged to her for her call, altho’ I was so unlucky as miss it. And you may add, if you like, that I am sure she would not dislike me if she knew me: for the only time I ever saw her, I felt to take to her very much, because she said no superfluous or insincere word! And I have always found that those I take to at first sight take to me sooner or later if they give themselves a fair chance.

I cannot understand your persistence in forgetting Mrs. Hawks (Madame Venturi)!³ She is to my mind perfectly charming! If you knew the romantic thing she once did for love of you, it would fix her in your mind forever!

“My lamed hand!” Alas me! It is not with that I write. That is quite past making any sort of writing whatsoever. It is too painful to attempt using it

¹ *Sesame and Lilies.*

² Parts of *Sesame and Lilies*, originally given as lectures at Manchester, 6 and 14 December 1864.

³ Emilie Hawkes, whose second husband was Carlo Venturi, an Italian friend and admirer of Mazzini, who was also Mrs. Carlyle’s friend.

at all. So I have had to learn to write with my left hand, which protests against the unwonted exaction in taking every now and then the Cramp!

I hope to get home on the 24th or 25th.

Yours affectionately,

Jane Carlyle

I saw Mr. Carlyle Yesterday, entirely sick of "Solitude" which he has got to call "Stragnation"! He is about to start on further travels.

Letter 20. Chelsea, 20 December 1865. Published.² Carlyle praises Ruskin's *Ethics of the Dust* as a work containing poetry "that might fill any Tennyson with despair". In writing to his brother John the next day, Carlyle says that although the book suffers from a "sad weakness of backbone" it is "full of admirable talent" and "twists symbollically, in the strangest way, all its geology into Morality, Theology, Egyptian Mythology (with fiery cuts at Political Economy etc.!)."³

Letter 21. Chelsea, 14 February 1866. Unpublished. The original was sold by the Parke-Bernet Galleries on 29 April 1953, but I have been unable to get information concerning its present owner and whereabouts. The sale catalogue describes the letter as follows: "A charming letter, intimately addressed to Ruskin, in which the 'Sage of Chelsea' mildly and somewhat humorously reproves Ruskin's unsociability, referring to their having been blackballed by the Athenaeum Club."⁴

Letter 22. Chelsea, 10 May 1866. Published.⁵ A deeply moving letter dealing with the death of Jane Welsh Carlyle, which had occurred on April 21.

¹ Carlyle was also in Scotland, visiting various relatives and friends. At the time he was in Annandale visiting his sister Jane but in a day or two would go to Keswick, where he visited his old friend Thomas Spedding, brother of the Bacon scholar.

² Collingwood, ii. 321-2.

³ From the original letter in the National Library of Scotland, 526/36. Evans says that Carlyle's praise of *Ethics of the Dust* was harmful to Ruskin; it was an adult philosopher approving the result of Ruskin's tendency to turn back to childhood, pp. 285-6.

⁴ Both Ruskin and Carlyle were members of the Athenaeum Club. Carlyle had become a member about 1 March 1853, when Lord Ashburton got him elected and paid his dues for life. See Wilson, v. 32.

⁵ Ruskin's *Works*, xviii, p. xlvii. Ruskin wrote to a friend on 11 June 1866: "The deaths of Mrs. Carlyle and of Lady Trevelyan take from me my two best women friends of older power." Ibid. xxxvi. 509.

On 16 June 1866 Carlyle wrote to a friend, probably C. A. Ward, that he commended the quality of his criticism on Ruskin in a recent letter except for one point, "when you seem to question not his strength alone, but his sincerity a little too; whⁿ latter I can testify to be complete, and even vehement and painful to him. If he live, there will be mission enough for him in the next 20 years."¹

Letter 23. Chelsea, 27 September 1866. Published.² This deals with the activities of Ruskin, Carlyle, and other members of their Committee to defend General E. J. Eyre, Governor of Jamaica, who was being called home to face charges that he used high-handed, authoritarian, and cruel methods in suppressing a rebellion there. Ruskin was still on the continent when the case first broke into the news. On 3 September Carlyle wrote to Charles Kingsley: "Ruskin is coming; full of holy zeal [to help]"³ On 15 September he wrote to Miss Davenport Bromley:

The Eyre Committee is going on better, indeed is now fairly getting on its feet. Ruskin's speech [spoken before the Committee on 5 September]—now don't frown upon it, but read it again till you understand it—is a right gallant thrust I can assure you. While all the world stands tremulous, shilly-shallying from the gutter, impetuous Ruskin plunges his rapier up to the very hilt in the abominable belly of the vast block-headism, and leaves it staring very considerably.⁴

Letter 24. 11 October 1866. Unpublished and whereabouts of original unknown, although probably in the Ruskin papers. A note in Ruskin's *Works*⁵ refers to it as follows: "Carlyle complains of a statement as 'presented as if wrapt in bales of wool, or by the broadest end, or even by the side, instead of the point,' and bids Ruskin see what he can do to help the author to mend it." This seems to have reference to Eyre Committee activities.

