

“The supreme comfort of your presence”:

The Letters of John Forster to Thomas Carlyle,

PART I

TRANSCRIBED AND ANNOTATED BY
KENNETH J. FIELDING AND DAVID R. SORENSEN

IN 1998 THE LATE PROFESSOR KENNETH J. FIELDING BEGAN to transcribe letters of John Forster to Thomas Carlyle that were held by the Armstrong Browning Library in Waco, Texas. The Forster materials formed part of the extensive Harlan collection of books and manuscripts, which had been donated to the Library by the scholars, editors, and bibliophiles Aurelia Brooks Harlan (1899–1991) and her husband, J. Lee Harlan, Jr. Aurelia Brooks Harlan was the daughter of Samuel Palmer Brooks (1863–1931), president of Baylor University from 1902–31, and his wife Mattie Sims Brooks (1868–1940). Fielding was unable to complete the transcriptions, and following his death in 2005, David R. Sorensen inherited Fielding’s complete set of photocopies of the Forster-Carlyle correspondence. The editors are grateful to Rita S. Patteson, Director of the Armstrong Browning Library, for generously granting permission to publish transcriptions of these letters in numbers 31 and 32 of the *Carlyle Studies Annual*.



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq / Cheyne Row / Chelsea

Postmark: FE 7 1849 / 58 L. I. Fields / 7th Feb^y 1849

Dear Carlyle

Hearing reports that “Whiteside’s Italy”¹ is not sent back: but it is of no consequence at all, as Mr Toots² says, and can stay over as long as you please.

Milnes³ amazed me by introducing Squire⁴ in full council at the library the other day—I protesting (god forgive me!) that I knew of no such man.

He also babbled about recovered portions of the Ironside Diary⁵ which were to be given to the world. Whereat I marvelled much though I didn’t say anything.

As you say I must go over & hear all about it. But I have not been very well lately. I hardly know what.

Affect^c regards to Mrs Carlyle. I found the enclosed letter in one of the books you had sent me sometime since.

Ever yours sincerely

John Forster

¹ James Whiteside, *Italy in the Nineteenth Century* 3 vols. (London: Bentley, 1848); the book was not included in a batch that TC was returning to JF. TC had lent the books to Lord and Lady Ashburton, who had been reading them at the Grange. On 6 Feb., TC had asked JF to “bid Henry [Henry Rawlins, JF’s factotum] compare this arrival of Books with the list of those sent; and if there is any discrepancy or mistake, let me *have warning immediately*” (CL 23: 228).

² Cf. Dickens, *Dombey and Son*, No. 9, ch. 28.

³ Richard Monckton Milnes (1809–85; *ODNB*), a member of the London Library Executive Committee.

⁴ William Squire (1809–80) of Great Yarmouth, a forger who convinced both TC and JF that papers belonging to his “ancestor” Samuel Squire, an adjutant to Cromwell, were authentic. With JF’s assistance, TC published thirty-five of the letters in *Fraser’s Magazine* in 1847. Following a critical outcry, TC and JF defended their decision to publish the Squire papers as part of an article in the *Examiner*, 15 Jan. 1848; see K. J. Fielding, “A New Review (of Himself) by Carlyle: The Squire Forgeries,” *Carlyle Newsletter* 3 (1982): 9–14.

⁵ On 23 Jan. Squire visited TC (the first meeting between them) and promised to send him “one little fragment relating to the ‘sack of Peterboro Cathedral’ he had copied from his ancestor’s journal long ago” (CL 23: 225). TC wrote to Lord Ashburton, 6 Feb., “Cromwell’s character remain[s] precisely what it was in all points, whether Squire be real or be imaginary” (CL 23: 225).

58 Lincoln Inn Fields
23^d June 1855

Dear Carlyle

I send you the fresh copy of the Memorial.⁶

I only wait your announcement in regard to Lady Palmerston,⁷ to proceed in the matter of the Times.

But it will not be the better if you can so far anticipate me in this Times proceeding as to bear this paper to Lowe,⁸ & bespeak his interest for it.

The only practical thing to settle beforehand will be the names (not more than 2 or 3) to receive subscriptions, and a banker, if an honest & safe individual of that species may be found.

Adieu dear Carlyle

I am always yours

John Forster

Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq / 5 Cheyne Row / Chelsea
Postmark: NO 5 1855

Guy Faux Day 1855

Dear Carlyle

I stop at Chapman's shop⁹ to write this note to you.

Hardly had I despatched my note to you on Saturday when letters began to tumble in. Before this reaches you Dickens's

⁶ TC drafted a memorial to Lord Palmerston as the first step in obtaining a pension for Anne Elizabeth Lowe (ca. 1777–1860) and Frances Meliora Lucia (ca. 1783–1866), daughters of Mauritius Lowe (1746–93), painter and friend of Samuel Johnson. Anne was Johnson's goddaughter and a beneficiary of his will. JF assisted TC in preparing an appeal later published in the *Times*, 31 Oct. 1855; see *CL* 30:97–100.

⁷ Emily, b. Lamb, formerly Lady Cowper (1787–1869), society hostess. Through his friend Lady Stanley of Alderley, TC had tried to persuade Lady Palmerston to bestow an annuity of £20 on the Lowe sisters; see *CL* 30: 324.

⁸ Robert Lowe (1812–92; *ODNB*), leader writer of the *Times*.

⁹ Edward Chapman (1804–80), partner in Chapman and Hall, 193 Piccadilly.

packet will have arrived. I think that Lichfield proposal¹⁰ has much in it. I also have a letter or two—one proposing to get an admission for our clients into some “free” cottages at Gravesend—which I have told my correspondent was exactly (as he might have perceived from the Times article) what the poor ladies did not want.

However I think now we shall get all that is required without further solicitation by Circular or otherwise.

I have posted the Letter to the Times—with only the alteration of a word or two to say that you have “no other” mode of thanking & identifying “than” so and so—otherwise it might have been fancied that this single letter was the only one received.

Dickens will accompany me to the Athenaeum on Wednesday—to accommodate whom I say $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour later. At 5, therefore, in the morning room of the Athenaeum, we three will meet on Wednesday.

Till when, dear Carlyle, Adieu. Every yours truly

John Forster



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq / Humbie / Aberdour / Fife N.B.

Postmark: A.M. JY 15 1859 S. W.

19 Whitehall Place

15th July 1859

Dear Carlyle:

It was a great pleasure to me—more than I could well make you understand, I fancy—to get your note. It was a sharp illness, such as I never before had—spasms in stomach with touch of inflammation, happily got into subjection by the good Elliotson before it became dangerous. But it has left me not in my usual condition—very susceptible to fatigue on the least exertion, and not at all equal to these terrible Dog Days. We are again today (after a cessation from that extreme fierceness

¹⁰ Dickens wrote TC, 4 Nov., sending him five letters, one from Rev. W. G. Cooksley (1802–80; *ODNB*), his son’s tutor at Eton, and another from Richard Greene (b. 1801), banker, of Palmer and Greene, Lichfield. In Jan. 1856 Greene was forced into bankruptcy, and the bank was closed.

for the days) at 90° in the shade.

Happily, however, I had already done what you so kindly and wisely counsel me to do. I have taken a little detached house at Anerly¹¹—about a quarter of an hour’s quiet walk from the Palace—a nice little place with a “garding” and a padlock, and plenty of cocks & hens—also a little open carriage to drive about in—and we have shut up Montagu Square¹² for 3 months! If only you and Mrs. Carlyle (of whose contemplated performance with the Cuddie¹³—a Northumbrian word which brings all my boyhood back to me—my wife heard with excessive delight, as I did) should return to Babel from those silent hills & vallies and the poluphlosbeia before the 3 months are over! What a joy to get you down here to our neat handed country messes for a day or two!

Meanwhile I rejoice to think of you, dear Carlyle, riding daily thro’ those glorious scenes, much meditating—and am fain to be content as I may under the necessity, for the present, of coming and going myself each day between this and Anerly by the Croydon Railway—for business compels me to be here daily, and leaves me, after the travelling, eating, a little reading, and sleeping, small time for what would be ten times pleasanter business to me. But one is put at any rate (at least I hope) doing no harm.—Neither fighting at Solferino, nor peace-making at Villa Franca.¹⁴

¹¹ In the borough of Bromley, 7 mi. / 11 km. SW of Charing Cross.

¹² JF married Eliza, b. Crosbie (ca. 1819–94) in 1856; they lived at 46 Montagu Sq., Marylebone.

¹³ TC wrote JF from Aberdour in Fife, “Tell Mrs Forster . . . that my Wife has got a Cuddy (anglice [in English] Donkey), and begins to be happy” (*CL* 35:142).

¹⁴ The Battle of Solferino, 24 June, resulting in the victory of the Franco-Piedmontese alliance led by Napoleon III and Victor Emmanuel II against the Austrian army led by Franz Joseph I. On 11 July, an armistice was signed at Villafranca, SW of Verona, between Napoleon III and Franz Joseph, handing much of Lombardy over to France, which in turn ceded the territory to Piedmont. Venetia remained in Austrian possession. Victor Emmanuel accepted the terms, but his prime minister Count Cavour resigned, objecting to the compromise with Italian nationalist aims. Napoleon III was eager to strike an agreement with Austria for fear of antagonizing Prussia. On 30 June, the new Palmerston government announced a declaration of neutrality in relation to the conflict between France and Austria.

Oh, Carlyle, come and set things straight for us! Would you undertake the affair if we put it in your hands?—Never was war so imminent as in these peace-making days, and we shall live to see the shouters for “Neutrality” making long faces before all is over. How sick the word would have made Cromwell, or Elizabeth!—Prussia is the next mark for the “most Sagacious Prince in Europe” (as Disraeli calls L. N.), and, when Austria and Russia are rubbing their hands at that, one wonders what England will be doing.

However, we have Adam Bede¹⁵—that’s something—and the chaste and believing “Miss Evans” to write more Adam Bedes for us, as often as the luxurious Lewes¹⁶ can spare her from his pleasures. In all this there is some comfort.

My wife desires very kindest regards to you and best love to dear Mrs Carlyle, in which I join with all my heart and all the strength that remains to me.

Adieu—dear Carlyle. Think of me sometimes. I never cease to think of you.

Yours most truly

John Forster



P. S. You’ll send back B’s letter, when quite done with it, to 46 Montagu Square

1861

Abergavenny: 11th August

Dear Carlyle

I meant to have sent you a line before I came away on this Welsh pilgrimage—but I was hurried at the last, and could not.

I wished to send you this letter of Browning’s about his wife’s death and his own future plans—the substance of which he permits me to tell to any friends interested in him, and I know your interest, as well as his reverence & regard for you.¹⁷ Dear Mrs

¹⁵ *Adam Bede* by George Eliot, published in Feb. 1859.

¹⁶ George Henry Lewes (1817–78; *ODNB*), with whom George Eliot had lived since 1855.

¹⁷ Part of Browning’s letter is missing; the remainder contains a description

Carlyle, too, might care to see what he says. It is a very manly, true, & honest letter—I think: increasing one’s love for Browning.

I wanted also to add a word to a request I lately preferred to you—and which I hardly made strong enough, I fear.

Don’t think of completing “Frederick” in two more volumes! You cannot do it in a manner fully worthy of what is already done—how, possibly, can you in the space you have left yourself! I am convinced that you cannot—and I woke the other morning in the midst of a violent argument of which the drift was to show that by attempting it you’d not only do wrong to a magnificent piece of work by huddling it up at the close, but would inflict upon yourself all kinds of harassments and worries and troubles still more to be regretted by those to whom nothing that even you can write is so valuable as You.

Do think of this in good time, dear Carlyle, and determine at once to add another volume—

Wales is very interesting—even this southern and least picturesque part; & the Vale of Usk in which we now are, with the Skyrriid and Sugarloaf Mountains circling it, has pictures even, as good as the North. What most pleases one, is to me the history of the inflammable little fiery and angry Province still written in the ruins of the innumerable old ivy-grown towers & castles to be seen in every town or village that one passes—none so insignificant but has its unpronounceable fragment of an abode where some old Celtic Chief once perched himself—now riddled by mines and railways, and darkened by English smoke more incessantly than by Welsh mists.

There is an excellent managed Asylum here¹⁸ to which a fair

of Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s last days. Browning wrote of her death: “There was no struggle, no sigh even, only a dreadful suspense for a minute or two—then a silence. I thought she had only fainted as her head lay on my arm—then there was one least contraction of the brow and Annunziata cried, ‘The blessed Soul has passed away!’ Why should I not have tried to tell you so much of this as will give you my own one comfort in some degree and not leave you to fancy there was pain, struggling, or the consciousness of departure and separation?—She went, like God’s child, into his presence with no more apprehension or difficulty than *that!*” (*New Letters of Robert Browning*, ed. William Clyde DeVane and Kenneth Leslie Knickerbocker [1951], 139).

¹⁸ The Joint Counties Asylum, Abergavenny, opened in 1851, served Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Brecknockshire, and Radnorshire; from

quantity of land is attached—and here we played cricket and bowls yesterday with a party of patients, assisted by the Medical Officers and a good homely kindhearted Chaplain,¹⁹ who, besides being a good scholar, talks Welsh as well as he talks English (perhaps a little better), and who has made the precious discovery that to take a real interest in these poor creatures, and induce them to join in games & amusements, & any kind of occupation, is worth a million preachings, & sermons.—I turned out to be a very good bowler and covered myself with laurels.

All the incidents in this strange new life²⁰ are not quite so agreeable, however. At a grand asylum near Bristol²¹ the other day, a poor fellow burst into tears as he caught sight of me, and called out my name.²² He had been a fellow student with me in Amos's²³ law class centuries ago. Ten years since, when I last saw him, he was one of the most promising of all the young Chancery lawyers and had written a very learned book on the Succession to Real Property.²⁴ About nine years since, he told me, he fell down one day on the floor of the Crown Court, and rose with one side paralyzed. It was very sad—the petitions to keep in such cases (which are not to be helped) are so painful.

Adieu, dear Carlyle. With love to Mrs Carlyle I am ever affect^y yours

John Forster

1858–83, the superintendant was Dr. D. M. McCullough.

¹⁹ Rev. W. G. Davies (1821–1900), B.D. (Oxon., 1866), rector of Llanvihangel-Gobion, near Abergavenny, chaplain of the Joint Counties Asylum for thirty years, author of articles and books on mental health.

²⁰ JF had been appointed secretary to the Lunacy Commission in 1855; in 1861, he became Commissioner in Lunacy.

²¹ The new Bristol Lunatic Asylum, which opened in 1861.

²² John Hubback (1811–85), barrister at Lincoln's Inn and author; he married, 1842, Catherine Anne, b. Austen (1818–77), niece of Jane Austen. In 1847 Hubback suffered a nervous breakdown and was institutionalized for the remainder of his life; Catherine Anne Hubback later emigrated to California.

²³ Andrew Amos (1791–1860; *ODNB*), barrister at Lincoln's Inn, professor of English Law, University College, London, 1829–34.

²⁴ *A Treatise on the Evidence of Succession to Real and Personal Property and Peerages* (1844).



Hastings—April 4—1864

I am so grateful to you—my dear, dear friend—for the pretty little gold seal you sent me yesterday. I never had a birthday remembrance I shall value so much. It shall hang on my watch as long as I have any interest in time—which I hope will be a long time, and that we shall have many many meetings meanwhile. Because I found you looking so much better than I dared to expect after all your suffering that it has made me very confident the worst is past. —God bless you and support you, my dear dearest Mrs Carlyle—You know (do you not?) how continually I think of you, and wish and pray for you to be well again more fervently than I wish for anything. I am ever your grateful and affectionate

John Forster



Envelope: Mrs Carlyle / 117 Marina / St. Leonard's on Sea

Postmark: London MY 6 64

Reverse: Hastings 8 May 64

Palace Gate House

Hyde Park Gate W

6th May 1864

I have been made very happy, my dear Mrs Carlyle, by somewhat better news of you lately. I shall be thinking of you continually while I'm away, and hoping on my return to see you.

For I go on Monday to Birmingham, and all those midland places where I have work that will detain me about three weeks—and after that I have work that will take me, for a couple of days at least—where, of all places, do you think?—to Hastings! So, mind and be sure to go on improving—no matter how slowly—that I may find at any rate not less of your dear old self than at my visit to Warwick Square; where it seemed strange indeed to me that you should have suffered so much and changed so little!

