

A Newly Discovered Carlyle Letter Donated to
the David M. Rubenstein Library at
Duke University

MELVIN SCHUETZ OF THE ARMSTRONG BROWNING LIBRARY AT Baylor University once again has located an uncollected or heretofore obscure Thomas Carlyle (TC) letter. Moreover, he entered the winning bid for the original document on eBay, and he has graciously donated his acquisition to the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Duke University, holders of a significant collection of Carlyleana.

Frequently, TC received earnest letters seeking his philosophical counsel. In answer to such a request he took time to write to D. B. Brightwell of Queenwood College in Stockbridge, Hampshire, early in 1859, at a moment when he was distracted and deep in the shadow of the third volume of his history of Frederick the Great. The context may be discovered surrounding a lacuna of a week of no letters in volume 35 of *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (CL; print edition) and in the open access *Carlyle Letters Online* (CLO; <http://carlyleletters.org/>). The bracketed insertions in the following transcription are due to how the letter was tipped into a Carlyle volume, obscuring the ends of some lines at the right hand margin.



Chelsea, 1 Feby, 1859 —

Sir,

I can give no advice or precept about the matters you write of, except this one remark: The grand secret (worth all the others together, and without which all the others are worthing nothing and *less*) for inculcating and teaching virtues and graces is, that a man honestly and with more and more of silent si[nc]erity, *have* them himself. Lodged in t[he] silent deeps of his being, they will not fail to shine thro', and be not only visible but [un]deniable in whatever he is bid to say a[nd] do, and any hour of the day he will, consc[i]ously and

unconsciously, find good means [of] teaching them. This is the grand indispen[sable] requisite; this present, the rest is very certain to follow; the rest is more matter of d[e]tail, depending on specialty of circumstance wh^h a man's own common sense, if he is in earnest towards his aim, will later and later instruct him in.

The business, I am sorrowfully aware, is often enough undertaken without this indispensable prerequisite; nay in general there is a dim notion abroad that a man *can* teach such things by mainly wishing to do it and without having them himself: but the fatal result inevitably is, He teaches, can teach nothing but Hypocrisy and unblessed Apery and Mendacity and it is a kind of salvation to his poor pupils if they, in a dim way, see thro' him, and refuse to imbibe the slow poison of such teaching.

I fancy you to be a ingenuous young man, aiming manfully to do your best in the vocation that has fallen to you — I hang up, far *ahead* (I hope), this ugly but true warning upon a certain path, wh^h all mortals of us ought to avoid and abhor much more than we do at present.

Wishing you heartily well, I remain (in much haste) Yours sincerely

T. Carlyle



Anyone who has worked with TC's text in holograph knows the difficulty of transcribing the increasingly palsied handwriting of his later years into a reliable form, and this particular letter, written hurriedly, presented several problems, beginning with the name and address of the recipient. Learning about the identity and career of the scholar Brightwell involved a pleasant collaboration of several Carlyle Letters editors, classics scholar Chris Stray of Swansea University in Wales (for whom, see his review in this issue), Browning scholar Philip Kelley, and, centrally, Melvin Schuetz and his wife, Carol, a reference librarian at Baylor University.

Let us follow the trail: the letter first showed up on eBay in June 2014, without a winning bid, and it was offered again in November 2014. This time, when Mr. Schuetz once again

brought it to the attention of the Carlyle editors, it resulted in a proper transcription, and the search for the identity of D. B. Brightwell began anew. From the address we learned he was associated, possibly as an instructor, with Queenwood College in Hampshire at the time of this correspondence. Established in 1847 by the Society of Friends on an old estate lately called Harmony Hall following its lease and development into a commune by social reformer Robert Owen, Queenwood was strong in the teaching of science having at one time on its faculty the Carlyles' friend the physicist John Tyndall and his close associate the chemist Edward Frankland. The school burned in 1902 and the remnants were razed; the site is now a park.

Brent Kinser, tapping the resources of the *Rossetti Archive*, reported: "Daniel Barron Brightwell, a Manx schoolteacher and minor critic, the author of *A Concordance to the Works of Alfred Tennyson* (1869), was [Hall] Caine's first literary mentor." He added: "He also appears in a University of London Register (1890)—Tottenham. / Brightwell, Daniel.—Matr. 1851, Pr. T. / Brightwell published something on Carlyle in *Notes and Queries*—it's in [Rodger L.] Tarr's secondary bib. / 'Articles on Thomas Carlyle.' 6th ser. Vol. 4, 86 (20 Aug. 1881): 145." Dr. Stray of Swansea extended: "Queenwood College started life in the early 1840s as Harmony Hall, an Owenite utopian institution but failed, and c 1846 became the College, a scientific and agricultural school. Its first pupil was Henry Fawcett, later to go blind and become Postmaster-General. It continued as a school, but burned down in 1902. There is some useful information in E. Royle, *Robert Owen and the commencement of the Millennium*." Philip Kelley, founding editor and publisher of *The Brownings' Correspondence* provided dates for Brightwell and the publication history of TC's letter to him: "Daniel Barron Brightwell, a journalist, was born 24 May 1834 at East Bergholt, Suffolk. He died 15 October 1899 at Edgbaston, Birmingham. I see that your letter is in print: *Scribner's Magazine*, v. 93 (1933), p. 61." Carol Schuetz of the Baylor University library located the *Scribner's* article and scanned it for us.

Brightwell's concordance of Tennyson, now mostly forgotten, may be found in Baylor's Armstrong Browning Library and in Duke's Rubenstein Library. The author might

well have revisited TC's advice about "virtues and graces" and "silent sincerity." His publisher, Moxon, sent a copy to Tennyson, and Tennyson was not pleased; not at all.



Blackdown, Haslemere, October 12, 1869

Sir,

Your letter has just reached me. I thank you for the kindness of your expression and for your offer of the Concordance; it has been sent to me.

I may tell you that this book is published altogether without my sanction or knowledge. I first heard of it and that lately from Mr. Strahan.

The obscure passage in your preface (if the words be your own and not dictated by another) would seem to imply that I had given my consent to the publication of such a work: something else perhaps they imply—I know not what.

But you have done—and, I would fain hope, also at the dictation of another—a thing thoroughly illegal. You have made a concordance of certain little songs of mine privately printed—and have made it in such a manner that anyone with 20 minutes labour can put them together.

If I did not see in this act rather my ex-publisher than yourself I should not now have been answering your letter.

As to the facsimile or fac-dissimile—the caricature at the beginning of your book, it's equally disgraceful to publisher and engraver, and will I am afraid annoy my good honest friend Jeffrey seeing it is as like me as I am to—Ancient Pistol. Believe me, Sir,

Yours faithfully

A. Tennyson



Tennyson's letter to D. B. Brightwell is in the British Library.

David Southern