Letter 25. Mentone, 15 February 1867. Published.⁶ An excellent letter. "The impetuous Tyndall tore me out from the

¹ From the original letter at the Carlyle House, Chelsea.

² In Ruskin's *Works*, xxxvi. 517. The original letter was sold by Maggs in the season of 1950-51, but I have not discovered its present whereabouts.

³ From the original in the National Library of Scotland, 1796/107.

⁴ Froude, iv. 330.

⁵ xxxvi. 517.

⁶ Ruskin's *Works*, xvii. 339 n. Incomplete in Collingwood, ii. 340-1.

sleety mud-abyssees of London, as if by the hair of the head ; and dropped me here." His hostess was the second Lady Ashburton.

Letter 29. Original in the John Rylands Library, English MS. 1191/6. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 6 April 1867

Dear Ruskin,

Y^r letter reached me, with warm welcome, at Mentone ; but nothing of the interesting "gossip" etc. wh^h was promised for "next week"! What has become of that?

About a fortnight ago, I got home (if this can now be called a "home"), and have been lying strictly perdu ever since, in the hope of recomposing myself a little ;—have called literally on nobody, except on Froude taking leave for Spain, and on Forster¹ with whom I had pecuniary "bus^{ss}"; nor has anybody (so to speak) called on me. I am very quiet, of humor very somber ;—looking, in these days, upon an "April last," wh^h must be forever memorable to me. My Brother John, who was here to receive me, still continues, for I suppose ten days yet ; and is the only company I have.

If you durst lift anchor agⁿ (Wedn^y night, to be exact), you w^d be a very welcome appearance here ! John, who knows you, and has sense to estimate you, will not be in our way at all ;—if he be even here on any terms, wh^h is not certⁿ for that ev^g.

If you don't write, I shall concluded you are coming.

Yours ever faithfully,

T. Carlyle

My kindest regards to the dear Old Lady & the d^r young.

The tone of this letter is peaceful enough. Even two weeks later Carlyle's comments on Ruskin in a letter to Lady Ashburton are full of praise :

Ruskin I have seen twice [since the return from Mentone] (who seems to have great things in view, more than one). He is writing some pungent Political Economy letters "addressed to a working man" (which come out in the Manchester newspapers) : well worth reading, these, among the deluge of stuff that requires not to be read.²

Neither man at this time could have possibly predicted the horribly violent storm through which their friendship passed during the next two months. It was their only quarrel of any significance. Yet the cause of it rose directly from the individual characters of the two men. On 7 May the Manchester *Examiner* carried another of Ruskin's letters to a working man, a letter

¹ John Forster. W. E. Forster was also Carlyle's friend.

² From the original in possession of the Marquess of Northampton. Ruskin's letters to a working man were collected and published as *Time and Tide by Weare and Tyne*.

dated 27 April, in which Ruskin reported that on a visit to Carlyle two days before Carlyle had complained bitterly about the manners of people in his part of London and had spoken of those of the people of Mentone as greatly superior. In Ruskin's words :

But in the streets of Chelsea, and of the whole district of London round it, from the Park to the outer country (some twelve or fifteen miles of disorganized, foul, sinful, and most wretched life), he now cannot walk without being insulted, chiefly because he is a grey old man, and also because he is cleanly dressed ; these two conditions of him being wholly hostile, as the mob of the street feel, to their own instincts, and, so far as they appear to claim some kind of reverence and recognition of betterness, to be instantly crushed and jeered out of their way ; and this temper of the London populace has been, he said, steadily on the increase for these last twenty years.¹

When a working man at Rochdale wrote Carlyle to ask whether Ruskin's report were true, Carlyle's indignant answer was published in the newspapers :

The thing now " going the rounds " is untrue, diverges from the fact throughout, and in essentials is curiously the reverse of the fact ; an " incredible " (and at once forgettable) " thing ".²

Another statement which Carlyle sent out to various newspapers called Ruskin's report " erroneous, misfounded, superfluous, and even absurd ".³ Ruskin stuck to his story and demanded that Carlyle openly acknowledge the truth of it : " You have given the lie direct in the most insulting terms possible to the man who most honored you. " ⁴ Carlyle refused, and the controversy continued both in angry letters which passed back and forth between the two men and in the newspapers. A letter which Carlyle sent to the *Times* on June 7 did not give ground but was more conciliatory in tone than earlier letters. Ruskin is supposed to have destroyed most of the letters that he received from Carlyle during the quarrel.⁵ But the letter which follows is probably the " ugly letter from Carlyle " which he mentions in his diary on June 14.⁶

Letter 27. Original in the Yale University Library. Hitherto unpublished.

¹ R. H. Shepherd, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Carlyle* (London: W. H. Allen, 1881), ii, 249 ; Ruskin's *Works*, xvii, 480-1.

