



The Kindness of Librarians

IN THE UNPROCESSED PAPERS OF CHARLES RICHARD SANDERS (1904–98), founder of the Carlyle Letters Project at Duke University and general editor of *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* through volume 12, one finds file upon file of correspondence with far flung librarians from whom information was sought concerning the extent of Carlyleana held in their collections. Though Professor Sanders conceived his great project in the 1930s, it was in the early 1950s that a worldwide canvass for the Carlyles' letters was begun in earnest. The first four volumes of the *Collected Letters* were published in 1970, and the acknowledgments to that set and subsequent sets and individual volumes testify in great extent to just how much this project owes to librarians, especially those who curate special collections.

Melvin Schuetz of the Armstrong Browning Library at Baylor University has been gratefully acknowledged many times in this journal for leads to Carlyle letters lately offered for sale or at auction. Mitch Fraas of the University of Pennsylvania library once proofread two volumes of the Carlyle Letters while completing a PhD in History at Duke University, and he, too, follows the manuscript catalogs as does Sara Seten Berghausen, formerly a reference librarian at Perkins Library, Duke University, and now Associate Curator of Collections at the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Special Collections Library at Duke. All have been particularly kind to this project over a number of years.

In addition to the TC letter he presented to the Rubenstein Library at Duke, Mr. Schuetz this past year has let us know of numerous pieces of Carlyleana at auction, including a medallion. When such information is given, we have transcribed directly from images of the holograph or quoted directly from transcriptions and descriptions provided by the vendor. In January 2014, Bonham's sold a letter from TC to Edward Rogers, dated "Chelsea, 11 febr 1868" and written on black-bordered mourning paper:

Dear Sir,

I recd yr *Fifth-Monarchy-Man*, and have gone over that curious record of his Earthly Pilgrimage, enveloped (as all Men's is) in strange clouds & hallucinations! He is not discreditable to you as an ancestor, and his course is set forth with great lucidity, faithfully, and from unquestionable documents, and sources. To say truth I found him tho' perfectly honest and zealous, rather *shrill* of tone; and what I most admired in that "Interview" and throughout, was the almost incredible patience of O.C. Protector (and *Governor* of *Engld* with him and the like of him, in those perilous *conditns* of the Commonwealth! . . .

TC went on to assure Rogers that his book "will be an ornament to my small Puritan Collectn" and indeed this copy is now part of the Harvard University collection of TC's books used in writing *The French Revolution* and *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*.

Mr. Schuetz also reported that eBay offered a TC letter to John Rutherford Russell, dated 21 June 1858, which was earlier offered at auction by Swann Galleries. Also on eBay was the following TC letter to Charles Kingsley that includes a death notice of JWC and two *cartes de visite*; an identical item was offered (date unknown but perhaps in the early 1950s) from the catalog of R. Atkinson, bookseller.

Chelsea, 17 Septr 1866—

Dear Kingsley,

I am very sensible to yr and Miss Kingsley's kindness; but, alas, I must not leave my gloomy solitude for any sunnier place at prest. I am trying to get into something like employt of my days again, with very poor success hitherto, but with constantly renewed efforts; at lowest, I am inuring myself to the new *conditns* under whh the poor remnant of life must be spent or wasted henceforth. Any [And?] the smallest alteratn of my silent daily habits produces an anarchy to me whh you cd not believe unless you saw it!— —

That you want to talk with me, is good news. Come & see me, I pray you, when you are in town agn, and you shall have plenty of that.

With many regards to Miss Kingsley,— and to Mrs Kingsley *Senior*, when you see her!—

Yours always

T. Carlyle

The Caliban Book Shop offered the following autograph note, dated 22 March from Chelsea but without a year. TC's handwriting has a clarity not seen in his later letters, implying that the note to an unidentified friend of JWC was written perhaps early in the Carlyles' London tenure.

My dear Madam,

I write by my wife's order, to say how sorry we are that your kind summons to us cannot be answered. My poor wife has got this influenza a *third* time, and lies ill, early in a way to make us all looking grave. It is a sad *wrong-side* this, to the pleasure you offer us. Let us hope better things another time.

You have not dated your Note, but I suppose my half-guess will hit.

Always, Dear Madam,

Yours most truly

T. Carlyle

In another auction, librarians Schuetz and Fraas both noticed the oft-copied lines "Simon Brodie had a cow," a piece of Scots nursery-room doggerel that TC faithfully repeated to satisfy autograph seekers, the latest example on the market being dated 5 April 1851. The complete text of the "Simon Brodie" quatrain may be found in Rodger L. Tarr and Fleming McClelland, *The Collected Poems of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (Greenwood: Penkevill, 1986), 73.

At Freeman's in Philadelphia, Mitch Fraas located and photographed a TC letter to an unidentified correspondent that has been published in the print and online editions of the Carlyles' letters. The differences between TC's holograph and the published sources that provide the text in the *CL* and *CLO* are minimal: no terminal punctuation for the date line; "playactor" is a single word; and there are two paragraph breaks (before "On the whole," and "There is another.")

Sara Seten Berghausen of the David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Special Collections Library wrote to advise of a TC

letter to Charles Kingsley (not the one mentioned above by Melvin Schuetz) dated 1 March 1850 that has shown up in a recent catalog of an unnamed dealer. The letter has been published in an incomplete form in *CL* and *CLO* with text from Mrs. Kingsley's biography of her husband; perhaps we soon will have the letter in complete form if the offer from the Rubenstein library has been successful.

These leads and finds represent a small portion of the work done by librarians for this journal and the Carlyle Letters Project over the course of nearly 80 years. Thanks to professionals such as Shuetz, Fraas, and Berghausen, the work of completing the epistolary history of the nineteenth century via the letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle is made possible.

David Southern