Do you remember Elwin?²⁵ An excellent-good fellow, who edited the *Quarterly* for some time better than it deserved to be edited. Writing to me this Monday, he mentioned incidentally that he had been riding out somewhere in January last with the Bishop of Oxford,²⁶ when all of a sudden he (the Bishop) broke out into a long and powerful description of Edward Irving which purported to be a repetition of an account he had received a little while before from you at Lord Ashburton's. Elwin speaks of it thus—"You never heard anything of this kind more extraordinary. He imitated her voice; and the tone, manner, and phraseology were so precisely her's that the illusion was complete. It was not only a marvellous specimen of mimickry, but of memory; for the language, which was very striking, was unmistakably Mrs. Carlyle, and the speech certainly lasted ten minutes. He mimicked her not in mockery, but in homage. He admires her as much as I do."

There now, my dear friend, I think you will laugh at that, and let the good kind Miss Welsh,²⁷ whom I love for the love of you, have a laugh too.

Carlyle told me I might write to you—not expecting (of course!) any answer. And so I end with my love to you, and my kindest regard to Miss Welsh (the small individual will write for herself—tho' I might say much for her here if there were room), and am Ever & Ever, my dearest Mrs Carlyle, most affectionately yr^s J. F.



Thomas Carlyle Esq.
Care of Honorable B. Baring
Bay House
Alverstoke, Hants.

58 Lincolns Inn Fields

²⁵ Elwin Whitwell (1816–1900; *ODNB*), rector of Booton, Norfolk, 1849–1900; ed. of the *Quarterly Review*, 1853–60.

²⁶ Samuel Wilberforce (1805–73; *ODNB*), bishop of Oxford, 1845–69.

²⁷ Margaret ("Maggie") Welsh (b. 1821), daughter of JWC's maternal uncle John; she lived in Aughtertool with her brother Walter; she came to nurse JWC from Dec. 1863 until early May 1864.

Dec. 6, 1865

Dear Carlyle

How are you? And how is Mrs. Carlyle?

I write to vent a little mortification upon you. It is not my fault that this weeks Examiner does not contain a proper notice of Cromwell. It is written and printed . . . but, being rather lengthy, has been at the last moment thrown over by the printer for supposed want of room and other shorter things of inconceivable flatness substituted in its place.

I did not know this until ten minutes since, & write at once to you, that you may not at any rate think its non-appearance a piece of indifference of mine. But yet I fancy you would not be in danger of thinking so?—Nevertheless I may as well send you this note.

I don't stop to talk of the Book in it—having already, as I say, talked of it in print. But I am more & more impressed by it—still maintaining some [omitted portion of sentence] you.

By the way though . . . how comes it that you missed that letter to Henry Downtell, which is printed in my Cromwell, Vol. 1, p. 40.²⁸ I feel myself in a-kind-of-J. O. Halliwell-P.-Jr.-S.-position.²⁹ For it will not be said that I am the Zealous Unpaid Doctor—the collector of autographs zealous beyond law—the thief probably dead long since—

Answer, oh most earnest Cromwellian—and illustrious be the answer, try to retain your kindness for (Dear Carlyle)

Yours most

John Forster



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq / 5 Cheyne Row / Chelsea S.W.

²⁸ *Oliver Cromwell, Lives of Eminent British Statesmen* (1838), 6:40. Henry Downtell was tutor to Cromwell's son Richard at St. John's College, Cambridge; see *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, Works* 9: 209–12.

²⁹ James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps (1820–89; *ODNB*), antiquary and literary scholar, accused in 1845 of stealing valuable books from the Trinity College, Cambridge library, and notorious among bibliophiles for cutting up 17th-century manuscripts and pasting the fragments in scrapbooks.

Postmark: London-S. W. 6 JU 22 66
In TC's hand: Forster's 2 (june, aug^t 66) / (& "Dickens" inclosed.
 / Forster Money in Bank 22 June 1866! / for attempted Balance
 in Cheque Books 18 June '66

Palace Gate House
 Kensington W.
 22^d June 1866

Dear Carlyle

The Bank people made no difficulty—and everything is now as you wish.

The 125£ principal—together with £3.1.4 interest—(128.1.4 in all)—has been transferred to your account; and to your account has also been paid today the cheque for 100£ which I gave them.

I have their acknowledgement to this effect—

Dear Carlyle, Ever yours

J. F.



Envelope: France-Affranché / Thomas Carlyle Esq^{re} / The Dow^r
 Lady Ashburton's / Mentone
Postmark: Charing-Cross. W.C. JA 19 67

19 January 1867
 Palace Gate House.
 Kensington. W. London

I weary for a little tidings of you, dear Carlyle, and shall be very grateful for a small word you can manage easily to write it, giving good account of yourself. We heard, before your sister³⁰ left London, of your safe arrival, as well as of some undisturbed successful nights that followed; and great will be the comfort of hearing that that promise was kept, and that all since has gone prosperously.

How often I have been thankful that you left us at the time

³⁰ Jean Carlyle Aitken (1810–88).

you did! Ever since, we have had the most atrocious weather, of which all sorts of accounts will of course have reached you—which if there be any truth in the “Suave mari magno”,³¹ must have made you, out yonder at Mentone, all the warmer and more comfortable. I went to Robert Landor’s³² in a fog, the day before we left, and returned in a worse fog, the day after you left; and those two fogs settled me. They brought on a terrible attack of bronchitis and from that Saturday the 22^d of December to Tuesday the 8th January I never left the house. Only indeed on odd days since I have ventured—but I am getting now a little courage, though the frost and snow continue, and fancy I may say I am pretty nearly right again.

But how with Christmas or other news I am like to have, you will judge. I saw hardly anybody but our good kind little Quain³³ and his news was not much. Dickens of course came (we were to have passed Christmas with him) to tell us all about the freezing up of Gad’s hill, and that his “Mugby Junction”,³⁴ the Christmas number of his *All Year Round*, had sold 250,000. I had Spedding³⁵ too, with his pamphlet about Authors and Publishers, which all arose from his exulting satisfaction in having received from some honest American, three pounds fifteen (more or less) for the reprint of Bacon in Yankee land: said £3.15 being the sum of his entire receipt up to present date from his labours and lucubrations in connection with the serpent-eyed Chancellor. Here be facts, hopeful and otherwise, for a distinguished man of letters!

³¹ Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 2:1: “Pleasant it is, when on the great sea.”

³² Robert Eyres Landor (1781–1869), brother of Walter Savage Landor, rector of Nafford, Birlingham, Worcestershire.

³³ Sir Richard Quain (1816–98; *ODNB*); he was appointed senior censor at the Royal College of Physicians in 1867.

³⁴ A collection of short stories by Dickens, Charles Collins, Amelia B. Edwards, Andrew Halliday, and Hesba Stretton, published in *All the Year Round*. Dickens contributed “Barbox Brothers,” “Barbox Brothers and Co.,” “Main Line—The Boy at Mugby,” and “Branch Line—The Signal Man.”

³⁵ James Spedding (1808–81; *ODNB*), editor and biographer, living in Westbourne Grove, London. In Jan. he published *Publishers and Authors*, in which he argued that English publishers, unlike their American equivalents, had refused to pay him for editing the works of Francis Bacon. For a review of Spedding’s work, see William Hepworth Dixon, *The Athenæum* No. 2046 (12 Jan. 1867): 41–42.

The same celebrated writer will also perhaps peruse with mild enjoyment the subjoined illustration of what may be called the “high and palmy” state of criticism in the present day. A literary periodical on Saturday last had a slashing article against D^r Latham’s preface to his new edition of D^r Johnson’s Dictionary, in which the modern Doctor is denounced as a “pompous” “bombastic” idiot, who uses the following preposterous language to puff off his execrable additions to his predecessor the greater doctor—

“In hopes of giving longevity to that which its own nature forbids to be immortal,
I have devoted this book, the labour of years, to the honour of my country.”

the critic mistaking Johnson’s own preface for Latham’s tearing the whole of it to pieces as a villainous brag, and ending thus “We do not wish to kick a man who is down, but we do beg Longman to cancel this author’s preface, and substitute one for which it will do a little more justice to Johnson’s work.”!!!³⁶

—I have not been able to settle satisfactorily the Frederick Chapman affairs, but by the time you return you will, I hope, find everything done. We cannot get the accounts from Edinburgh of the sales of the Inauguration Address³⁷ then until “Candelmas”, March next, it being the alleged rule there to give accounts only from “Candlemas to Candlemas”. At my request F. C. has written to desire them again to make special exception in this case, and we shall see next week if they will do so.

It would be a happiness to find that there were other things here I could be any help in during your absence: but I hope

³⁶ “Review of Johnson’s *Dictionary*, ed. R. G. Latham,” *Reader* No. 211 (12 Jan. 1867): 24. The reviewer, Frederick James Furnivall (1825–1910; *ODNB*), attacked Johnson’s preface to his dictionary, under the mistaken belief that it had been written by the editor of the Longman’s volume, Robert Gordon Latham (1812–88; *ODNB*). The error was exposed in an article published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 Jan., entitled “Shocking Suicide of a Reviewer,” and was widely discussed in the periodical press. The 12 Jan. issue of the *Reader* (1863–67) was its last. For a history of the journal, see John F. Byrne, “The Reader,” *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter* 2.1 (1869): 47–50.

³⁷ TC’s rectorial address in Edinburgh, 2 April 1866. Forster was also assisting with the publication by Chapman and Hall of a 30-vol. Library edition of TC’s collected works; see Tarr, *Bibliography* 448–49.

you know that. I have been going on as well as my poor spirits and continual cough would let me at the Landor book:³⁸ in which I lose heart often, and less often fancy it may contain something that will interest you—always the reward I promise myself, and flatter myself with, at these hopefuller times.

Dear Carlyle, there are none in the world to whom good tidings of you will be welcomer than here. My little wife asks me to say all kindest things for her—God bless you. I am ever your sincerely attached friend John Forster



Envelope: France-Affranché / Thomas Carlyle Esq^{re} / The Dow^r Lady Ashburton's / Mentone

Postmark: Charing-Cross. W.C. / MA 9 67

Palace Gate House: Kensington W.

9th March 1867

Now that more than a month is gone, dear Carlyle, I think the “by and by” has come. Almost ever since that welcome letter of yours arrived, I have been travelling over Suffolk and Norfolk, from which I returned two days ago. My wife has had a poor time of it in my absence: venturing out only twice: but we are now both of us reasonably well, and hopefully looking toward the spring.

Delightfully you described to me Mentone and its climate, and its villages in the rocks lying under the sea-mountains—only I wanted to hear just a little more of yourself, and how the nights and days go with you, and when we are to look for you again. But all this in good time will come.

When in the country Frederick Chapman sent me the acc^t of Edmonston³⁹ of Edinburgh for the Address; by which it appears

³⁸ JF's biography of Walter Savage Landor, published in 1869. TC responded to JF, 24 Jan., “There is no doubt but you will make a pretty little Biography; some speaking Life-Portraiture of *yr* indignant hero and his course thro' the world, wh^h will be interestg to us all. *His* features were sufficiently pronounced; his bad *world's* too are legible, and how he spurned it fiercely abt, and went, in various cases, to the length of . . . *spasm* in his controversies with it; and yet died unconquered and with harness on his back: really a kind of hero, tho' with import^t deduct^{ns} on some sides!” (CL 44: 130).

³⁹ Alexander Edmonstone (d. 1894), of Edmonston & Douglas, publishers and

that 3000 copies were printed of which something more than a half up to this time are sold. They tell me the arrangement was to give a royalty of £10 on every thousand—that seems small; but was it so? I was to have received a formal memorandum from your brother, after conference with the Edmonston's but never had it. Supposing the alleged sum to be correct, I say that 30£ will have to be now paid: whereas the Edinbro' man claims that this is not due until all sold. Give me merely a line as to this: telling me what you remember of the arrangement, and I will settle the rest, and see that the money is paid. Edmonston sends in the whole account Frederick Chapman accounting to him for the number sold in London.

From the letter I have requested that your general account of sales to the end of 1866 should be handed to me; and upon it I find that upon reprints and use of stereotypes for 1500 copies of Sartor, and 1000 each of the volumes of French Revⁿ, Schiller, and Chartism, £385 is now due. Shall I obtain it from him and forward it you—or (perhaps the better course) send it as a payment in his name to your bankers?

Into the accounts generally I went at some length with him yesterday—all but the “Frederick”⁴⁰ as to which he had not immedi^y at hand the information I wanted; and there is nothing perhaps to which objection can fairly be taken, under the arrangement as now existing. When “Frederick” comes into it, something may have to be said. He is however, in future, besides the accounts rendered each half year, to make a return at the same periods of all the stock on hand at the time when each is rendered. The charge of the stereotype plates rests exclusively with Mr Robson:⁴¹ who keeps them under lock & key, and is responsible for the exact number taken from them—of which he also, in my opinion, ought to make return to you. But I forbear to make my express stipulation of this kind, till I have

booksellers, 87/88 Princes St., Edinburgh. The first Edinburgh edition and only printing of TC's *Inaugural Address* was published jointly by Edmonston and Douglas and Chapman and Hall in 1866; see Tarr, *Bibliography*, 196–97.

⁴⁰ Profits from the sale of the 16-vol. Cheap Edition (1864, 1869). Chapman and Hall added a 7-vol. edition of *Frederick the Great* to this edition in 1869.

⁴¹ Charles Robson (1805–76), TC's printer since 1837, a native of Kelso, partner in the printing firm Levey, Franklin, and Robson, 23 Great New St., Fetter Lane.

the opportunity of talking the matter over with you.

I was at Cambridge the other day and went & saw the Sidney Sussex portrait of Cromwell⁴²—fine certainly, but not the finest. It was in the Portrait Exhibitⁿ. One has no room in the College itself for any other association or memory. It was high term and the colleges were busy & thriving over the production doubtless of the due number of wranglers and wooden spoons—but considering that I had just visited an asylum in Norwich having a senior wrangler for one of its patients, I thought the question of which article was best worth turning out might not be an unfair one.

For how many reasons, dear Carlyle, I wish I were near you at this minute—this paper would not hold the telling: but it would be something to hear you on the household suffrage bill which the Ds are to give us on Monday week⁴³—if the smash does not come before then. Return Alpheus⁴⁴ for a thousand better reasons than that, but all of them infinitely worthless if you still continue to enjoy and think yourself better at Mentone. My wife sends all most affectionate wishes with mine. A word of news—good news—of yourself will gladden our hearts. Dear Carlyle, I think of you constantly, and am—far more than is here to be said—Yours

J. F.



Envelope: Mr. Carlyle Esq / 5 Cheyne Row

In JF's hand: 5 May, 1867 / Verbal Answer

In TC's hand: List of Books (Londⁿ L^y) is within

⁴²A crayon portrait of Oliver Cromwell executed by Samuel Cooper (ca. 1607/8–72; *ODNB*) owned by Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and loaned to the National Portrait Exhibition in 1866.

⁴³The Second Reform Act of 1867 was introduced by the Derby and Disraeli cabinet, which took office following the resignation of the Liberals in 1866. The Act's household suffrage clauses, which enfranchised approximately 58% of adult males in the boroughs, was a more radical bill than the one introduced a year earlier by Gladstone and Russell. The bill received the Royal assent, 15 Aug.

⁴⁴Mythical Greek river that Hercules re-routed to clean the Augean Stables in a single day.

Palace Gate House
Kensington W.

journal 1788 (p. 392?)
Rievallensis (20)
Antiqⁿ Repertory (23)
Anc^t (Brit.) Drama (17)
Apuleius Golden Ass (24)
Aristophanes (Wieland, W¹ &.) 31
Athenaeus (38) (—English)—
Ayre, Life of Pope (1745) p. 42
Baratariana (Dublin) 57
Heron (Wⁿ Counties 1792) 348
Barrington (Daines)
journey to Morōco (18 |1| 6 (61)
Beamish ~~Northmen~~ discov^r America (61)
Forsyth, Beauties of Scotl^d (637)
|Boll.| Gibraltar (66)—
Life of Gay (181), & Sobieski (ib)
Cavour (201), Strange Engravings (204)
t.o.
Diog^s Laertius (211)—
Jürgens Luther (394), & C^s Egmont (ib)



Tuesday—7th May 1867

Yes or no—dear Carlyle? It grieves me that I cannot say an earlier hour than seven o'clock—for I would rather have made your dining hour ours; but I shall quite understand it if you tell me you cannot come tonight; and in any case a few days before my return I will write to you.

Dear Carlyle—ever yours

J. F.



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq / 5, Cheyne Row / Chelsea
Postmark: London-W JU 10 67

~~Palace-Gate House:~~
~~Kensington. W~~
Royal Hotel. Plymouth
26th May 1867

Dear Carlyle

After four weeks' unquiet wanderings, ill at ease in many ways, and with health indifferent at the best, I have the prospect now of turning my face homeward on Saturday next. That will be the first of June—and we have had weather, even in these Western Southern parts, that November itself might have been ashamed of.