² *Ibid.* p. 481.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 482.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Wilson, vi. 130.

Chelsea, 13 June 1867

Dear Ruskin,

With a Poet's temperament, you enormously exaggerate this miserable, but intrinsically small and paltry matter. "The most dishonouring words ever spoken of you" are, as you will understand by and by, simply to the effect, that you in y^r headlong incautious way, with the best and truest intentions in the world, strode into one of the foolishhest practical puddles recently heard of, and dragged a most unwitting friend along with you,—who refuses to lie there with you (especially to lie undermost, as he chanced to be), and, finding you took no steps and did not even recognize the puddle much, has striven honestly to save first himself, and then his more or less blameable companion too,—really with his best endeavour, and utmost stretch of faculty and skill, exerted in an element infinitely foreign and unpleas^t to him. So that he is now out, and getting his mind cleaned; ¹ and you too are out (if you will be wise) with only an infinitesimal minimum of smutch upon you,—such as all sons of Adam catch to themselves from time to time, and are all absolved from, so soon as they heartily [?] acknowledge it. For the man that never made a "mistake" was not heard of hitherto. And these are "the most dishonouring words that ever" &c. &c. Oh dear, oh dear!—

But on the whole, I too, my friend, have had my abund^t vexations, botherat^{ns} and distresses ab^t this small and miserable matter,—whⁿ is so extraneous, so infinitely incongruous, and comes intruding on me with such a ghastly contemptibility, amid the serious, sad and solemn matters whⁿ are my constant occupaⁿ otherwise (especially sad in these weeks),—that I too find it at last unbearable; and decide to have done with it at once, till it take a quite new figure! Please, don't send me any "formal Letter"; but take this as my ans^r to it beforehand, and the only ans^r I will make to it or any other on that subject, as matters now stand betⁿ us:

First, therefore, I never told you, nor c^d tell any mortal, that "Mr. Carlyle" was liable to be insulted on the streets of London or Chelsea; the constant fact that I have the natural liberty of all quiet persons to walk the streets unmolested, and if need were, protected & defended; and that in no street, lane or place of London or any other City, Town or region, did "Mr. Carlyle", when personally recognised, meet with anything hitherto but an evid^t respect far beyond what was his due, or what was in the least necessary to him. This is the steadfast fact; and this you have carelessly tumbled heels over head into a statement incredible to all who hear it, and monstrous to imagine. Secondly, I did tell you that, by order of the Doctor, I had discontinued my midnight walks, whⁿ used to have a sombre soothing charm, and to seem salutary, as the last work of the day. This I perfectly remember telling you. And what mad reversal you have made of this

¹ On 1 June Carlyle had written to his brother John: "Ruskin is in great agony about the beggarly *Pall-Mall* 'Paragraph' affair; but I have at least ended it, and the dirty rumor of impertinent nothingness about it;—and he feels, or will feel, that the headlong folly [into which] he fell way 'absurd.' Finis to that dirty babble!" From the unpublished letter in the National Library of Scotland, 526/61.

you cannot have forgotten ! A domestic picture unexampled in British History or Biography. The wretched dreary old Dotard and Coward peering tremulously out of door at midnight, If he might now steal a little exercise,—and not substance enough left in him even to tell himself if he c^dn't alter such a state of matters. Papae, proh pudor ! If a man were on the outlook for “dishonouring words,” or cared much ab^t them when they came, here by accid^t they are, in richest measure for him.

In fine, so far as I can recollect those unlucky 10 minutes of loose talk, wh^h memory took so little charge of, and wh^h are now several weeks away, our discourse did not turn upon public streets, thoroughfares or walking, but almost wholly on my experiences in riding, thro' the unfrequented slums and waste-lying outskirts of London (tempted thither by the soft ground, or the immunity from wheels, where the lower pop[ul]ace or canaille inhabit : nor, agⁿ, was my experience there the least definable as “Mr Carlyle's,” but simply as that of A. or B., riding seemingly for his amusem^t, and from his age or gravity of aspect, not very likely to use his horsewhip in reply (wh^h more than once proved a miscalculatⁿ, too, and had firm effect on the individual two-legged canis, if he chanced to stand within reach). These are the precisest certain facts (as precise as I can now give them) of that bit of private dialogue betⁿ us.

And had you, instead of carelessly, hastily and heedlessly reversing these, stated the whole of them with the accuracy of an affidavit, and then printed my name to them,—what c^d I have called it but the absurdest oversight, and foolishhest “practical blunder” that ever dropped upon me of its own accord, from any man of sense, in all my days ! And this is the last word I intend to write upon a subject, wh^h has already cost me a great deal too many.