Just before I left (the day after seeing you) I had a word with Frederick Chapman about a Projected “Library” edition of the works, I told him that if he named it to you, I had no doubt you would refer it to me—and that I should think well of the proposal, if he would make it the opportunity of getting rid of the over-printed huge volumes of Frederick, and begin his literary experiment with a proper library edition of that book. I mention this now that you may think of it, & talk it over with me on my return.

Often and often I think of you, no day passes that I do not; and I have been hoping that the Summer, when it comes, will not pass without your having Miss Welsh with you. I give you fair notice, dear Carlyle, that, once in London again, and remaining there undisturbed, I hope, for several weeks, I shall try hard to get my fair share of you.

Coming on here from Bodmin in Cornwall I stopped to see Port Eliot, the birth place of Sir John.⁴⁵ The mansion, enlarged by all the successive Eliots since, has not much remaining that identifies itself with him—but one can piece it out as it was, amid wonderful scenery, opening everywhere upon a fine river, and with a Church forming almost part of the House, so closely they stand together, which is really noble, a sort of cathedral on a small scale, with two towers of about the eleventh century.⁴⁶ Capital family portraits in the house—and in the church the old register with Sir John's baptism on its first page, establishing

⁴⁵ Sir John Eliot (1592–1632; *ODNB*); JF published *Sir John Eliot: A Biography 1590–1632* in 1864.

⁴⁶ St. German's Priory Church, next to the Port Eliot estate.

the correctness of Antony Wood, and the incorrectness (from trusting a statement by Browne Wills^s) of your humble servant and friend.⁴⁷

Adieu, dear Carlyle. I am sick of the Reform Bill, and the Compound Households, and the right of women to vote, and the right of Irishmen or Yankees to commit treason without peril to their necks, and the right of Beales to the Park, and all other corresponding Rights of Men—⁴⁸ but I am always far more than I can say Yours

John Forster

My companion through all my journey has been Sartor



Palace-Gate House:

Kensington. W.

Royal Hotel—Ross—Herefordshire

29th September 1867

Dear Carlyle

It was very good of you to write me that nice letter—and it was like yourself to give that great comfort to poor Frank Cunningham!⁴⁹ I will still hope that what I am now writing may

⁴⁷ In his biography of Eliot, JF noted that Anthony à Wood in *Athenæ Oxonienses* (1691–92) “fixes [Eliot’s date of birth] incorrectly at 1592” (1: 3), citing the evidence of Browne Willis’s *Notitia Parliamentaria* (1715, 1716, 1750).

⁴⁸ JF refers to a variety of events revealing the public preoccupation with “rights”: the speech of John Stuart Mill, M.P. for Westminster, to the House of Commons on 20 May 1867, on the inclusion of women in the electoral franchise; the trial of three Irish-American Fenian activists, John Warren, William Halpin, and Augustine E. Costello, who had sailed on 12 April from New Jersey to participate in the Fenian rising in Ireland, but were subsequently arrested and tried for treason-felony at Dublin Special Commission; and the decision by the Tory Home Secretary Spencer Horatio Walpole to overturn an earlier ban and to permit a mass rally in Hyde Park by supporters of parliamentary reform led by Edmund Beales (1803–81; *ODNB*), president of the Reform League.

⁴⁹ Francis Cunningham (1820–75; *ODNB*), army officer, literary editor, and son of TC’s close friend Allan Cunningham (1784–1842) and his wife, Jean, b. Walker (1791–1864). His only sister Mary Cunningham (ca. 1822–67), died, 20 Sept.

have to follow you either to Addiscombe or to Berkhampstead. Don't let the summer pass without that little change—or, failing both, come to us!—

We had been going on somewhat better here till the last day or two, when something of a move backward came. I am still hopeful however that, on the whole, progress will have been made. The place is extremely healthy, the air high and healthy; & she lives almost wholly in it. But the nights do not mend.

I heard nothing from poor Frederick Chapman until yesterday—when he wrote to tell me that “Niagara”⁵⁰ was ready. Let it come down then, say I (with the murderer in *Macbeth*);⁵¹ as soon as he is ready to tell what he will come down with. So I wrote yesterday to say he was to furnish the number printed and the sum near payable—when he should have license to proceed.

Indeed, strange to say, I shall have to be in town for a couple of hours tomorrow: so I have told him to send a memorandum to Whitehall, when he shall have immediate reply. Returning here in the afternoon, I shall only have from 2 to 4 at Whitehall: for which I am to undergo the fatigue of some ten hour's travel: but it was necessary to have a Board, and they could not have it without me.

What I am going to add, you will think stranger still—but Dickens is here. He came last night and returns with me tomorrow morning. He did not of course know I was to be at Whitehall tomorrow—or he needed not to have come: but I am all the gainer.

The truth is I had written to him (on being asked my opinion upon certain papers & calculations sent me) in a sense so adverse to his enterprise of visiting America, that he came down in sudden alarm to discuss and remove (if possible) my objections:⁵² announcing his advent by telegram yesterday afternoon. We are proceeding to the discussion immediately: but I fancy it can only end in one way: that he will fail in convincing me, that I shall note entirely fail in convincing him,

⁵⁰ Chapman and Hall printed 4,000 copies of *Shooting Niagara: And After?* in Oct.; see Tarr, *Bibliography* 207.

⁵¹ Cf. *Macbeth* 3.3.

⁵² Dickens sailed for the United States, 9 Nov.

but that he will go all the same.

Chorley (enriched by his brother's fortune) has announced to D that he has executed his will leaving Mary Dickens two hundred a year.⁵³ I tell him that so amicable a man ought to put nobody under the painful temptation of wishing him out of the way and that he had better settle the thing at once. In this way do we worldlings contemplate such generous deeds—

Dear Carlyle—I am to give my wife's love you and also Dickens:—And I am again to urge you not to stay in Chelsea all the summer months. That you were but here!—Adieu—Ever yours

John Forster



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq. / 5 Cheyne Row / Chelsea / London S.W.

Postmark: Leamington / A OC 20 67

Tachbrook—n^r Leamington
20th October 1867

Dear Carlyle

I give Miss Landor's address⁵⁴—having come here some days ago to bring my wife, who has been passing a week with her, while I did some official work to forestall the necessity of having to do it at a later and colder time—

But alas! I have to tell you of the breakdown of all my plans—
Tuesday I had to go to London to attend a Board I caught

⁵³ John Rutter Chorley (1806–67; *ODNB*), poet and scholar of Spanish literature, close friend of TC, who died 29 June and whose wealth at death was listed as “under £45,000”; his brother Henry Fothergill Chorley (1808–72; *ODNB*), music critic and miscellaneous writer, was an intimate friend of Mary (“Mamie”) Dickens (1838–96), Dickens's eldest daughter, and at one stage members of the Dickens family expected him to propose marriage to her.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth Sophia (“Sophy”) Landor (1816–89), eldest daughter of Rev. Charles Savage Landor (1777–1849), rector of Colton, Staffordshire, and Catherine, b. Willson. She inherited the Tachbrook estate on the death of her uncle, Henry Eyres Landor (1780–1866); Forster dedicated his biography of Landor to her.

some cold, unnoticed at first, but afterward very troublesome—

The result has been a very bad attack of bronchitis indeed—attended by much suffering—

I fought with it day after day till it fairly broke me down—and when I came here, a doctor had to be sent for from Leamington, who looked grave at first, but has ended by doing me some good.

After three days of bed I am sitting up today for the first time, and we have resolved on risking the journey to Kensington tomorrow.

This little note, dear Carlyle, will have to follow you into the country somewhere, I hope: but we will meet as soon as you return.

I liked very much indeed all the additions to Niagara⁵⁵—and I would rather have this little tract, with its supreme and withering scorn for unverity of every kind, than all the rest of English literature now going.

I shall know whether you are in Chelsea or not, as soon as I return.

Adieu, dear Carlyle—with my wives & my own affectionate regards

I am ever yours

John Forster



Palace Gate House—Kensington

W. 5th Nov^r. 1867

Dear Carlyle

I have waited for Quain's report today that I might tell you, what I hoped he would empower me to say, that the cough for the present is really gone, and he permits me to resume my work tomorrow. I shall however be very very careful—for, though we have an hour or two of sunshine at midday, the afternoons are gray, chilly, and Novemberish; full of warning to such poor brokendown mortals as I am. There is an odd quite unusual

⁵⁵ TC made numerous changes to the pamphlet version of "Shooting Niagara," which had been published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 1 Aug. 1867. See D. J. Trela, "Carlyle's 'Shooting Niagara': The Writing and Revising of an Article and Pamphlet," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 25.1 (Spring, 1992): 30–34.

depression left by this attack which I cannot shake off—some sort of weakness I suppose—but I'll write again in a day or two, as I hope more cheerfully. Our good Dickens leaves on Saturday—farther removed himself from the cheerful than I have ever known him to be, notwithstanding the Dinner Celebration; at which, they tell me, the too sensitive Mr. Trollope almost shed tears over the Woe! Woe! (better spelled perhaps without the e) denounced in memorable manner lately to writers of fiction.⁵⁶ So I comfort myself in my misery by mentioning the miseries of others. But I find it not nearly so effective after all as thinking of the brighter side—for instance, that you are really enjoying and profiting, in all happy ways, by your present holiday. Adieu, dear Carlyle—I am ever yours

John Forster

My wife, who dreamt of you last night, desires kindest thoughts to you.



Palace Gate House
Kensington W.
Wednesday, 4th Dec^r '67

Very sorry, dear Carlyle, that I did not see you yesterday.

This was an unexpected breakdown. Though my circuit was unusually heavy, and I had had greatly more travelling than

⁵⁶ In his toast at the farewell dinner for Dickens, held 2 Nov. at the Freemason's Tavern, Lincoln's-Inn Fields, Anthony Trollope denied TC's assertion in *Shooting Niagara* that fiction "has a close cousinship . . . with lying." On the contrary, Trollope declared, "The state of literature in England at this moment is not only very prosperous, but is also very healthy. And I believe that in spite of those prospects of the 'Falls of Niagara' which have lately been brought before us, in spite of those wails of 'Woe, woe from the housetop' which have lately been heard from the lips of a great prophet among us. We all love that great prophet because he has passed a long life among us, a long life of truth and honesty, and has done good work; but I am inclined to think that he has now allowed himself to be carried away by a melancholy enthusiasm of foreboding until he forgets that there is a God still above us, and thinks that it is his duty to tell his brethren that nothing but 'Woe, woe from the housetop' is fitting word to be addressed to the people" (William Charles Mark Kent, *The Charles Dickens Dinner* [1870], 24).

I expected, I got through reasonably well, my cough having spared me all the time, and I was anticipating the pleasure with which I should tell you so on Sunday last, when I meant to write to you from Clifton.

Alas I fell suddenly ill—a violent & continuous pain in my right side—on Friday, and suffered so much all that night that I desperately resolved on Saturday to go back to London.

It is an attack of congested liver—which the doctor seems to think, like the bronchitis, connected with the *teterrima causa*⁵⁷ suppressed gout. I certainly had eaten nothing to bring it on—but for three days previously I had not-dined till 8 o'clock, which might have had something to do with it.—

I continue very weak indeed after the pain I have had—and the remedies—but I consider all the gravity of the thing to have passed away.

Dear Carlyle—Forgive all this about myself. I heard so gladly a fair report of yourself yesterday. Now I hope, with small intervals, to have a longish rest here.

Yours ever grateful

J. F.



Wednesday 11th Dec 1867

Dear Carlyle

Do not think it strange that I have not called to see you. I went out on Saturday for the first time—and had quite counted on going to you on Sunday; but the day was so bad I did not dare to venture out. I was so vexed!

On Monday I was at a Board in Whitehall till the Ev^g; yesterday I was all day visiting at Hoxton; and today I am obliged to go to Hanwell. I am little able to do these things—but the law requires that they should be done before the year expires. I continue very shaky, but still the cough spares me.

My wife would have gone down to see Mrs Aitken⁵⁸ today but I am depriving her of the brougham by taking it to Hanwell.

⁵⁷ Cf. Horace, *Satires* 1.107–08: “most shameful cause”

⁵⁸ TC’s sister Jean married, 1833, James Aitken (1809–87).

We were very sorry to miss her and you yesterday.

Tomorrow I have to go into Surrey—but on Saturday I mean if possible to have a rest—and on that day please God I hope to see you. Our kind remembrance to Mrs Aitken.

Adieu, dear Carlyle. You know how much I am

Ever yours

John Forster



13th April, 1868—Easter Monday

You will I know, not object, dear Carlyle, to let our little dinner stand for Thursday at ½ p-6 instead of tomorrow. Do not reply; because you will kindly consent if you can, and I will take the consent for granted. Unless indeed you can not; which would add much to the annoyance with which I write this. I have not stirred out of doors since you saw me. Not that perhaps I am really worse; but have been taking very powerful medicines, and these are to continue over tomorrow. If I should have any doubts whatever on Wednesday I will not scruple to write again—but I cling to the hope that I may certainly have you here on Thursday, for that will be the best medicine of all! So, only till then, adieu, dear Carlyle.

Ever yours

J. F.



Palace-Gate House

Kensington. W.

7th May 1868

Dear Carlyle

I had arranged to go down to you this morning, and should have done so if you had not written.

I will not now wait till I have seen & arranged with Mr

Watts⁵⁹ to whom I wrote as soon as your letter came, proposing to go up to him today, or tomorrow, or Saturday—or to receive him here one of these days—

I explained to him also that he must select one of them as I leave town early on Monday morning

Word is brought back to me (I sent to him by messenger) that he is “out” this morning. Doubtless I shall see him tomorrow—and in that case will see you on Saturday. Certainly, either that day or Sunday—

Meanwhile I will go to Chapman & arrange as to number of volumes. There will be no difficulty. What you propose seems to me quite right.⁶⁰

I write in haste. I have been going on reasonably well. My cough much less at night. But I shrink from my impending journey & the hotels discomforts!

Dear Carlyle—I am ever yours

John Forster



Palace-Gate House.

⁵⁹ George Frederic Watts (1817–1904; *ODNB*), painter and sculptor. Forster had originally commissioned Watts to do an oil portrait of TC in June 1867, but Watts was unhappy with the result. Forster urged the artist to begin work on a new portrait, and persuaded TC that it should be used as the frontispiece for the first volume of the proposed Library Edition. In his letter to JF, 6 May, TC reported, “I went to Watts the day after you spoke; Watts is ready with the readiest, will ‘take a sitting’ *quàm primum* [as soon as possible]: only he wanted first to see you ab’ the size” (MS: Forster Collection). TC noted in his journal, 24 May, “Forster urged and agⁿ urged me, w^d take no denial: ‘Sit to Watts; Picture for me!’ and I am actually sitting; went Friday last, am to give my second sitting tomorrow. Very mournful to me, sad and wearisome and dreary, this too,—such joy and interest as there w^d have been over it, & never agⁿ now can be! Alas, alas.—But I feel this to be faintly a kind of quasi-duty also, —perhaps, perhaps? —nay I had at bottom a kind of . . . feeble wish that Watts, who has been aiming towards it for ten years past, sh^d finally paint me. . . . It will cost Forster £150, poor Forster; but he has bro’ it on himself, and w^d take no denial.”

⁶⁰ In the same letter to JF, 6 May, TC noted, “In regard to dividing of the ‘Library Editn’ . . . I counted today; and cd see no handsome way, but that of making Fr^h Revolution 3 voll., Crom^{ll} 5 voll., Miscell^s (with Chartism &c) 6 voll., & Friedr^h 10 volumes!” (MS: Forster Collection).

Kensington. W.

11th May 1868

Dear Carlyle

With my foot in the stirrup which means that the brougham (alas for the bearer of that name! but he has passed very peacefully away) is at the door—I send the Cromwell⁶¹—I cannot help putting in a word, at same time, for more than “a head” in the Watts portrait. You will do what seems right to you in that—

Adieu, dear Carlyle—All health & good be yours

Ever Your grateful friend

J. F.



Palace-Gate House

Kensington. W.

21st May 1868

Dear Carlyle

I do not give my address in Birmingham because I am hastening on to Derby.

It quite distressed me—the pains and trouble you took about the poor miserable little Abyssinian book.⁶²

The truth was that last time I was “out” with the same doctor-colleague who now accompanies me—he expressed a wish to see this book, from which some extract has interested him; and I said I’d bring it with me to entertain him next

⁶¹ TC had been looking for a copy of the 3d edition of *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1850), which served as the model for the Uniform edition of *Collected Works* (volumes 10, 11, and 12) published by Chapman and Hall, 1857–58. The lord chancellor Henry Peter Brougham (1778–1868; *ODNB*) had died on 7 May.

⁶² James Bruce (1730–94; *ODNB*), Scottish traveler, author of *Travels and Adventures in Abyssinia*, ed. J. Morison Clingan (Edinburgh, 1860). TC wrote in his journal, 4 Feb., “A most unreasonable, confused, unimport^t, and yet more or less attractive work. The Author has some fine qualities; rugged valour, faith in his own insight & eyesight, a contemptuous sincerity, something of original & genuine.”

circuit we went together.

But there it is—and here we are—and he had clean forgotten it—and I have never reminded him of it—and the last friend on earth I should have wished to put to any botheration is the only one who had a quite needless worry and annoyance in the matter—

I passed through Lichfield yesterday, and ran up to the marketplace to have a peep at old Johnson's statue.⁶³ A poor thing, though better than nothing. Such as it is, it seemed to fill the old quiet place—and to leave nothing else to be seen in it.

If Mr. Watts makes yet no sign, might it not be well to send him a line? He may be waiting for it.

I guess that you did not go to Vichy,⁶⁴ but shall hope to hear of your flight somewhere to a cooler place than London is likely to be.

Goodbye, dear Carlyle. I write in a great hurry.

Ever & for ever yrs

J. F.



29th July 1868
Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.

Written in a great hurry indeed

Dear Carlyle

It has been a great delight to me to hear that you are enjoying your release from London and all its manifold heats & horrors.⁶⁵

⁶³ Dr. Johnson's statue, Market Place, Lichfield, Staffordshire, executed by Richard Cockle Lucas (1800–1883; *ODNB*) in 1838.

⁶⁴ At the end of May, TC's brother John Carlyle visited the spa town in the Allier department in Auvergne. He failed to persuade TC to join him.

⁶⁵ John Carlyle had been urging TC to visit Scotland in order to seek treatment for his hernia from Dr. James Syme (1799–1870; *ODNB*), surgeon and professor of clinical surgery at the University of Edinburgh. Syme was a leading expert on the subject. In the *Edinburgh Medical Journal* in 1861, he

I shall not myself be absolutely released till Monday next—though we left Kensington Saturday, and are now located at

“Coldblow
Banstead
Surrey”

—I am obliged to be in London daily by 10, and do not get back till between 6 & 7. Next Monday is however my last day at Whitehall, and though it seems but small change to turn from the Lunacy to the Landor Mill, I shall at least be turning and labouring at the last alone, and with free wholesome air blowing about me. The place is very pretty & you will come & see it—

Before leaving Kensington I wrote to Watts. He prepared me for my visit by first writing to me

“I cannot profess to say that the portrait is finished—the extreme heat having been so very unfavourable both to Mr Carlyle’s sittings and to my working; but “if Mr Carlyle (ah!)” will give me some sittings (as he kindly promised to do) at his return, my utmost shall be done to produce a satisfactory picture.”

Perhaps it was because of the lowering of my expectation on this intimation preparatory—but the expectation with which I went was more than satisfied. All that your face contains is by no means there—want of softness—want of sweetness—of humour—many wants—But much that is there rendered very grandly indeed—a face of a prophet—very sorrowful—very mournful—wanting the correction I would have him give to it in the refining and humanizing way—but certainly the material for the greatest picture of you that has ever been done. I left him upon the whole very satisfied—knowing both what I disliked and what I liked in it: and himself appearing heartily to agree with me as to both—Such as it is, I can hardly

first proposed a “radical cure of reducible hernia” (6: 865–67). TC noted in his Journal, “Thursday 8 (or 9?) July 1868. Am to set off, Sat^y morn^g, to Scotland on the Syme &c errand. Woe’s me, woe’s me, what I have to meet now in that old Land of my birth, now become Grave of Those that made Earth lovely to me!—And in such a hurry, too, and hurlyburly of confusions bodily and other!—But my Brother gives me no rest; better I sh^d go, and have done with it; I shall at best be left in silence agⁿ.” JF was writing from Frederick Chapman’s cottage in Banstead, Surrey.

make out how he manages such a performance: for his personal points do not come out stronger on closer acquaintance.

The thing now is to manage the completion in time for engraver. For the latter six weeks will suffice.

Adieu, dear Carlyle. I have written very hastily because of the opport^y presenting itself. I will write again. I think of you very much and am always yours

J. F.



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq / The Hill / Dumfries / N. B.
Postmark: Epsom AU 15 68

Coldblow, Banstead,
Surrey,
15th August 1868

Dear Carlyle

You would not think the gladness your little note gave here! If all that good will but continue—and you take the right way for it—Syme shall be the Saint of my kalendar. Yet our Foxy friend promises great things.⁶⁶ The very day after this news of you de-lighted us, the papers brought us the prophecy by him from which it appears that a very few years will enable us to master all our difficulties in this world, to “balloon” us into the Mountains of Rasselas or other regions of perfect felicity, and to consume every bit of our own smoke. Upon the whole, though I shall stand by Syme, I don’t think he has much chance against Reynard.

We are all the better on these modest heights—as we hope you will be on your hill—since the Rain came: though it was rather hard it should come on the very day I went with Croydon to hire

⁶⁶ In his letter of 2 Aug. to JF, which TC sent from Syme’s Edinburgh residence, Millbank, he wrote, “I really now think I shall derive some considerable benefit from it [Syme’s procedure]. Thank Heaven, and the excell^t Syme, skillfullest and helpfulllest of men, a man of the finest frank good-hum^r, too, and honest as . . . the best Scotch oatmeal! . . . The grand topic, I found was our little ‘Sir James,’ or Foxius II [Syme];—who I gradually grew to believe to be verily a dangerous and reckless couch [as a conch shell, projecting sound] . . . whom simple people, simple women especially, w^d do well at all times to keep far from them!” (MS: Forster Collection).

a little open carriage, and should drench me through on my way back in the “Basket” which I had so triumphantly arranged should have no cover. These are the disadvantages of not being a prophet. However, I changed at once and am not the worse. Indeed, except for the irritation of body from the heat, I have kept very well; and for the last week have been working somewhat. But the difficulties are great of coming to a close—handsomely or otherwise; and looking over old dead letters is a very sad occupation.

But it will come to an end, somehow, and you will be back in good time, and perhaps we shall see you here! I hear fair accounts of progress—and that, besides completing the 6th vol of Friedrich, you are getting on with the 3^d of the Library Ed. So I comfort myself with the prospects of early pleasant meeting—with something of our burdens dropped off.

I wind up with a little bit of business: before which I must interpose, from the small individual here as well as myself, all affectionate remembrance to your sister and yourself. I turn to your brother, whose Dante I am reading again. And pray tell Mrs. Aitken that “the Keswick Hermit”⁶⁷ does not impress me so favourably as to give me much hope of a portrait after that style. Yet now I look again—there may be something in him, though much to wash, that the “washed-out” would not be the worse for!.

Now for the business—as to the request of this Mr Hain Friswell⁶⁸—(a pity he should have left frizzling well for writing ill—“Hain” being evident corruption of the real prefix (hair) derived from some peruke-making progenitor)—I don’t myself quite like this connection of your name with these catch-penny things. On the other hand Frederick Chapman tells me the man will pay 20 perhaps more guineas: and I cannot satisfy myself, either, that the harm would be twenty guineas or thirty guineas worth! I asked Chapman also whether the advertising the name in that connection would do good or ill for the great Lib. Ed. Enterprise—and he inclines to the ill; though he does not speak very decidedly. Truth is, therefore, I am a little puzzled—and

⁶⁷ Saint Herbert, a hermit and disciple of Saint Cuthbert of Lindisfarne. In the seventh century, he established a hermitage cell on an island in Derwentwater nr. Keswick.

⁶⁸ James Hain Friswell (1825–78; *ODNB*), essayist and novelist. Chapman may have been considering the possibility of advertising in Friswell’s popular works.

have said that answer cannot be given till Wednesday or Thursday next. Will you just think of it again, and give me one line before then? My fear is that such advertising by other publishers may in some degree disconnect you from your own editions & give people the notion that others have some right over your works. But there may be nothing in this. Only it gives me pause—and I must think of it further. You will help me if you can. But if you don't write, I'll judge for myself.—And now Adieu, dear Carlyle, that every good & happiness this world can afford may be yours is the prayer of your always grateful friend

John Forster



Envelope: Mr. Carlyle Esq / 5 Cheyne Row / Chelsea / John Forster

Palace-Gate House.

Kensington. W.

Saturday ev^g 20th. 19 Sept^r 1868

Dear Carlyle

Not five minutes since (it is now 6.40) I found your note, sent on from Coldblow, lying on hall-table here.

We left the pleasant place only a very few days ago—pushed back by dire necessity of work that was waiting & insisting to be done.

I will go to you at Chelsea before 2 o'clock tomorrow (Sunday) and tell you all and hear all. I long to feel the pressure of your hand again.

I have been suffering dreadfully from an eruption & irritation of skin—a great trouble. I had to come up & see a “skin-doctor”. He has done me little good as yet—⁶⁹

Landor—ah, well, you shall hear of Landor too, and we will discuss many things.

The great point is—that I seem to feel from your tone of

⁶⁹ TC wrote to his brother John A. Carlyle, 26 Sept.: “Forster came to me Sunday last; he has got some troublesome cutaneous eruptⁿ all over him except the face; wh^h seemed to me probably a blessing in disguise, and to have given him a look of *health* such as he has wanted for years” (MS: National Library of Scotland).

writing that you are certainly better—God grant it, and that you may only feel the full benefit now you are back—

With kindest regard from her here—Adieu till tomorrow

Dear Carlyle

J. F.



Sunday—11th October 1868

Dear Carlyle

You would probably wonder not to see me last week—but alas! I was in town only two days! one of which I had to give up to an official visit at Uxbridge, and the other to business at Whitehall, being dragged away next morning to take the place of another Commissioner, whom sudden illness prevented from doing what was necessary to be done. I came back from Cornwall on Tuesday night late, and left London again for Hampshire, where I am now, at 9 on Friday morning. On the intermediate Wednesday night my wife had come back from the North with her poor invalid—and is now at home.

I write now to say that I shall be again in London on Thursday night next—and that you will see me (all going well) at Chelsea on Friday morning. I shall then hear what has been done in the Watts affair—and we will take final steps as to the engraving of portrait—⁷⁰

⁷⁰ TC recorded in his journal, 21 Oct.: “Yesterday the Engraver took away that Photogr^h, to engrave it as frontispiece to ‘Library Editⁿ,’—coming out, vol. 1 of it, first of jan^r instant. All details ab^t that & ‘small Fr^h’ in 7 vol.! completely fixed and settled by aid of Forster, some days ago: thanks to him many! The Watts picture, he decided, was out of the game; Watt’s elbow having fallen lame, flatly disabling him from finishing it in time, or till one knows not when. I myself am as well pleased (this Photo^h had Her fav^r, were there nothing more on its behalf); —and in reality I think it w^d have pleased me best of all, had there been no ‘frontispiece’; but they w^dn’t hear of that. My indifference to all this puddle and bother ab^t my ‘Works’ so-called, astonishes even myself. ‘Works, poor cobweb of Works, what are they to me, in this stage I am got to, and with such an audience as there now is!’ that is my const^t tho^t on the matter.” The engraver was Joseph Brown (1809–87), who had exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1833 and had produced stipple and line engravings after artists such as George Romney, John Opie, J. Robson,

The post goes out so early on Sundays in this little town of Fareham,⁷¹ that I have only time to say thus much—and if time would let me I could hardly add any thing very agreeable—for I caught a chill coming down here & have now my cough added to my other troubles—As yet however it is not very bad—

Adieu till Friday, dear Carlyle.

I am ever yours

John Forster



Envelope: Thos. Carlyle Esq / John Forster

Dear Carlyle—I returned day before yesterday, and have been hoping to be able to go to you today. But alas! the cold prevents me. I dare not venture out. If, by chance, you should be walking this way, you are sure to find me at any time—but if I do not see you, you shall see me tomorrow or next day or the very earliest day practicable, at Chelsea. Your's ever, dear Carlyle

J. F.



Palace Gate House
Kensington W
Saturday 21 Nov^r 68

Dear Carlyle

Just a word to say that the Brougham will call for you in Cheyne Row this evening at 6—and bring you here to take us up. I have a characteristic letter from the Washed out to show you! Dear Carlyle ever yours

J. F.

In TC's hand: Procter's⁷² "last birthday dinner:" ach Gott!—

and George Perfect Harding.

⁷¹ Market town at the NW tip of Portsmouth harbor.

⁷² Bryan Waller Procter ("Barry Cornwall") (1787–1874; *ODNB*), poet and barrister, married, 1824, Anne Benson, b. Skepper (b. 1799–1888), old



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq / 5 Cheyne Row / Chelsea S.W.
Postmark: 2 DE 21 68

Palace Gate House
 Kensington W
 21st Decemb^r 1868

Dear Carlyle:

Your kind note was very precious to us⁷³—and I thank you, far more than these words will say for me, for the supreme comfort of your presence on Thursday. You will receive some letter, I believe, today; but you will not mind that. I will send the Brougham for you to Cheyne Row at ¼ before 11 on Thursday morning, to bring you here. Again & again I thank you, dear Carlyle, and am ever yours

John Forster

You will let me say even now that we cling to the hope that you and your good kind niece will share our dinner with us on Christmas Day. We shall of course be quite alone. Do not answer as to this. You will tell me on Thursday.



Palace Gate House
 Kensington W
 22^d Decemb^r 1868

Dear Carlyle

This is merely a word to say that the Brougham will call for

friends of the Carlyles; Procter had recently been paralyzed by a stroke, and could venture out only in an invalid's chair.

⁷³ JF's sister, Elizabeth Forster died on 19 Dec. 1868 after a long illness. In a letter of condolence, TC wrote: "Thank God the poor Wearied One's now at rest; victorious in her sore agony; inexpugnable to misery and pain and sorrow any more. Take care of poor Mrs. F.; take care of y^rself. Surely I will attend on Thursday day; it is well my hest, right well. May blessings be ab^t you, dear Forster; may y^r woe be softened into perfect tenderness, and have blessing in it" (MS: Forster Collection).

you on Thursday morning, not at a $\frac{1}{4}$ to 11, but at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11. We do not meet so early as was fixed at first. My wife is a little better: hopes to be able to get up today: and joins me in all kindest thoughts to you. Dear Carlyle, I am ever yours

John Forster

We had the kindest and most welcome present from Mary Aitken⁷⁴ last night—A box filled with all good things in generous profusion.



Palace-Gate House.

Kensington. W.

Sunday morning 26th Jan. '69

Dear Carlyle

I am earnestly hoping that we may see you tonight at 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ past, or your own hour; though I was not quite satisfied with the report we had last night. If you do not come, it will only be a delay of a day or so, I hope; and you must do exactly what is best. I shall understand a verbal yes or no—and perhaps see you later in any case. How much I should be effected by the words you have written on my “Sartor” you will know⁷⁵—happily for me, as I could hardly succeed in telling you. Dear Carlyle I am ever yours

J. F.



Royal Hotel—Bristol

16th May 1869

Dear Carlyle

I write to you on a very small sheet of paper, but indeed it is all I have till I take in a fresh supply tomorrow; and today must

⁷⁴ Mary Aitken (1848–95), who married her cousin Alexander Carlyle in 1879.

⁷⁵ *Sartor Resartus*, vol. 1 of the Library Edition (1869); see Tarr, *Bibliography* 449. The inscription reads, “To John Forster, Esq^r (Palace-Gate House), my ever-helpful friend,—without whom this Editⁿ and much else, had never been: gratefully, T. Carlyle, Chelsea, 20 Jan^y 1869” (Forster Collection 1380).

not pass without a line to you.

Froude probably would tell you that I wrote a line to him from Gloucester about the Miss Jewsbury matter?⁷⁶ Not having again heard from him, I suppose he did what I suggested by way of explanation as the point in which the case appeared to have been understated in our memorial—

Whether we get an immediately favourable answer from Gladstone or not, I have no doubt whatever that we shall get Miss Jewsbury's name upon the next list; and meanwhile, if she should indeed be quite disabled from work, it will be easy so to anticipate her claim as to make it in no degree painful to her.

Since I began this little note a telegram has brought me announcement of my poor dear old friend Dyce's death. Last night he passed away.⁷⁷ We have expected it for some weeks now—during the last week, almost hourly; but I grieve, and shall grieve long, for him. He was so good, so scholarly, so gentle—and knew so much that seems nowadays passing completely out of knowledge; leaving nothing better in its place, but a vast deal that is infinitely worse.