For I have had, not on my own acc^t alone, to manipulate in my sad and sick Soul, this paltry bit of nonsense not a little, to tear it carefully down to its elemental fibres, and to sight and survey it on all sides till I c^d completely reckon it transparent to me, but something of you too, my friend, and of the mad world's ways with you and me ; and in fine “to forge my miserable horse-shoe” (as I told you), nay in successⁿ my two horse-shoes, “in the middle of leaky powder-barrels” ;—and I now thank God to have done with it altogether. Further words upon it, especially betⁿ you and me, what good c^d be in them, till a considerable change come ; till, as I once said already, we both of us come to see both sides of the matter ? Till each see, in a perfect and quietly transparent manner, not only his own grief, and whether he bro^t it wholly on himself, but also his neighbour's and whether he did so ! If I am so egregiously in error to suppose that “six weeks” will work this salutary change in you, I shall be profoundly sorry (and much surprised withal, for it is still my belief) ; but the actual coming of the change does not now depend on me at all ; and till it do come, we must wait.

The tone and new style of y^r last Letters, especially of y^r last but one, has been perhaps or seemed a little singular ; and I want no more of that fashion soon. But as to “implacability” &c &c, it is, to myself, void of meaning or conceivabi[l]ity ; and on such a score, as you assign, it w^d savour to me of utter madness ;—nor do I believe it of you at all, nor will unless forced. If I had in any degree

injured a certⁿ interest¹ (of wh^h I was not thinking at all), that w^d indeed have been a cruel and most forbidding circ[umstanc]e in my necessity ; but that was not there ; nor do I now believe (what^f your wildly exaggerative mind may do) that it will have the weight of a fly's wing in the beautiful resolute and candid soul on whose vote you alone depend ; —nay if it did, & if she did see it to proceed from a too headlong habit &c, and to require a little censure and attempt at amend^t, might it not be better that she know it now, before closure of the bargⁿ than after it ? There is for you !—

Adieu, my friend. Since you won't accept any counsel on that mutual plunge into the puddle, I must leave you to y^r own. Quod faustum sit. I consider it still possible that by this accid^t we may become "better friends than ever"; more sincere, more frank, ruggedly veracious, much more humanly helpful to one another : But the chance depends now altog^r on y^rself, and I can't control it farther. Adieu : none of y^r fine qualities and talents, nor of y^r uniformly amiable procedures, are forgotten by me at this moment, nor have much chance of ever being.

Y^{rs} sincerely (so far as you will permit),

T. Carlyle

P.S. Please send me that Ms. of Edw^d Irving at y^r convenience. I want it for a reason, but not till you have quite done with it.

It was about this time that Carlyle told Moncure D. Conway that even the gods could not save Ruskin.² But the fury of the quarrel seems to have abated after the middle of June. On 26 June Ruskin records in his diary that he was "at Carlyle's in evening".³ Yet two months later it was still possible for Carlyle to feel a spasm of wrath about the matter. On 27 August he wrote to Lady Ashburton : "Ruskin and I are parted for the time being—forever, if he like, the fool !" ⁴ The truth of the matter is by its very nature complex. It will probably never be stated more convincingly than in Carlyle's long letter to Ruskin. Yet we need to consider also the following very helpful comment from a letter written by Charles Eliot Norton on 22 July 1869 :

He [Carlyle] did say, so I heard from a person who was present when he said it, what Ruskin reported ; but he said it in one of his wild moods of half-cynical, half-humorous exaggeration, very likely forgot his words as soon as uttered, and at

¹ Probably Rose La Touche. Ruskin had taught her when she was a ten-year-old child in 1858 and was now in love with her. She died unmarried in 1875.

² M. D. Conway, *Autobiography : Memories and Experiences* (Boston and New York : Houghton, Mifflin, 1904), ii. 117.

³ Wilson, vi. 130.

⁴ From the original letter in the possession of the Marquess of Northampton.

least had no intention that they should be taken au pied de la lettre, or that he should be held responsible for them.¹

The respect and even affection which the people of Chelsea had for Carlyle at the time was, as he very well knew, not to be doubted. The most fitting last words on the subject are certainly those of Carlyle's niece, Mary Aitken, who came to live with him soon after the quarrel. She wrote to Lady Ashburton :

Mr. Ruskin also comes sometimes in the evenings. I think it was very generous of Ruskin to come back to him and never allude to any misunderstanding at all. My uncle seems to like him far better now than he did before.²

Letter 28. Chelsea, 17 August 1869. Published.³ Complains of his "poor rebellious right hand, which oftenest refuses altogether to do any writing for me that can be read; having already done too much, it probably thinks!" Praises Ruskin's *Queen of the Air*. On 14 September 1869 Carlyle wrote to Froude: "There is (in singular environment) a ray of real Heaven in poor Ruskin;—passages of that last book (*Queen of the Air*) went into my heart like arrows."⁴

Letter 29. 1 October 1869. I have found only the following short excerpt: "Don't neglect to call on me the first time you are in town—the sight of your face will be a comfort, and I long for a little further talk on the problems you are occupied with."⁵

From 1870 until Carlyle's death in early 1881 Ruskin would often write him as many as five letters for every one received from him. Ruskin greatly missed his father, who had died in 1864. To John James Ruskin he could freely pour out his heart in frequent letters. Now that Ruskin's father was gone, Carlyle was willing to serve as well as he could as the recipient of such letters and

¹ *Letters* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1913), i. 362. In an earlier letter, 7 June 1869, Norton wrote: "Emerson and Ruskin are the only distinguished living men of whom Carlyle spoke,—in all the talk I ever had with him,—with entire freedom from sarcasm or depreciation, with something like real tenderness." *Ibid.* p. 333.