I shall have to go up at the end of the week for the last sad office to him—yet again I must return; for work about Worcester will have still at that time to be done. I shall hope, however, towards the latter end of the week following—about June 27th or 28th—to be in London again “for good”; and I will see you first of all—

I have a very unfavourable account of my poor wife from Tachbrooke today. She went there on Friday last—hardly fit to travel; and she seems to have suffered from her journey. It was an old promise she made to Miss Landor to stay Whitsun-week with her, while I should be perforce away—

Dyce has left his books, & many curious things—to the Kensington Museum.⁷⁸ His library of old English plays is, I

⁷⁶ TC and JF were seeking to secure a Civil List pension from the prime minister, William E. Gladstone (1809–98; *ODNB*), for the Carlyles' friend Geraldine Jewsbury (1812–80; *ODNB*).

⁷⁷ Alexander Dyce (1798–1869; *ODNB*), literary scholar.

⁷⁸ Dyce's library comprised more than 14,000 volumes, including many rarities of English, Italian, and classical literature. He also bequeathed his art collection to the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), which included English watercolors and theatrical portraits.

believe, quite unique. I am his executor—

Adieu, dear Carlyle. Say kind things from me to your niece and Miss Welsh. I will see you as soon as I am back. Do not trouble to answer this. I am always thinking of you and hoping that you Sleep. Ever, & as ever yours—

J. F.



Palace-Gate House.

Kensington. W.

23^d May 1869

Dear Carlyle

I was in town a few hours yesterday for poor Dyce's funeral. Immediately after, I returned to Tachbrooke to see my wife; who came on a visit to Miss Landor ten days ago, and has since been so unwell that she has only managed to be out twice during her stay. She is now however a little better, and proposes to go back to London on Tuesday. I go to Worcester tomorrow to do work that will occupy me until Wednesday afternoon—when I hope myself to return home.

In the half hour I was at Palace Gate yesterday—I saw the Schiller⁷⁹ with its interesting additions, very well done; and the beautiful mention you make of the time when Goethe prefaces became known to you and her—very touching & beautiful I thought it.

There was a letter from Froude which had followed me from Bristol, and to which I have replied today. I have told him that I will confer with you as soon as I am back—and, if he should not meanwhile have done what I have ventured to say, I should think best, we will then determine what is most advisable to be done—

He is under a great mistake in supposing that the sum at Gladstone's disposal is only an annual 1200£—it is an annual 1200£ a year: a thing very different.

I ought not to be selfish, and I have been trying to take for

⁷⁹ *The Life of Friedrich Schiller* (1825), vol. 3 of the Library Edition. In Appendix I, TC included a memoir of his "Friendship with Goethe."

granted that you don't like the second volume of L- less than the first—but somehow I think I should like first to have one word, when you shall have been able to read it. I really want no more—and this only if I should not be able to get to you on Thursday. You will certainly see me before the end of the week—

My wife asks me to say all kindest things for her to your niece Miss Welsh as well as yourself—in which I heartily join. It will be the best news to hear you have been sleeping well.

Adieu, dear Carlyle—I am ever and as ever yours

John Forster



Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.
Thursday morning
27th May 1869

I can have no such pleasure or reward, dear Carlyle, as the intimation of your liking or approval gives—

There is a Board at Whitehall today—adjourned expressly to admit of my attendance. My visit to Cheyne Row, therefore, must be tomorrow.

I saw Coleridge,⁸⁰ the Solicitor General, last night, and spoke to him very urgently as to our memorial for Miss Jewsbury. He went into it, I am glad to say, very warmly—for Miss Jewsbury's own sake as well as ours—and said he'd use whatever influence he had with Gladstone at once about it.

I shall write and tell Froude of this—if possible today—

Dear Carlyle—

Ever Yours

John Forster



⁸⁰ John Duke Coleridge (1820–94; *ODNB*), judge.

Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.
Sunday, 30th May 1869

Dear Carlyle

If, when you have read this letter. you will goodnaturedly forgive my having troubled you with it, that is all I wish. Of course you will not think of answering it.

I ought not to have asked you yesterday whether my second volume had at all moderated your unfavourable judgment of Landor as a writer—but I was sufficiently punished for I came away much “down in the mouth” by what you said thereon, and (let me confess) a little self-reproachful for not at once having attempted to make the small protest which I now venture to ask you to let me make.⁸¹

I understand, I think, so well, the point of view, far higher than that open to ordinary criticism, which such a thinker and writer as you are entitled to take, in passing judgment not on Landor only but men greater as well as less than he, that I never myself presume to question it—and in the cases, which indeed are very, very few, where I should ever have desired to do so, I have thought it much more becoming to be silent. So unspeakably great are my obligations to you, so poor a thing without you and all that I owe you I should think my whole life to be, that I have never heard an opinion of yours from which I differed without a sorrowful self-misgiving—and I really don't think I could get on at all if I fancied I had not a little bit of favourable esteem from you, to rest upon always.

Well—that brings me to the small protest I am going to make. It is not that your few words swept out of court me and

⁸¹ TC wrote JF, 26 May, “Most certⁿ it is, nothing has gone wrong in my relatⁿ to Landor and his *Life*. I finished the Book two weeks ago, with increase, not diminutⁿ of my respect for the many merits it has. A ‘*monumental*’ work I call it; such its solidity, precision, massiveness, completeness:—a very *mausoleum* to the ungovernable old Hero; far beyond what *he* c^d have expected; and a noble discharge of y^r duty to him” (MS: Special Collections, Spencer Library, University of Kansas). TC wrote to John A. Carlyle, 5 June: “Forst^r has just with intense labour done a Life of Landor; and is considerably chagrined that I don't much like either Landor or it. No remedy! . . . It is diligently, even candidly, and faithfully done . . . so much I have testified to himself, and will not more” (MS: National Library of Scotland).

all my poor laudation of poor L—for I had no claims to be made on exception from all the rest who have praised him: But that, as it seemed to me, you were making me an exception in another sense—and upon that I would just say a word.

You expressed a sort of wonder that, to such a man as Julius Hare,⁸² L—should seem so and so—as if others' praise surprised you less. Well, but I really think I know as much about English literature as Hare, and have the right at least to stand on no lower level;—and I wanted further to say that, though I have hardly so exalted views of L—as many bigger men than myself have expressed in various ways, and which it was only fair to put on record in my book, I ought not to have hesitated, as in a half-cowardly way I did yesterday, to repeat, even in the presence of your censure, that my late careful reading had increased, not diminished, my own admiration of many parts of his writings. These things of course are relative—and, where we attribute too little appreciation to others, there is always the danger of too much for ourselves; which I suppose would be Ruskin's excuse for comparing our Helps to Plato.⁸³ But there can hardly be a doubt that L-s' writings with all their defects arising from his temperament, have given pleasure to people out of the common—well, I won't go on. I have said perhaps too much, for, what business have I to bore you at all? Only I wanted to say that I did not praise L—as I have done, without the best consideration I could give—and without having really derived, myself from my late attempts to make myself better acquainted with him, the sense I have wanted to communicate to others. Else all the labour I have expended on a task which could otherwise be but a thankless one—as it threatens in all respects to prove—would indeed have been wickedly thrown away.

⁸² Julius Hare (1755–1855; *ODNB*), author, church of England clergyman, whose biography of John Sterling in 1848 had inspired TC to write an opposing version of Sterling's life.

⁸³ Sir Arthur Helps (1813–75; *ODNB*), public servant and author. Ruskin particularly admired Helps's compilation of contemporary commonplaces, *Friends in Council* (1847–59). In the first volume of *Modern Painters* (1843–60), Ruskin declared, "A true Thinker who has practical purpose in his thinking, and is sincere, as Plato, or Carlyle, or Helps, becomes in some sort a seer, and must be always of infinite use in his generation" (*Works* 3: 333–34).

Forgive me all this, dear Carlyle, and believe me, far more than I can every express in words, gratefully yours

John Forster

This letter was written on Sunday—I looked at it yesterday & thought I ought not to send it, lest you should think it imposed on you a necessity to reply. I reassure myself however as to this—and hope in any case to have your forgiveness.—We shall see you, with the “Child of Nature”,⁸⁴ on Sunday at 6



The Queen’s Hotel—
Alderley Edge
Near Manchester—23^d July ’69

Dear Carlyle

It was a great disappointment to me to have to quit London without seeing you, but there was no help for it.

I have had better accounts of you since I left—and these gladdened me not a little.

For myself, I have hardly been going on in what one might call a brilliant way. A terrible pain in the side attacked me some weeks ago—and though the worst of it seems to be over now, I have had to work under difficulties and disablements of which I have thought it best to say nothing to the small wife at Kensington—I’ll go home, well, if I can—

Your message came to me yesterday—the part of it about the Cromwell Edition⁸⁵ had been already attended to—and, in reply to the other part, I now send you at once what I intended to have kept to show you when we met—soon I trust—

You will see that by presenting the letters as I propose there will be no altercation of any kind necessary in lettering, numbering, or indexing—and the small errors of dates I will let Robson have to make at the proper places in the proofs—

Did I tell you that Rushworth hardly bears you out in what

⁸⁴ JF’s name for Mary Aitken.

⁸⁵ *Oliver Cromwell’s Letters and Speeches*, volumes 14–18 in the Library edition, published in 1870; see Tarr, *Bibliography* 449.

you say of Cromwell's having drawn into the town. He never got into the town—having been repulsed, as you correctly state. R's expression is "unto" the town.⁸⁶ He drew up to the town, but not into it—

Forgive these hasty words—and, dear Carlyle, alys believe me ever yours

John Forster

I shall be home in a fortnight or three weeks



Palace Gate House
Kensington W
Tuesday Ev^g. 10 Aug. 1869

Dear Carlyle

The small one here is so unwell that, very reluctantly, I give up the attempt I meant to make to get you here on Wednesday—

She will go for a few days to Dickens's on Thursday, and the change may do her a little good. I shall join her, myself, in the evenings; but every day for the next fortnight, and all the day, I am at Whitehall, having promised to do the secretary's work there for so much of his holiday.

After this fortnight I shall have first another to myself at home—when those letters shall be dated for you, and you may probably still be accessible in Cheyne Row. I am not however so abominably selfish as to wish that—for I would rather think of you "sole-sitting" in the airy halls of Addiscombe, or as far as the Hill at Dumfries above this "dim spot that men call" by all sorts of bad names, but which I really don't think so bad when there's nobody in it.

I have been much exercised in spirit by your sufferings in connection with the Poor picture, especially remembering what I

⁸⁶ Sir John Rushworth (ca. 1612–90), *Historical Collections of Private Passages* (1659–1701): "Cromwell then drew unto the town of *Farringdon*, and sent this second Summons" (6: 25). In *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, TC wrote, "Cromwell waits for infantry from Abingdon 'till 3 next morning,' then storms; loses fourteen men, with a captain taken prisoner;—and draws away" (*Works* 6: 206).

formerly said to you in connection with the Portrait Gallery. Now I only wish to say that nothing shall be done respecting it excepting what you may yourself desire, and that I hope to concoct a letter to Watts which may probably save you further botheration about it.

Adieu, dear Carlyle—When next week is over I shall look you up—merely for the chance there may be. Ever yours

John Forster



Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.
Tuesday—12th October 1869

Dear Carlyle

I am grieved to give you any further trouble in a matter which has not turned out so fortunately as perhaps its intention may have deserved.

Hoping to save you from the necessity of giving another sitting in what had become distasteful to you—I have requested the picture from Mr Watts, telling him I shall be quite content to accept it as it is—He writes in reply—

“If you will leave the picture with me yet a day or two I will ride over to Chelsea and see if Mr Carlyle will give me a sitting—If inconvenient to him now, I will send the picture to you & ask you to let me have it later when it may suit Mr. Carlyle to sit.”

It seems inevitable! and, if it were possible, I should ask you, just for my sake, to give him another hour. You shall have no trouble or annoyance beyond—If however (which I can well understand) you cannot go to him just now—I would ask you merely to “let him down gently”—not to tell him, I mean, of the decisive opposition the thing has provoked.—It troubles me beyond measure to ask all this, but I would not have the poor man suffer more than is needful—having done what he meant to be his best.

I came to town last week very ill—the return of my old cough made the previous three weeks of my wanderings quite wretched—and I have suffered very much since my return, though I begin to fancy I see land again. If the cough would only torment me less at night!

I have seen no one—but should have seen you only that I wanted to take the dated letters to you. This I will do in a few days. My wife had nothing but profit from her journey with me, & is very well. That is a comfort to me. Adieu for a day or two, dear Carlyle, and forgive your remorseful

J. F.

In TC's hand: Watts's Blotch-Portrait ("last sitting" to be, Friday next, 2½ p. m. to end at 4 forever).⁸⁷—So distracted a monster of Painting I have never seen before: "cross bet" a lunatic & an Imposter: —no feature of me recognizable in it, Fie!



Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.
17th October 1869

In TC's hand: Venison (from Loch Luichart)!—

Dear Carlyle:

Certainly—

“finer or fatter ne'er ranged in a forest, or smoked
in a platter”⁸⁸

—and most kind of you to send it! When I had recovered a little my amazement at its size, I saw immediately that my only chance was to buckle it without delay, and some steaks from it (our commonplace provisions already made, being ignominiously thrust aside) were smoking in a platter at 7 last night. They were admirable—the *canna deorum* could have had no divener dish!

There is something to add, too. Three days ago there came here to us as forequarter of venison from Lytton's at Knebworth⁸⁹—the

⁸⁷ Watts sent the finished portrait to Forster on 7 Nov. It was later bequeathed by Watts to the National Portrait Gallery in 1895. JF bequeathed the first version of the portrait that Watts completed between June 1867 and July 1868 to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1876.

⁸⁸ Oliver Goldsmith, “The Haunch of Venison, A Poetical Epistle to Lord Claire” (1776), ll. 1-2.

⁸⁹ Knebworth House, Hertfordshire, estate of Edward Robert Bulwer-Lytton,

whole of which, loin and haunch, would not weigh more than half yours! Yours too already ripe for eating; and the lord of Knebworth's not likely to be ready for a week or two—So I saw at once the way to get out of your generous gift not only much selfish but some unselfish enjoyment—and tomorrow evening there will go to Proctor a full half of the Knebworth present—

I could not consent to part with any of yours!

Dear Carlyle, my wife adds many thanks to mine.

I am ever yours

John Forster

I will see you in a day or two



Palace-Gate House.

Kensington. W.

Friday Ev^g. 19th Nov '69

Dear Carlyle

I had to go back to my office this week and have been kept close ever since—except the first two days when I was too unwell to go out—

Tomorrow I hoped to have a leisure day, intending to go to you: but I am dragged off, instead, to “Brooke House Clapton.”⁹⁰

I will however look in upon you before 3am on Sunday. On Tuesday morning I leave for about a fortnight's absence in Sussex.

But I am counting on you for Monday—when Froude comes expecting you—you and your good little niece. And I pray (humbly and contritely) for no disappointment.

Ever, dear Carlyle,

Yours, J. F.

1st earl of Lytton (1831–91; *ODNB*), poet, linguist, diplomat, and viceroy of India, 1876–80; he married, 1864, Edith, b. Villiers (1841–1936; *ODNB*), countess of Lytton, who later served as lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria, and after her, to Queen Alexandra.

⁹⁰ Brooke House Asylum, Hackney, managed by Dr. Henry Monro (d. 1891). Brooke House was formerly the estate of Fulke Greville, 1st baron Brooke of Beauchamp's Court (1554–1628; *ODNB*), courtier and author.



Eastwood Asylum
Red Hill, Surrey

_____ 186 _____

Tuesday—30th Nov^r 1869

Dear Carlyle

Your letter has just reached me—and I write the most hurried answer that a post may not be lost.

As to the Grainger and its contents,⁹¹ act exactly as if all were your own—as indeed they are, and it is my pride that they should be, for every purpose.

As to the Watts picture by all means too let the photographer⁹² be instructed.

He can take it, I suppose, where it now is—at any rate without removing it from the house.

If however this is not feasible—I will add that he delay proceeding till my return on Saturday next—as I should like to be present when the picture is removed.

I say this, assuming that the delay will not be material—but if the interval between this & Saturday is important, I give you carte blanche to act as you think best.

I write a line by this same post to F. C. [Frederick Chapman] to say that you will be with him tomorrow.

Dear Carlyle—with all earnest wishes I am

Ever yours J. F.

I go to Tunbridge Wells from this place—and am bent on being back on Saturday



Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.
Sussex Hotel—Tunbridge Wells

⁹¹ Possibly James Grainger (ca. 1721–66; *ODNB*), born in Duns, Berwickshire, physician, translator, and poet, author of *The Sugar-Cane* (1764), a four-part “West Indian georgic” describing working life on a sugarcane plantation.

⁹² Elliot and Frye, photographers, 55–56 Baker St., London.

December 1. 1869

Dear Carlyle

Very hurried was the note written to you from an asylum where I was yesterday—and hardly less so these few supplementary words.

For I am working hard to get back to London by Friday night if it may be—not later than Saturday certainly. And my enemy has been with me, unrelenting, all the time of my journeyings.

The note would sufficiently explain I hope, dear Carlyle, that you are to do exactly as you please in both matters referred to you—for though I expressed a wish for the day or two's delay in case the Watts pictures cannot be photographed at home, I lay stress upon that, and wish you to be guided altogether by what you find to be best.

I managed to write also yesterday a few lines to F. C. telling him especially that you would be with him the day following (today) and bidding him be in the way—as I hope you will have found him.

Dear Carlyle, I am ever yours (very thankful for what I infer to be a fairish report as to sleep)

John Forster

Love to Mary. And kindest regards to your sister and brother. Do not write anything in return for this poor scrap I will write to you again at end of week—when I hope to be better able—



Palace-Gate House.

Kensington. W.

11th July 1870

Dear Carlyle

You see on what a scrap of paper I am writing to you. I am indeed forbidden to write, excepting what is absolutely necessary, by Quain: and though necessity has obliged me to make that exception a very large one, having had many letters to write at Whitehall, I have hardly written a private letter since you left us—

The Tuesday after that Sunday night we parted, the assault was made upon me, by one of a very dangerous class of men—an insane Indian soldier whose delusion was that I had ordered his food to be poisoned. I had reason to complain of the authorities & attendants of the Asylum—but the terrible suddenness of the frenzy was some excuse. I suffered very much, but everything was done promptly to alleviate that—and there is now no external mark of the injury

Unfortunately however there was “effusion” in some of the small vessels of the eye & brain—and I have ever since had the sense as of a film or veil passing about continually over the left eye (the opposite side to that on which the blow were struck)—

All engagements I had were of course abandoned, and every night since I have sat without candles—and for the most part with eyes closed. I think I am, during the last two days, a little better—the film having being less frequent. Quain assures me there is no injury to the eye itself, but that it will be some weeks before the discomfort passes away.

The Dickens sale has been a success far beyond the most exaggerated expectation. I should have thought 5000£ a fair, even a great, result: and we have obtained £9410—The pictures all went for prices far beyond their value; but the other smaller things brought prices even more disproportionate; bits of china obtainable for 10s. or 20s. going for 20 or 30 guineas!⁹³

Adieu for the present, dear Carlyle

—I will write again Ever yours

John Forster



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq / The Hill / Dumfries N. B. / John Forster

Postmark: Charing Cross. W.C. JY 23 70

⁹³ Dickens died 9 June and was buried in Westminster Abbey, 14 June. JF and Georgina Hogarth (1827–1917; *ODNB*) were appointed executors of Dickens’s estate. The *Times* announced, 22 June, the “sale of Mr. Charles Dickens pictures, drawings, and objects of art, to be held at the rooms of Messrs. Christie and Manson, on Saturday July 9.”

I will write to you again from York—

Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W. London
Monday 25th July 1870

I have your letter from Craigenputtoch, dear Carlyle, precious and sacred to me.⁹⁴ Your words have always moved me, as none other; and these bring a strange sad comfort to me. God bless you—and keep up your great heroic heart to the end.

I was to write to you today in any case—having to leave town for York tomorrow: and I tried in vain to write earlier. I have been forbidden lately to write or read at night—this left eye continuing to trouble me sadly as with a veil or film dropping over it; and though all doctors tell me it will pass away, it is a discomfort. When I add to this that each day during the past week, from “morn to dewy Eve” I have had to visit Colney Hatch,⁹⁵ a very city of the insane with a population of nearly 3000, you will understand my silence, I know. I could not get to Lytton’s, even for a day.

And now tomorrow I go into Yorkshire and Northumb^d for a fortnight, my good little wife going away also, to pass the fortnight in the quiet of Tachbrooke with Miss Landor—a rest she much wants, having ailed much since you left us. The hot weather tries her weakness sadly. At the close of the fortnight I mean to take her up, or rather get her to meet me at York; and stay a week with her at Whitby. These are our plans, if the Diis Aliter should not intervene—

Your little letter to Georgina Hogarth⁹⁶ is valued by all of

⁹⁴ In his letter of 22 July, TC hoped that JF was recovering from “that miserable accident . . . an unmixed bit of human-diabolic ugliness on the part of that poor simple fellow-creature.” He described Craigenputtoch as “the Forecourt of the Grave, . . . a scene comparable to no other under the sky; sad to me as the Sepulchre at Jerusalem, sacred too as that.” Of Dickens he wrote, “How strange, how sad, and full of mystery and solemnity, to think of our bright, high-gifted, ever-friendly Dickens, lying there in his silent, final rest” (MS: National Library of Scotland).

⁹⁵ The Country Lunatic Asylum in Colney Hatch, Middlesex, the largest asylum in Europe opened in 1851, housing 2000 patients.

⁹⁶ TC to GH, 5 Aug. 1870.

them far far more than any other word that has reached them in this dreary time. Now, alas! as time tells them what they have lost, more and more dreary to the poor girls. I have much to talk to you of, that may not be written. Everything thus far in the sale, has been astonishingly beyond our hope,—but I fear this frantic war⁹⁷ be against the sale of poor Gadshill.⁹⁸ This is to be on the 5th August; and on the three following days the furniture & wines &c. will be sold. We went down yesterday week to see the place for the last time, and it was infinitely sorrowful to us. Poor fellow, he had made several additions to it lately, with a conservatory opening out of the dining room, meaning to surprise us all—and, on the evening when the summons came, he looked from the latter room, which he never again quitted till he was borne away to the abbey, for the first time and for the last time on the completed work. It had been finished only the night before—

I have now to relate to you another little misadventure of mine in which you play an unconscious part. As soon as Lyttelton⁹⁹ got your letter announcing your acceptance of the Presidentship of the Library¹⁰⁰ with the conditions I had carefully prepared them all to acquiesce in—he sent it to me; with a request that I should send it on to Christie¹⁰¹; who, after communicating the sense of it to Harrison¹⁰² at the Library, was to return it to the owner. He prized it naturally, and made much of its punctual and safe return. How, then, shall I tell the disastrous sequel—for so I fear it may prove! On the evening of Friday the 15th I received it from Lord L—and before going to bed that night, I wrote to Christie, enclosing the precious letter; and I wrote to L^d Lyttⁿ telling him I had enclosed it

⁹⁷ On 19 July, the French declared war on Prussia.

⁹⁸ The sale of Dickens's house, Gad's Hill, Higham, Kent, 5 Aug., consisted of two lots, the first being the residential property and the second being the enclosure of arable land.

⁹⁹ George William Lyttelton (1817–76; *ODNB*), 4th baron Lyttelton, vice-president, London Library.

¹⁰⁰ TC served as President of the London Library, 1870–81.

¹⁰¹ William Dougal Christie (1816–74; *ODNB*), diplomat and author, member of the London Library committee.

¹⁰² Robert Harrison (1820–97; *ODNB*), librarian of the London Library, 1857–93.

to Christie; and the following morning, before 8 o'clock, both letters were posted in High Street here. That to Lord Lyttelton reached safely, but, to my horror, I found three days ago, by letter from L^d L that the letter to Christie, containing yours', never was delivered. I have seen Christie today who says a similar case occurred to him a few months back, also where a letter cont^d evid^{ly} an enclosure. I am in great trouble, because Lord Lyttⁿ, who knows not much of me, may think it carelessness on my part; whereas I took very special care & pains in the matter. Of course there is yet hope, for I have lodged my complaint at the G. P. office, and enquiry after the missing letter is now proceeding: but I am full of fear. I will tell you the result—

You will say all kindest things to dear Mrs Aitken for us both, and give our love to Mary, and my wife adds, to “dear M^{rs} Carlyle.”

Adieu dear Carlyle

Ever yours John Forster



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq. / The Hill / Dumfries N. B.

Postmark: YORK JY31 70

My poor little wife has been ailing a good deal, but sent me better news this morning from Tachbrooke. News from Mary Dickens and Georgina Hogarth leave Gadshill tomorrow for ever.

31st July 1870

Dear Carlyle—I have just heard of this miserable affair of Robson¹⁰³—and that Frederick Chapman has very unnecessarily appealed to you. Have no anxiety about it, and do not disturb or worry yourself in any way. I have determined to return to town a week earlier than was my first intention—and meanwhile

¹⁰³ Robson had been involved in bankruptcy proceedings since Oct. 1865, and his partnership with Levey and Franklin was dissolved. Robson then began a new firm, Robson and Sons. His two sons subsequently carried on the business in St. Pancras Rd., King's Cross.

I have taken all necessary steps to render everything quite secure. If it be essential to remove the stereotype plates at once, they will be moved tomorrow. I do not myself think it will. If everything is paid in connection with the last that were stereotyped, and nothing whatever of any kind remains due, there can be no danger; and I have done what is required to obtain absolute satisfaction on this point. I heard of the thing last night for the first time, and this morning brings a letter from Mr Robson as well as another from Chapman, to both of which I have replied, giving C authority to act only in the event of a delay until my return to London involving the remotest possibility of danger. My word to you therefore, dear Carlyle, is—Don't think of it again. My eye continues to be a trouble to me, but my cough spares me, and upon the whole I have no reason to complain. Earnestly I hope, for it is part of the good or ill to myself, that sleep has come back & the nights go fairly with you. Love to Mary and all kindest regards to Mrs Aitken, Dear Carlyle, take great care of yourself—Ever yours

John Forster



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq. / The Hill / Dumfries N. B.

Postmark (front): LONDON-S.W. AU 29 70

Postmark (back): A DUMFRIES AU 30 70

29 August 1870

Palace-Gate House.

Kensington. W. London.

It has been a great comfort to hear from you, dear Carlyle. We are both very grateful to you for having written: the only drawback being that you do not expressly tell us you have been sleeping well. But I will assume as a favorable omen the absence of any allusion as to that—I fling aside a letter I began to you on Friday, and which I did not finish till I should have called to ask a question in Cheyne Row. I missed the opportunity on Saturday, and coming home that evening saw the handwriting more precious to me, and telling me more of what I am deeply concerned to know, than anything else left in this world.—You answer by anticipation much that I had written, so I begin afresh.

Of the small one here first, whom you gladden by your enquiries for her. She stayed a fortnight (something over) in perfect quiet with Sophy Landor and her sister at Tachbrooke, and it really did her good. At the end of the fortnight I joined her for three days, and took them, one pleasant day, travelling post and not by the rail, to Stratford on Avon; leisurely going round by the intervening Charlecote and other places associated with the Mighty One: all which was a vast success. Many times we wished aloud that you and little Mary had been there.

Since she came back she has been having visitors, who, though quiet and homely as ourselves, she yet finds not quite so well for her. Robert Lytton and his wife have been here since Wednesday the 18th, and do not leave us till Saturday next. Then, on following Monday, I go off for one of my dreadful circuits: which will occupy me between 2 and 3 weeks: at the close of which I take what is called my holiday; but where, it is as yet quite in the vague. I should most like some cottage or house by the Thames—when I might perhaps see you.

One word more only, of myself. The colder weather lately, strengthening and restorative to health, has alas been ill for my infirmity. I think that I am more than ever sensitive to it, and must fortify myself as I can against the winter. Otherwise I have been getting on fairly well: living very cautiously and temperately: and suffering, on the whole, during the last fortnight less from the eye: which remains nevertheless a trouble of which I am never entirely unconscious.

The first thing I did on my return was to get an independent opinion—apart from the law advisers of both Chapman and Robson—in reference to your stereotype plates; and there being no doubt or question in the matter at all (as I never thought there was), I am permitting the further impressions needed to be taken for the present by Robson. The folly of the poor man, in acting as he has done (or rather in permitting his sons to mislead him), is very sad. I know nothing yet of what the issue is to be, or whether another chance is to be afforded to him by his creditors.

Of Frederick Chapman I have seen nothing since you left. He went into Scotland (Argyllshire) before I came to town, and returned on Thursday covered with boils and blotches, on his face, his neck, his feet, everywhere. He came to me at

Whitehall for a moment in a cab, the day of his return, walking painfully, his feet slipped—and I begged him at once to go to Quain. I have since heard that he is “laid up” in his home at Banstead, and they told me at Piccadilly the eruption is attributed to insect-stings—a very superficial explanation of what seemed to me to go much deeper!

By this absence & illness one hoped for settlement of the affairs of my poor dear Dickens is obstructed and delayed: many things connected with the copyright lying for the present at the mercy of F. C. But I will tell you briefly what has been the result of the other sales.

The furniture sale at Gadshill did not disappoint us. I fancied and foretold that we would get 2000£ by it, and we got 2200£ odd.¹⁰⁴ We had hardly such good fortune in the sale of the house itself and the land: but thereby hangs a strangeish story, of which I can hardly yet even tell you all. To settle a reserved price was further previously of some anxiety with me: & after much consultation with the solicitors and auctioneers, I determined that we would buy it in if there was no bidding higher than 8000£: the price we hoped might possibly be got for it being 9 or 10 thousand, but our reserved price being by no means an unfair or unremunerative one. The sequel will surprise you not a little.

Not communicating with me in any way beforehand, not knowing there was a reserved price, most unwisely and most unbecomingly (representing his father alas!¹⁰⁵ in no one particular but his name) showed himself prominently in the crowded sale-room—very probably deterred many from bidding—and, from the slow and comparatively small offers at first made, believing (this is his own account unapologetically made to us after) that the property was about to be sacrificed,

¹⁰⁴ The *Times* reported, 16 Aug., “The household furniture, china, glass, and other effects of the late Charles Dickens were finally disposed of on Saturday, at the residence; Gad’s Hill-place, Higham, near Rochester, by Messrs. Thomas and Homan, Eastgate, Rochester, by order of the executors. The last day’s sale consisted of the plate, wines, and liquors.”

¹⁰⁵ Charles Culliford Boz (“Charley”) Dickens (1837–96; *ODNB*), the eldest of the ten children of Dickens and Catherine, b. Hogarth (1816–79); magazine editor and compiler of guide books. He was not able to let Gad’s Hill and sold the house in 1879.

was induced to take up the bidding himself—bid on, quite unconscious that he was bidding only against the auctioneer representing us,—and had the whole knocked down to him at the next bidding above our reserved price made by him!! He will have to pay dearly for his folly. He finds it impossible to sell again; and we have no alternative but to insist on the fulfillment of the contract. We could not do other, if we would. Only on Saturday I heard that he had borrowed 5000£ on mortgage of the property itself, and we shall have to impound the other 3000£—out of his share of the division of the entire estate. Our present situation is that there will be between 6 and 7 thousand for each of the children.

Mary and Georgina, in the interval before they determine on the hour when they will fix themselves in London (one nearly chosen already, Bayswater way), are in a nice little cottage, with pretty lawns and garden, at Weybridge: where I had a quiet Sunday with them on my return: certainly the best of all, but only by degrees (as I find with my myself too) the full sadness of their loss making itself known to them. On Thursday I took the small one with the Lyttons to see them, and we had dinner at the Oatlands park hotel that seemed on the whole to be so cheery to them that they are to come and pass next Thursday here with us here. And so we go on, dear Carlyle—making of it no other than is set down in your most touching, most impressive, always elevating and ennobling words—and knowing we shall never never see him any more.

Another familiar face gone too—the kind old chief baron¹⁰⁶—great admirer of yours in the leisure of late years (I got all your works for him not long ago). He died so peacefully that they hardly knew when—“fell asleep” his daughter said in writing to us.

But I must have bored you dreadfully dear friend. You will know for what purpose I send the enclosed for Mrs Aitken, to whom we desire kindest regard with love to dear Mary and yourself. Dear Carlyle I am Ever & Ever faithfully y^s

John Forster

¹⁰⁶Jonathan Frederick Pollock, 1st baronet (1783–1870), lord chief baron of the exchequer, 1844–66; he died, 23 Aug.



“Steyne Hotel (which Mary alarmed us not a little by spelling “Steam” and giving us the notion that we might at any time be blown up so near to Guy Faux Day!