² From the original letter in possession of the Marquess of Northampton.

³ Ruskin's *Works*, xix. p. lxx.

⁴ Waldo H. Dunn, "Carlyle's Last Letters to Froude," *Twentieth Century*, clix (January 1956), 51; Froude, iv. 383.

⁵ Cook, *Ruskin*, ii. 165.

even humoured Ruskin by allowing himself to be addressed (and, once when Ruskin came to call, even kissed) as "Papa".¹

The Franco-Prussian War was very much in the news in 1870. Ruskin in general agreed with Carlyle in favouring the Germans. "And dear old Carlyle," he wrote to Norton on 26 August 1870, "—how thankful I am that he did his Friedrich exactly at the right time!"² Yet he also believed that Germany pressed her victory too far and that she should offer terms which France could accept with honour.

Letter 30. Original in the Yale University Library. Hitherto unpublished.

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea
10 October 1870

Dear Ruskin,

On Saturday morning, on my first sally out into the open air, I noticed on a Newsvendor's Placard that there was a "Letter from Mr. Ruskin", which it would be necessary for me to see. Not having the copper penny in my pocket, I took the necessary steps immediately on my return home; and, along with my coffee, comfortably swallowed the Ruskin Letter accordingly,—more comfortably than I did my coffee, for which, alas, as for all other material things (tho' not for things spiritual, thank God), there is now a clearly decaying appetite.

In the course of the day, I learnt that there had been another Letter, which somehow must be attained here; and, by our last post, came your beneficent announcement that both Letters had duly been put under way by you. By you duly; but not by the Postoffice Authorities, who did not, till our second post this day, forward your two Daily Telegraphs at all;—and now further, to my confusion, I discovered that they are both copies of the Saturday's Telegraph, which I had already possessed, and given away several copies of, before the week ended! Letter first, therefore, still stands as a lonely Desideratum in that waste-howling Wilderness of human mismanagement, disloyalties and infidelities!—You see then, what is at once to be done. Pray clip out Letter first for one, and dispatch it quam primum.—Your Second Letter, full of holy indignation was as if it came from my own heart; at the end, however, I think you do the Germans wrong. My notion is: Bismarck knows very well what he is aiming at; & I find withal that it is a perfectly just thing; likewise that all the World cannot prevent him from getting it; and that he is calmly taking all the necessary steps for coercing an inarticulate mad and furious Wasps' Nest of thirty five million delirious

¹ Alfred Lyttleton, Gladstone's nephew, after calling on Carlyle with Ruskin in 1878, wrote thus of the way in which Carlyle received them: "At first he groaned and sighed a good deal, receiving kindly enough, however, Ruskin's kiss, most tenderly given." Wilson, vi. 423.

² C. E. Norton, ed., *Letters of John Ruskin to Charles Eliot Norton*, (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1904), ii. 24.

Mountebanks to quietly grant it him, with the Minimum of Sulphur applied. He seems to me at this moment to have power to cut France into thongs, and, in a few days, to convert Paris, if he liked, into a red hot Cinder; but is far from intending anything beyond the strictly necessary for his objects.¹

I am reading Bitzcius,² with astonishment at the dull gritty strength of him; also at his cruelty, limitation, dimness, narrowness; but there is the charm in him of a rugged Veracity; strange "Dutch Picture", as you say, of an object curious to me and unknown to me. With great pleasure my little Niece will be of your party to the Theatre whenever you see good. Whether her poor old Uncle, who also would like much, can accompany or not will depend on the complexion of the Nervous System for that evening;—The willing mind for many things is still partially here; but the Man is way-worn, weary, and rigorously ordered to be aware of that fact.

Send me the Newspaper Clipping, dear Ruskin; and believe me
Ever yours,
T. Carlyle

In late December 1870 Ruskin seems to have given Carlyle an advanced copy of *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 1, which made the old man decidedly uneasy. He was always afraid that Ruskin's impetuosity would overcome his judgment. In a letter to his brother John of 31 December 1870 Carlyle wrote:

There is further waiting for you an astonishing Paper by Ruskin. . . . I think you never read a madder looking thing. I still hope (though with little confidence) that he will bethink him and drop the matter in time: therefore keep it to yourself in the meanwhile,—though, alas, I fear he will plunge into it all the same.³

But when the fifth letter of *Fors* appeared in April, Carlyle gave it almost unreserved praise in the following letter:

Letter 31. Chelsea, 30 April 1871. Published.⁴ On the fifth number of *Fors*: "Every word of it as if spoken, not out of my poor heart only, but out of the eternal skies; words winged with Empyrean wisdom, piercing as lightning—and which I really do not remember to have heard the like of."