~~Palce-Gate House:~~

~~Kensington.W:~~

Worthing: Sussex

4th November 1870

Dear Carlyle

I am so anxious you should lose no time in seeing what “the Womb of Time has added to the Roll of History” (Gladstone p. 555),¹⁰⁷ also in moralizing on “the man now contemplating the undulating landscape from the brow of Wilhelmshöhe as his Uncle from the rock &c. upon the sunset” &c. (Ditto p. 575),¹⁰⁸ and still more in understanding what at present you certainly apprehend in a highly imperfect manner, the causes that make England predominant in the Earth and Cynosure of all the Nations. *Felix prole virûm Glastonianissimum* | Ditto p. 588!¹⁰⁹—that by this very book-post, I send you the Edinburgh Review. You will find the article quite a little Dictionary of Pleasing Quotations with all the references (especially to Tennyson’s “Guinevere”)¹¹⁰ complete: and I only hope you

¹⁰⁷ JF quotes from Gladstone’s article “Germany, France, and England,” a review of Émile de Laveleye’s *La Prusse et l’Autriche depuis Sadowa* (Paris, 1870) and *Correspondence respecting the Negotiations Preliminary to the War*, Presented to Parliament by Command (1870), *Edinburgh Review* 132 (Oct. 1870): 554–93. Commenting on the Franco-Prussian conflict, Gladstone notes, “Rarely indeed has the womb of Time added so much within so brief a space to the roll of history” (555).

¹⁰⁸ Referring to Napoleon III, Gladstone remarked, “We shall not attempt to sketch the career or character of the man who perhaps now contemplates the undulating landscape from the brow of Wilhelmshöhe, as his uncle from the rock of Saint Helena gazed upon the sunset and the ocean.”

¹⁰⁹ Gladstone observed, “Happy England! . . . Happy not only because she is a *felix prole virûm* [*Aeneid* 6.784: “blessed in a brood of heroes”], because this United Kingdom is peopled by a race unsurpassed as a whole in its energies and endowments.”

¹¹⁰ Referring to France’s defeat, Gladstone quotes Tennyson’s *Guinevere*, in *Idylls of the King* (1859–85): “All is passed: the sin is sinned” (l. 540).

won't be oppressed by the burden of Duty and Delight thus suddenly projected upon you. You have but to resort to the manual of wisdom before you (p 557)

“O passi graviora! dabit Deus his quoque finem”¹¹¹ And I heartily hope you will get to the end as comfortably as circumstances will admit.¹¹² I was regularly taken [in] by a letter from Longman¹¹³ calling my attention to the article as a thing of very special importance indeed, and I'm sorry to say that after reading it—I replied (not knowing the Scandalum Magnatum I was committing) with extreme irreverence.

—That was a charming letter I had from you yesterday—so pleasant to us both, because showing us to that—dear Mary was well no less than yourself—and what a nice good clear hand she writes—what a more than recompense for temporary loss of your own—above all what an inducement to turn off, in so choice a hand, that paper I very earnestly would have you put forth on what is now going forward in the world! Pray, pray consider this—and above all don't be deterred by the beauty of the composition I send you. It is not everybody who can write like a Gladstone—but you have admirers, and I know they just now very sharply listen for a few words from you!—

As for this admirer here—what will you think of her awful descent from those altitudes in which I lately presented her to you, and where I must in justice to her say she had rested and expatiated the greater part of the time we have been here—when I inform you she is now deep in the Second Volume of *Lothair!*¹¹⁴

For myself—I have a hard struggle with my cough,

¹¹¹ Of Austria, Gladstone observes, “Her motto may well be ‘O passi graviora; dabit Deus his quoque finem’” [*Aeneid* 1.198–200: “you who have suffered worse, this also God will end”].

¹¹² TC wrote in his journal, “Ten days ago read Gladstone's article in the ‘Edinburgh Review’ with amazement. Empty as a blown goose-egg. . . . According to the People's William, England, with himself atop, is evidently at the top of the world. Against bottomless anarchy in all fibres of her, spiritual and practical, she has now a completed ballot-box, can vote and count noses, free as air. Nothing else wanted, clearly thinks the People's William” (Froude 4: 402).

¹¹³ William Longman (1813–77; *ODNB*), publisher.

¹¹⁴ *Lothair* (1870), a novel by Benjamin Disraeli.

notwithstanding the kindly south and west winds that have accompanied the rain; but on the whole I have got on fairly well here, and I do not at all complain. So well, that I do not think we will turn homeward till the holiday is fairly out—which will be exactly three weeks from today. I shrink from possibilities of November fogs—and am furthermore doing a little, a very little, in the direction of which you so kindly speak. But of that, somewhat more when I know more—

The neighbourhood of the place too rewards a little exploring. Did I tell you I had been looking up a cottage in which Selden¹¹⁵ lived—and other ingenuities in the way of the West. Ferring; a very ancient village on this Sussex Coast,¹¹⁶ with associations back to Edward the Confessor¹¹⁷ and his alleged fondness for fresh figs—of which there is to this day a public garden in the place, where people may poison themselves for six pence a head.¹¹⁸

A misadventure has just happened—I have flung by mistake into the fire instead of into this envelope a letter I had from L^d Shaftesbury¹¹⁹ this morning saying farewell before he goes to Italy and proving biblically (by conduct of German soldiers in giving part of their rations to the starving French before Metz) that the “Germans are a great people.” However perhaps you will have no need of the letter to help you to this discovery, & will write your article all the same.

My wife sends much love to Mary (whom she is going to write to in a day or two) and yourself, in which, as far as with propriety I may, I desire earnestly to have art and part. Adieu,
dear Carlyle, I am Ever your

John Forster

¹¹⁵ John Selden (1584–1654; *ODNB*), lawyer, historical and linguistic scholar. He was born in his parents' cottage, “Lacies,” which was attached to a forty-acre farm in the hamlet of Salvington, on the Sussex coast near Worthing.

¹¹⁶ Ferring, village 3 mi. / 4.8 km. W of Worthing.

¹¹⁷ Edward the Confessor (1003/5–66; *ODNB*), king of England.

¹¹⁸ The ancient fig garden, dating to 1745 or earlier, is located in West Tarring, 1.2 mi./1.9 km. N of the town center of Worthing

¹¹⁹ Anthony Ashley Cooper, 7th earl of Shaftesbury (1801–85; *ODNB*), philanthropist, social reformer, and head of the Lunacy Commission, 1845–85; he married, 1830, Emily Caroline Catherine Frances, b. Cowper (1810–72; *ODNB*).



Tuesday evening 8 Nov 70

Dear Carlyle

I put in this scrap to the attention of the small one—just today—That I forgot, in writing myself, to ask you whether anything had been done further in the matter of your nephew¹²⁰ and the Mr Harding¹²¹ proposals—and whether it is at all possible that I could capably do anything?—You will not hesitate to send me a word if you think so—Weather is mending here a little—Adieu for present dear Carlyle—

Alys yours J. F.



Steyne Hotel—Worthing—

22^d Novemb^r 1870

A very noble letter, dear Carlyle¹²²—going to the very heart of the truth of the whole matter—the truth spoken out in it with no want of human and even tender consideration—beautifully spoken on all sides. I cannot say of it here what I would—but that it satisfied me every way, and even the corner of me where lie love and pity still for the French—

Poor fool and knave I have one part in my heart—
That's sorry yet for thee—!¹²³

And oh, dear Carlyle, the newspaper comments I have seen

¹²⁰ James (“Jamie”) Aitken (1836–71), who had been working in Liverpool since 1864 and may have been searching for a new position. Forster later tried to get him a job at Chapman and Hall.

¹²¹ Possibly Sir Robert Palmer Harding (1821–93; *ODNB*), accountant, specialist in liquidations and bankruptcy work.

¹²² In a letter to the *Times*, 18 Nov., TC expressed the hope that “noble, patient, deep, pious and solid Germany should be at length welded into a Nation, and become Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless and over-sensitive France” (*Works* 30: 59).

¹²³ Cf. *King Lear* 3.2.

on it—which, Gladstone himself might have written!¹²⁴—Here is a little note from L^d Shaftesbury which talks at least as feasibly—& much more pleasantly.

“Carlyle is beyond, not beside himself. What a wonderful utterance it is! It has all the intensity & heat of fire with all the crackling and brilliancy of fireworks (!!!). But his balloon will go steering a great way, for it is ballasted with truth.”

However, this little scrawl of mine was not to say even 10 words; but simply to send assurance that these matters, the two named by you, shall have my glad attentions the first moment of my return. We shall lift anchor as you say day after tomorrow—amazing to think that five weeks will have gone! Our weather throughout, almost unvarying until yesterday, has been of the kindest in all ways to me—but yesterday it seemed to break; I had with great difficulty to manœuvre for the walk of four or five miles which I have done each day since we came; and today, with a fierce south wester, the rain is drenching our windows and the sea roaring upon into our very room. Perhaps nautical “notice to quit”—But another main object of my note, is, with our loves as well to yourself as to your distinguished “colleague and collaborateur” (I think that is the proper phrase), to ask her, if she can spare so much time from her literary labours, to send the other small one just a line to Palace Gate House by or before Friday, to say that we may expect you to dinner on Sunday at whatever hour you now dine at, or is most suitable to you. And so till then adieu, dear Carlyle! *Vivi et vale—Ever & Ever—John Forster*

¹²⁴ In a letter to the *Times*, 21 Nov., “Modestus” quoted TC’s “American Iliad in a Nutshell” (published August 1863) with the expectation that “a Frenchman might be glad to be made acquainted with this sample of Carlylian justice and political perspicuity as applied to America.” He concluded that the “‘Eternal Verities’ and Mr. Carlyle were not apparently of the same mind with respect to that American war, and it is just barely possible they may not be of the same mind now.” *The Saturday Review*, 19 Nov., commented: “Mr. CARLYLE’S mode of regarding history is so exclusively his own, that it is scarcely necessary to criticise it from the point of view of other people. When a man honestly believes that the robbery of Strasburg by Louis XIV. was the work of the Devil, and the robbery of Silesia by FREDERICK was the work of God, there is no arguing with him. His God and his Devil are equally his own invention, and are puppets playing the parts he assigns them.”



Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.
Tuesday morning
7th March 1871

Dear Carlyle

I have unexpected office work which calls me away this morning—but if I am not able to see you today or this evening, I will see you tomorrow, even as I pass to the railway—Dear C—

I am Ever yours

J. F.

In extreme haste.



York House Hotel—Bath
26th March 1871

Dear Carlyle

We have had more work than I expected on this circuit—out early in the morning and sadly fatigued & indisposed to write upon return in the evening. Yet I have been very anxious to hear of you: to be quite sure there had been no return of the sleeplessness of which I heard soon after leaving home, but of which there was better report after a day or two—

I have myself, thanks to the general kindness of weather, got on much better than I dared to expect: fairly well indeed: and though last night was not so good, I have been able today to walk all the way up to Lansdowne and as far as the Bevil Grenville monument.¹²⁵ You know it doubtless. Certainly a wonderful site for a battle—with the rich prize fought for, glittering within sight is the valley below—

When at Cheltenham I saw our poor dear old Macready.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Erected in 1720 on Lansdowne Hill, 4 mi./6.4 km. NW of Bath, to commemorate the heroism of the royalist commander Sir Bevil Grenville (1596–1643; *ODNB*) at the Battle of Lansdowne, 5 July 1643.

¹²⁶ William Charles Macready (1793–1873; *ODNB*), former actor and theater

He is only two years older than you are, but you are twenty years younger than he is. His mind alas! has broken down. I shall have much to tell you when I go back—

At the end of the week I hope to do so. I propose, God willing, to be at Kensington on Saturday evening next—That is April Fool Day: and the day following, such are the thin partitions which divide madness from wit and the ridiculous from the sublime, is my birthday. So I want you and dear Mary to dine with us at your own hour that day—and I know you will humour me if you can—

Frederick Chapman has been writing to me about omitting the specifications of volumes on the sides of the two shilling editions, leaving simply French Revolution (excepting at the Back)—but I tell him he is not to risk inconveniencing the reader, who would properly resent very much a Compression of volumes—

My wife, as you will have heard, joined me at Cheltenham—as Touchstone says of Audrey “a small thing Sir, but my own”¹²⁷—and I really think she is gaining something of strength, though not of size, since she came. We shall now remain here in Bath until we leave for London next Saturday—She desired specially to join in love to Mary and yourself—

—By the bye that hairy and ear-pointed animal that Darwin¹²⁸ talks about would be rather startled to see what “natural selection” has done for his descendants in Paris just now.¹²⁹ Mr

manager, who lived at 6 Wellington Square, Cheltenham; he married, 1862, Cecile Louisa Frederica, b. Spencer (d. 1908).

¹²⁷ Cf. *As You Like It* 5.4.

¹²⁸ Charles Darwin (1809–82; *ODNB*), naturalist, geologist, and originator of the theory of natural selection. Since the 1860 Oxford evolution debate between Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–95; *ODNB*) and Bishop Wilberforce, in which the latter allegedly asked Huxley whether it was through his grandmother or grandfather that he claimed descent from a monkey, the relevance of Darwin’s theories to political events was frequently debated.

¹²⁹ Following the defeat of Napoleon III in September 1870, the French Second Empire collapsed. For four months the Prussians lay siege to Paris. On 26 January 1871, Paris surrendered, and a month later, Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877) became the executive head of a national government that established its base at Versailles. But the authority of the Third Republic was challenged by the Paris Commune, a radical and socialist government that ruled the city between 18 March and 26 May. On 21 May troops under the command of Patrice de MacMahon, Duke of Magenta (1808–93) began a final offensive

Buchanan must write the history of this French Revolution—no mean pen!¹³⁰

Adieu, dear Carlyle, you know how entirely I am yours

John Forster



Monday 21 August 1871

Palace-Gate House.

Kensington. W.

This morning brings me your welcome letter dear Carlyle and, only last night, myself went to Mrs Warren¹³¹ for your address, it being my intention to write to you today: which in any case I should have done. I returned here on Friday night, after a weary absence of three weeks and upward.

First let me thank the fair kind hand that enables me to receive news of you which has given us such true pleasure. Gladly I heard you had been sleeping well—and of itself that seems almost everything. Add to it all the rest, and even I could wish no more.

Of myself, & the small one here, there is the usual mingled yarn—the worst kind of stuff unhappily making itself the most prominent—(as happens in so much else). On the 25th of July I left upon my circuit—and two days after I left, she went to Tachbrooke. She stayed there with Miss Landor until Wednesday last, returning two days before, as she left two days

against the Commune. During the ensuing week, the Tuileries Palace and the Hotel de Ville were burnt down, hundreds of Communards were executed, and a massacre took place at the Père Lachaise cemetery in the wake of the Commune's surrender. The *Times* reported, 25 March, "What we have before us is Society in a state of decomposition—a kind of nebulous substance, with its atoms gravitating each round its own separate nucleus—Ultra-Conservatism on one side, Ultra-Radicalism on the other. . . . Between these two extremes there lies a fluctuating mass with hardly an idea or a wish of its own, but striving to feel its way, swaying from right to left, dreaming of impossible conciliation, or chimerical compromise."

¹³⁰ Robert Buchanan (1841–1901; *ODNB*), poet and novelist, whose literary circle included G. H. Lewes, Dickens, Browning, and George Eliot.

¹³¹ Mrs. Sarah Warren, TC's cook and housekeeper.

after me; and unluckily the burning heat at last undid the good she got at first, and I had the horrible disappointment of finding her in all the pains of that neuralgia which exhausts her [small strength] so terribly. Since Saturday we have got on a little better, however, and the weather is much more tolerable, and I have more hope.

Another disappointment waited me today at Whitehall (where I am writing this)—for the Commissioner “on duty” who is the only one in town except myself, and on whom I relied for attention during the week to the necessary duties, was on Friday last suddenly disabled, on his way to visitation in Harrow, by a large stone flung with great violence through the open window of the railway carriage as it entered Willesden Station, which hit him on the left side of his hatless head—and has caused concussion—it is hoped not very serious, but alarming enough to lay him up in ordinary helplessness for weeks of doing any work, which thus falls on me. The interval between my two heavy circuits therefore (for I am obliged to go into Lancashire on the 3^d of September) is likely to be filled with sorry labour instead of happy leisure—which I must bear as I can—

My health has not been very brave but I have had no absolute break-down—except in the way of sleep. How I have thought of you in the dreary watches! I could have borne it better if my cough had been the culprit—but my cough specially spared me during the great heat, just to show that I might have even a more relentless enemy. Now, have I not said far more than enough of my miserable self? I am going to try to be better now, and to qualify myself for a better report to you before I go to Lancashire.