Letter 32. Chelsea, 21 October 1871. Published.⁵ On 5 December 1871 Ruskin's mother died. Carlyle knew how

¹ The two letters, both on the Franco-Prussian War, were in the *Daily Telegraph* for 7 and 8 October 1870 and may be found in Ruskin's *Works*, xxxiv. 499-500.

² Albert Bitzcius (1797-1854), Swiss novelist.

³ From the original in the National Library of Scotland, 527/37.

⁴ Collingwood, ii. 411; Ruskin's *Works*, xxvii, p. lxxxvi.

⁵ Ruskin's *Works*, xxii, p. xix.

unusually close the relation of son and mother had been. He had been unusually close to his own mother up until her death in 1853. His next letter to Ruskin is one of profound sympathy.

Letter 33. Chelsea, 6 December 1871. Published.¹ On 7 December Carlyle wrote to his brother John: "Poor Ruskin has lost his Mother; she died Tuesday about 2 p.m. A note from him of three short lines came that night; mournful as if every word were a tear."²

Possibly Carlyle's most eloquent tribute to Ruskin is the well-known one in his letter to Emerson of 2 April 1872.³ Too long to be quoted in full here, it begins: "There is nothing going on among us as notable to me as those fierce lightning-bolts Ruskin is copiously and desperately pouring into the black world of Anarchy all around him."

Letter 34. Chelsea, 31 October 1873. Published.⁴ Praises Ruskin's *Val d'Arno*. "Have you read poor Mill's Autobiography; and did you ever before read such a book?"

Letter 35. Original in the John Rylands Library, English MS. 1191/7. Hitherto unpublished.

Chelsea, 15 July 1874

Dear Ruskin,

We have been bountifully furnished with these precious little showers of manna which fall on us day after day with a wonderful continuity on your part. They are really strange and charming to me, wonderfully annihilating time and space between us, bringing you and your whereabouts vividly home to us as in a magic glass. It is little to say of them that I have had no such epistolary pleasure for the last eight years. If I could command or expect such a thing, I should say Encore, encore, do not cease while I live! but alas, that is not in my power; and while the reciprocity is all on one side⁵ such a thing in nature is not to be expected.

¹ Ruskin's *Works* xxxvi, p. xxiii.

² From the original letter in the National Library of Scotland, 527/56.

³ *The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1834-1872*, ed. C. E. Norton (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1894), ii. 388-9.

⁴ Ruskin's *Works*, xxiii, p. lv. See also Carlyle's tribute to Ruskin in the letter to his brother John of 24 February 1872, *New Letters*, ii, 284. To C. E. Norton he wrote in November 1873: "Ruskin also is treading the winepress alone; and sometimes feels his labor very heavy. God be with him, poor fellow. I hear at the present time no other Voice like him in this dreary Mother of dead dogs which is still commonly called a world." From the original letter in the Houghton Library, Harvard.

⁵ Coterie speech in the Carlyle household. Mrs. Carlyle had found the expression very amusing and had used it often.

Go on at any rate, as long as it is not a bother to you, and know always that nothing you can do is more certain of a grateful welcome. I think we have had eight Letters since I wrote to you last, and now that you are going or gone to Perugia and we are soon to be driven out of London by the fervent heat, I write again to apprise you as far as possible when we are going and witherward, both of which points, especially the latter, are still somewhat involved in haze.

As to the time, it seems certain enough that we are still to be here for ten days ; so that there is still room for a Letter or two, if you will stand good, not to say for three or four wh. could be safely and immediately forwarded to Froude's in Wales (J. A. Froude, Esq., Crogan, Corwen, Merionethshire) ;—and should we even sail to Lerwick, where we suppose my Brother John to be, diligently looking out for bathing quarters, there is a daily post to that Scandinavian locality with only an addition of two days or perhaps of only one to the distance between Cheyne Row and you. Go on therefore for at least ten days hitherward and for ten more Froude-ward. Before the latter period expire you shall have another dispatch concerning our ulterior movements ; and so enough, on that poor time-table head.

Mary and I turned up and punctually persued, & with great attention, all the chapters and passages of Scripture appointed you in childhood, by one now sacred to you ; nor did we omit the recent passage of Jeremiah's Lamentations ; but cannot any more than yourself who the " them " and " they " especially are. As to the rest, I found them one and all beautifully significant and maternally fit ; indeed in nearly all of them I was struck by a kind of divineness of piety, intensity, and perfect sincerity not to be found in any other Book ; ever wonderful old Jews ! In three or four of the pieces, I forget now which, there was a speech about Wisdom, of its dwelling with the Lord before anything else existed, of its being the essence and foundation of all that does or ever will exist ; nay, of its being almost the Lord himself, which struck me very forcibly and with a light quite new, as words springing from the deepest region of man's soul, and being eternally the truth for the soul of man,—for me at this day as for the ancient Hebrew that penned them in his remote wilderness, thousands of years ago, thrice wonderful old Hebrews, sunk now to Baron Grant¹ and his scoundrel Resuscitations of the Fine Arts in Leicester Square !—Under this head, too, I may as well mention that your earnest and eager enquiry twice repeated, 24th & 27th June, about my notions on Abbot Samson's religion, on King Friedrich's, Cromwell's, and my Mother's, have been often present to me ; and at first gave me some surprise at finding you think I had still something more to tell you on that subject ; though of late the surprise has gone, for I can now bethink me of almost nothing I have ever hinted, even in the obscurest way, on that point,² if it be not one transient, but

¹ Albert Grant, known as Baron Grant (1830-99), son of W. Gottheimer. He assumed the name of Grant. For his Leicester Square project and the many others which he promoted, see the *Dictionary of National Biography*, xxii, 763-4.

² An amazing statement to many of Carlyle's twentieth-century readers who think of his writings as being rather heavily saturated with religion. But W. H. Wylie wrote at the time of Carlyle's death : " To a friend of ours who happened once to say that he held the same religious views as himself, Carlyle with some heat retorted, ' My religious views ! And who told you what my religious views are ? ' " Thomas Carlyle : *The Man and His Books* (London : Marshall Japp,

to myself significant allusion in Past and Present apropos of that duel apud Radingas where a sinful caitiff, desperately fighting for his life, sees the gigantic figure of St. Edmund, looking doomful and minatory upon him in the splendor of the evening sun, and falls down as if dead, but is brought to life again by the monks and lives as a monk many years afterwards absolved from the world. There followed that a little word or two which had much much [sic] meaning to myself ; but I now see can have had none to anybody else.¹ I would gladly write on that subject, were there left in me, without fingers, the smallest power of writing, but it will be better that we first talk of it, as you propose, which I shall long for an opportunity of doing.

Froude is bound for the Cape of Good Hope and generally for the Colonies on an earnest mission from Lord Carnarvon and the government to look into that colonial problem with his own eyes, and to advise what, in his own best judgment, can by a wise Government be done or attempted. He is to leave Southampton for Cape Town on the 23rd August ; to be away many months, so that, probably, I shall never see him again. But the whole world, and all British men in the first place, may fairly expect to get some good of it, and in the end a boundless quantity of good by this adventure ; and to himself in his silent sorrow it seems to me of all enterprises the most promising and wholesome. Everybody that I hear speaking of it warmly approves of the project & of the man selected for it. For my own part I feel well enough what I shall lose by the affair and how sad and solemn the adieu is. Of course I must see him on whatever terms for a few days before we part.

I had much to say about the last Fors and things relating to yourself but my unfortunate ethereal part is so crushed down into the foul mire by this intolerable heat and feebleness of nerve and muscle that I must forbear it all till a better time. I tell you only two things ; first, that I think and have long thought that you are dreadfully in error as to the German people and the genius of Germany ; which (including England & its Shakespeares, wh. are radically German) I place far above the genius and characteristics of any othere people ancient or modern ; very especially above whatever can be called French ; and truly I wish you could get to understand how poor an affair, if you deducted those Franks out of it who are purely German every fibre of them, and not the best of German, la belle France, with all its boundless self-conceit, and even its pretty tailoring and cooking and ingeniously filigreeing talent, would be.

The second thing I had to say is but a repetition, namely of the dreadful shock you have given to the Fine Arts here, especially to the Architectural, by your refusal of the Gold Medal to be presented by the Queen & the tittering and tee-heeing of many sober minded and ingenious people by your dreadful offer to sit willingly in sackcloth and ashes with any respectable body of Fine-Artists that will

1881), p. 384. Jane Carlyle's Edinburgh aunts worried constantly about the souls of both Carlyles and feared the worst, since the Carlyles would not change.

¹ The duel took place at Reading between Robert de Montfort and Henry of Essex. Henry was overcome and became a monk. Carlyle's comment characteristically emphasizes duty, justice, and reverence. See *Past and Present*, Book Second, chap. xiv.

invite you for such a purpose. Oh joy! Was there ever such cruelty heard of! How well deserved, I and the ingenious people do not now say.¹

Adieu, dear Ruskin, many kind adieus. Mary adds her kind regards and best wishes to mine.

Yours ever,
T. Carlyle

Letter 36. Original in the Yale University Library. Hitherto unpublished.

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea
30 July 1874

Dear Ruskin,

Thanks again and again for these little showers of manna immediate from the skies, which do not wholly cease but still come to us now & then,—last night from Florence, for example, and some nights before from Perugia; wonderful things for us amid the dusty tumult of London in our little cell at Chelsea here.

The gorgeous splendour of your room at Florence, and, alas, your own wild gloom of mind while lodged in it, as if it were the blackest nook of Malebolge;² that is a strange but not unaccountable phenomenon, such as easily occurs in this wicked perversity of a world! But we can expect a still more emphatic and scorching Fors from you on that account, which is some benefit of good out of evil.

On the whole, is it not evident for one thing, that the Italian summer is getting far too hot for you; that in practical truth you ought to bundle up your note-books and come home, or nearer home? I really think so, but must not take upon me to advise. If at the "tomb of Simon de Montfort," in more tolerable air (in France, as that may well be), you could pick up for us any vestige of clearer evidence or intelligibility about that notable and to me inconceivable man, it would beyond doubt be a welcome thing. But wasn't he clearly cut down and chopped into mince meat, flesh and bones, at Eavesham; how then can he have got buried near Paris? Furthermore, have you not heard that his Son was "The blind Beggar of Bethnal-Green"? What a Dark-Lantern is history, or worse, even, a Lantern of darkness; absolutely tenebrific, instead of illuminative!

The one real object of this Letter is to tell you that we are still here, & likely to be so for at least a fortnight longer, hungry therefore for your immediate missives if you will have the charity still to send such. Froude is expect[ed] here Saturday (the day after tomorrow) stays for three weeks, and in the course of the first, must settle many small but important things with me, in case we should not meet again in this world. I am confident he will do real good in his colonial expedition; good, even in the emigration line, in spite of the pot boiling over. These things go on at an inconceivably slow rate; a century, nay ten centuries, representing what would actually be but a minute in the real pot, dashing its fat into the fire. Patience, my Friend, patience; we must have patience.

Before leaving Florence I must ask you to take another look at Michael Angelo's Statue of David and explain to me a little (on your return) how it is that

¹ See Ruskin's two public letters to the Royal Institute of English Architects, 20 May and 12 June 1874, in Ruskin's *Works*, xxxiv. 513-16.

² The eighth circle of Hell in Dante's *Inferno*.

the gigantic plaster case of this Figure (in our Brompton Boilers here) is more impressive to me than any statue I have ever seen.¹

Not a word more ; there is an intrusion jingling at the door, peremptorily saying cease. Mary sends her love.

Yours ever, dear Ruskin,

T. Carlyle

This is the last letter from Carlyle to Ruskin that I have found. After its date Ruskin wrote Carlyle over thirty letters, in addition to a considerable number which he wrote to Carlyle's niece, Mary Aitken, who continued to act as her uncle's secretary. A few of these contain references to later letters from Carlyle, and Carlyle's hopes and fears for Ruskin were frequently expressed in a running commentary through letters to his brother John and others in the years that remained. He was greatly concerned about Ruskin's poor health, especially with the often-recurring spells of brain-fever. And it was futile to admonish Ruskin to be patient. Even in conversation he could be decidedly annoying, with his nervous nature, his sensitiveness and flightiness, and his high-flown strain of flattery.² His books on "high Art" were "very hard reading, abstruse and fine-spun, yielding me next to no spiritual nourishment when I sum them up".³ There was the fear that he would turn to Roman Catholicism at last, as he had already apparently turned to spiritualism, a "horrible absurdity" which Carlyle detested.⁴ And Ruskin in his folly expected "a millenium to be provided by the St. George Guild," to Carlyle a ridiculous thing which he thought was a joke at first and to which he would give nothing. On the other hand, "Ruskin is full of friendliness and is aiming as if at the very stars"; few of his generation had been gifted with "such a splendid outfit of faculty and opportunity". His morality was

¹ Carlyle refers to a copy of the "David" in the South Kensington Museum. For Ruskin's comments, see his letter to Carlyle of 16 August 1874 in Ruskin's *Works*, xxxvii. 130-31. With his acute Scottish susceptibility to heat, Carlyle must have found the Museum rooms uncomfortable.

² Letters of 6 and 17 November 1874. From the originals in the National Library of Scotland, 528/19, 20.

³ Letter of 9 September 1875. From the original in the National Library of Scotland, 528/36.

⁴ Letters of 14 October 1877, 15 February and 1 March 1879. From the originals in the National Library of Scotland, 528/78, 102, 104.

the highest and purest. Mixed with the wonderful folly which appeared in him too often, there was “ a celestial brightness ” in Ruskin.¹

¹ Letters of 14 October 1877, and letters of 26 October and 6 November 1875 and 11 October 1878, National Library of Scotland, 528/41, 42, 88. William Allingham, *A Diary* (London : Macmillan, 1907), pp. 245, 263.