Frederick Chapman was here on Saturday to tell me he was going into Argyllshire (Oban) for a three weeks shooting. A Mr Virtue¹³² it seems, printer & so forth, has a place there, & has invited him. I was surprised to learn from him that he had not yet heard further of your nephew—who had yet, as he told me, been heard of in town, with his brother. I said I thought it would be hardly well if the youth should go to his new duties in Piccadilly during his (F. C.’s) absence, and he

¹³² James Sprent Virtue (1829–92; *ODNB*), printer, publisher, and manager.

promised me on this that he would write to him as to what his own movements were to be; leaving it to young Aitken to shape his course accordingly; joining at once, or waiting F. C.'s return, as might be best—

Little news came to me while I was away, except from poor Robert Lytton who has lost his only son (my godson) after the saddest sufferings. It has been a great trial—and the poor mother, Edith Villiers, you remember, so good and gentle, has had to bear it under the additional burden of another child to be born after a few months.¹³³ We have been very anxious for her—and I have had but small fictitious anxiety to spare for the woes that I hear our friend Browning has been singing¹³⁴ (to add to the enjoyment of the Rt. Hon. Countess Cowper) and which already were sung a great many hundred years ago—I will even go so far as to say that it is matter of doubt to me whether you will prefer his *Alkestis* and *Olumpus* to the t'other one!—When the good little Mary rejoins you, you will give my love to her, and I shall hope to hear from Dumfries—Ld Shaftesbury comes in to tell me of the prorogation today: with himself & another peer to do honor to it: and so ends the most contemptible session of parliament entered upon any kind of record. Dear Carlyle, my wife desires her love to go to you with

¹³³ Edward Robert Lytton and his wife, Edith Villiers, countess of Lytton (see above, 52n89); Edward Roland John Bulwer-Lytton (1865–71), JF's godson; Elizabeth Edith Bulwer-Lytton (1867–1942).

¹³⁴ JF alludes to the publication of Browning's translation of Euripides, *Balaustion's Adventure: Including a Transcript from Euripides* (1871), which he dedicated to the Countess Cowper: "If I mention the simple truth: that this poem absolutely owes its existence to you,—who not only suggested, but imposed on me as a task, what has proved the most delightful of May-month amusements—I shall seem honest, indeed, but hardly prudent; for, how good and beautiful ought such a poem to be!" *The Examiner* (12 Aug.) was diplomatic in its praise: "It would be an interesting study to compare the old and the new poems, to see in detail what Browning has taken from Euripides, where he has varied the meaning, and where he has introduced thoughts altogether fresh. We shall not here attempt that work, however; and we advise no reader of *Balaustians Adventure* to attempt it until he has thoroughly enjoyed the poem as it stands." *The Saturday Review* (2 Sept.) was less tolerant of "[Mr. Browning's] . . . capricious attempts to spell English words as if they were Greek. . . . Of all [his] travesties, the most barbarous is *Olumpian*, a sound which would never been tolerated on Olympus if the gods had English ears."

my own, and her affectionate wishes than can be crowded in here. I am ever, dear friend

Yours wholly

John Forster



Manchester 24th Sept^r 1871
Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.

Dear Carlyle—The terrible sorrow which has fallen on your sister's family has most deeply affected me.¹³⁵ So strange—so sad. It has brought back to me what I think was the greatest pain of all my life¹³⁶—and I have been thinking of you ever since as I thought of you then. Alas! how little one can say—of what yet perhaps is best all unsaid. I have no fear that I shall not be now and then in your thoughts in these mournful hours—as one who feels to the heart everything that touches you or those dear to you—and, though knowing he can be of no help or service, would fain be near you at such a time—I can hardly believe but that it is all a dream! I am sure that I need not ask you to say what may be said from me to Mrs Aitken and all her sorrowing ones—

I should have written to you long ere this but for my illness. I had hardly left town on this heavy Lancashire circuit—when I broke down, and ever since have been making such fight as I could! I left London the 6th and have not had two days freedom from painful incessant wearing cough. The worst of it unhappily has come at night—and the last weeks' has been terrible. In the seven days and nights I am quite sure that I have not had twice seven hours of sleep. I am obliged at last to confess myself vanquished—and as early as possible (for one

¹³⁵ *The Liverpool Mercury* reported, 25 Sept., on the death: "Sept. 21, at St. George's Hospital, London, from the effects of an accident, James Carlyle Aitken, son of James Aitken, The Hill, Dumfries."

¹³⁶ I.e. the death of JWC, 21 April 1866. On that day Robert Browning wrote to Isa Blagden, "Forster, who had a deep affection for her, is in a paroxysm of grief" (*Dearest Isa: Robert Browning's Letters to Isabella Blagden*, ed. Edward C. McAleer [Austin, 1951], 235.

day's more work I must do) I go back. I think of Bournemouth for a few week's rest—but I shall hope not to leave again till you return to Chelsea.

Dear Carlyle—my heart is very full as I write these few poor insufficient words. I pray that all strength & support may be extended to those who need it so much and I could myself have no help or comfort so great, as a word of assurance that your own health has borne up against all—

Adieu—dear Carlyle—I am Ever most affect^y yrs John Forster



Bath Hotel—Bournemouth
 Sunday 19th November 1871
 Palace-Gate House.
 Kensington. W.

She compels me to repeat here more legibly most affectionate regards to you & Mary for us both

Dear Carlyle

I know you are kindly interested to hear what news of ourselves we can give—and upon the whole of it is not unfavourable. The Small One is, I hope, getting a little stronger; and, though I have not had good nights, my cough has spared me very much! Last night unfortunately was the worst I have had—so I write this morning at some disadvantage; but the place decidedly is a success thus far, and I am extremely glad that we have come to it.

One of the guide-books describes it—as “Embowered in trees and hardly known to fame”¹³⁷—which you will recognize perhaps as a not-less appropriate description of its two last-comers. But really the fir plantations are very pretty, affording excellent shelter from the “nipping and eager” East; and the channel sea on one side, and Bourne valley on the other, are a good contrast. It's not at all dull—for there are none of those horrid straight terraces that seaplaces have, but nice detached villas are picturesquely dotted about everywhere,

¹³⁷ William Shenstone, “The Schoolmistress” (1742), l. 11, qtd. in Thomas Johnstone Aitkin, *The Visitor's Guide to Bournemouth*, 2d ed. (1842), 10.

by the cliffs and among the woods.

—Oh how I wish that you may have had some of the sleep that I have not had! I thought this many times in the silent watches—and that the loss might be worth enduring for such a grain.

It is not because of being uneventful that I have not sent you the volume. I brought a copy of the sheets that I intended to send one to you—but thinking it right, in the quiet here, to go through them once more carefully while yet corrections could be made—I found alas! so many, and had to trouble the printer with so many of the sheets, that my poor copy was completely pulled to pieces, and I have had a remorseful dread of not bothering them for another “pull” until the working of the press was over. They are making rapid progress now, I hear, and in a few days all will be right and another copy acceptable. You will therefore hear from me again as to that.

I heard not a bad story of a Frenchman the other day, during the siege of Paris and the famine. He had a favorite dog called Fox—and in the extremity of hunger he killed and Eat him. After a hearty meal on the roast favourite—pushing away the plateful of bones—his eyes filled with tears—and . . . “Ah! poor Fox how he would have enjoyed the bones!”—Swift would not have objected to this bones of a story.

Oh, dear Carlyle, how dismal the outlook seems—but as it turns out to be a choice between the little Queen and Gladstone—and a Republic with Dilke at the head of it¹³⁸—I think we must stick even to sweet William! Only we ought to insist on his reading better poetry than Bradlaughs.¹³⁹ I have some notion of sending him Tupper.¹⁴⁰ How she blames me for not filling half of my note

¹³⁸ Queen Victoria’s increasing reclusiveness, together with the Prince of Wales’s involvement in 1870 in the scandalous divorce case of Harriet Sarah, Lady Mordaunt (1848–1906) and her husband Sir Charles Mordaunt, 1st baronet (1836–97), Conservative M.P. for South Warwickshire, had raised fears that republicanism was becoming popular among the masses. Gladstone was determined to thwart this trend, which was associated with Sir Charles Dilke, 1st baronet (1843–1911; *ODNB*), writer and Liberal M.P. for Chelsea.

¹³⁹ Charles Bradlaugh (1833–91; *ODNB*), social reformer, atheist, freethinker, politician, and proprietor of the *National Reformer*, which published the poetry of his friend James Thomson (1834–82; *ODNB*).

¹⁴⁰ Martin Farquhar Tupper (1810–89; *ODNB*), poet and writer.

with a huge message of love for Mary & yourself.

Dear Carlyle—Ever and Ever yrs

J. F.



Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.
Bath Hotel—Bournemouth
27th November 1871

Dear Carlyle

Day by day I have been expecting the promised book.¹⁴¹ I ought to have done before what I suddenly resolve to do now—But, waiting also for my own, it did not occur to me

I have written by this post to the faithful Mr Jones¹⁴² desiring him to take in special charge the instruction to cause the volume to be sent to you tomorrow without fail. It is to be published early next week, but I have not myself seen a complete copy yet.

Of what it is, and what it might have been, much is to be said which there is no need to say to you. It has at least the merit of containing more of Dickens than of myself.

We had a nice little letter from Mary to which a reply is in course of preparation and meanwhile all loves go to her and you. As I write here, the Small One is lying on the sofa, quite tired out with her walk. We indeed do almost nothing, she and I here, except in the health-hunting way, which is really very hard work after all! I was out this morning at 11—and did not come in until nearly 2; and am indeed out at all times when I have a chance—so you see I try hard not to waste time by doing literally nothing at all.

I have not seen Philip Van Artevelde¹⁴³ or any of the poets.

¹⁴¹ *The Life of Charles Dickens*, 3 vols. (1872–74).

¹⁴² John Edward Jones (ca. 1824–93), assistant librarian at the London Library.

¹⁴³ The poet Sir Henry Taylor (1800–1886; *ODNB*), known among his friends as Philip van Artevelde Taylor, as a result of the success of his drama, *Philip van Artevelde; A Dramatic Romance* (1834), which brought him fame and renown.

Perhaps in this dearth I might find even Mr Buchanan a treat; but I don't mean to try. My nearest poetical associations is to meet the carts belonging to "Sir Percy B. Shelley Bart" as I walk along the Christchurch road.¹⁴⁴ I should however like to see the grand old Saga,¹⁴⁵ which I hear is done; and perhaps I shall not be too late for that chance when I return. We shall be back in good time for our Xmas Day meeting—please God.

Adieu, dear Carlyle. No day papers, I think, in which your name is not mentioned here.¹⁴⁶ And she has all the popular Edbg volumes with her. I shall assume, if I don't hear, that the Volume has reached safely: and you will kindly let no one see it (except Mary) until after next Monday. Ever most aff' yrs

John Forster



15th February 1872

Alas that I should have to say so—dear Carlyle! But anything so ignominious as my utter failure to get the very remotest scrap of information: about the Battle of Lancaster, or any other encounter of Scotch and Norse in those days of

¹⁴⁴ Christchurch Rd., Bournemouth, which led to Boscombe Manor, estate purchased by Sir Percy Florence Shelley, 3d baronet (1819–89), son and only surviving child of Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822; *ODNB*) and his second wife, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851; *ODNB*).

¹⁴⁵ In the autumn of 1871, TC dictated to Mary Aitken his translation of the *Færeyinga Saga* as well as a preface, which he completed on 14 Feb. 1872. The preface was later published separately as "The Early Kings of Norway" (1874).

¹⁴⁶ There were numerous references to TC in the papers, including his pledge to the Anglo-American Association to provide copies of all his works to the Free Library at Chicago, whose collection had been destroyed in the Great Fire in Oct. 1871. Chapman and Hall also issued an announcement of the publication of the Cheap Edition of TC's works: "In compliance with urgent applications from large classes of readers interested in MR CARLYLE'S writings, to whom the existing Editions are not accessible because of the price, the Publishers have obtained MR CARLYLE'S consent to the issue of a CHEAP EDITION printed from the Library volumes which have received his latest revision" (*Berwickshire News and Free Advertiser*, 7 Nov.).

second Kenneth¹⁴⁷ or thereabout, is not to be imagined. I went to the London Library to consult some publishing society's Early Scotch Chronicles¹⁴⁸—but they were as stupid and silent as Mr Burton,¹⁴⁹ the Distinguished Historiographer of Scotland: and is any ditch-water is dirtier than that man's first volume, I should like to see it as a natural phenomenon. I am going to make one more effort among my own books—but if you don't hear tomorrow, you may give me up altogether as a bad bargain. Only you won't quite give me up, even then—and with this thought I comfort myself against this harsh & terrible East wind—

Adieu, dear Carlyle—Vive et vale for all my “Ever”

J. F.



Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.
London: 31 July 1872

I returned yesterday, dear Carlyle; but not till late at night did the post bring me the enclosed.

I am very eager to have just a word to say that all is well, and promising well, with you and your brother at Seaforth Lodge.¹⁵⁰

Great too would be the comfort also of hearing that the good kind Lady Ashburton is again happily herself—as thoroughly well as all to whom she is known must earnestly desire.

I got on reasonably well at Knebworth—and have promised to return in a few days for a little longer stay, when I will take

¹⁴⁷ Kenneth II (d. 995; *ODNB*), king in Scotland, 971–95; Kenneth's father Malcolm I (d. 954; *ODNB*) joined an alliance of Scots, Britons (from Strathclyde), and Saxons in 952 in an attempt to expel Norse-Gaels from York, but they were defeated.

¹⁴⁸ W. F. Skene, ed., *Chronicles of the Picts, Chronicles of the Scots, and Other Early Memorials of Scottish History* (1867).

¹⁴⁹ John Hill Burton (1809–81; *ODNB*), Scottish historian and political economist, author of *The History of Scotland from Agricola's Invasion to the Extinction of the Last Jacobite Rebellion*, 7 vols. (1867–70).

¹⁵⁰ Seaforth Lodge, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis in the Outer Hebrides, Lady Ashburton's birthplace.

the Small One with me. We had a change to a North-Easter last night, and today it is many degrees cooler: which I think of a little doubtfully for myself, but with unmixed gladness for you.

If you approve of the printed announcement—there will be sufficiently known by your not returning it with amendment. I have put in beside it a list that will commend itself to you a fresh ending of the claim of the people's William to the people's gratitude. Which will be doubled, let us hope, when Mr Scrivener publishes his book; and Miss Corbaux delivers herself of her thirty pounds worth of Sacred Literature and Learned Languages.¹⁵¹

Adieu dear Carlyle, until I write again to you from Knebworth I join in my wife's love to you and her kindest regard to your brother. I think of you alys—Most affectly

John Forster



Palace-Gate House.
Kensington. W.
London
12 August 1872

Dear Carlyle

We came home on Saturday night after a very agreeable little visit—There were some pleasant people, and I found that doing absolutely nothing suited me very well—And, ever since I sat down at my desk again, I find that trying to do something is not nearly so successful. But this book hangs over me now like a nightmare & makes me anxious and wretched. I have promised to go to Lytton (alone) for two or three days next week, and I must endeavour to occupy the interval in settling some feasible plan for work as well as holiday—

¹⁵¹ JF attached a clipping from the *Times*, 24 July 1872, announcing Civil List Pensions, which included the following names underscored by JF: "Miss Marie François Catherine Doetyer Corbaux (in consideration of her researches in sacred literature and attainments in learned languages), 30*l*.; the Rev. Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener (in recognition of his services in connection with Biblical criticism and in aid of the publication of his works), 100*l*."

The Small One profited also by the Knebworth visit, and begs her most affectionate regards to the illustrious inmate of Seaforth Lodge: where all, we earnestly trust, goes as well and happily, and the worst of the shock of poor Melchet has passed away.¹⁵² I have felt throughout that the mere loss of the house would pain you little (unless the same architect be employed to rebuild—which Heaven forefend!) in companion with possible danger to Lady Ashburton's health—and that this not gravely affected, also will be well.

I have ventured to write just a word of sympathy—and will ask you kindly to put the right address on my note—

In a few days farther report of us here shall go to you—and in the absence of any news I gladly infer good news. Yours alys,
dear Carlyle, Gratefully & Affect^y

John Forster



Envelope: Thomas Carlyle Esq / Seaforth Lodge / Seaton / S. Devon

Postmark (front): London-S.W. AU 13 72

Postmark (back): Axminster AU 14 72

Palace-Gate House.

Kensington. W.

13th August 1872

¹⁵² Louisa Lady Ashburton's estate, Melchet Court, nr. Romsey, Hampshire, was a Jacobean revival house designed by Henry Clutton (1819–93; *ODNB*) in 1863. The *Times* reported its destruction by fire, 6 Aug.: "The fire was first discovered by an under gardener about a quarter to 10 o'clock on Saturday morning [3 Aug.] . . . It is said that Lady Ashburton, though in delicate health, witnessed the fire from the grounds for four hours. . . . The one redeeming part of the narrative remains to be told—namely, that all the priceless works of art with which the mansion was crowded and adorned, consisting of paintings, sculpture, bronzes, rare and curious china, tapestries, and the like, together with the library, were saved through the great energy displayed on the occasion. Comparatively few of these treasures were injured. . . . Since the disaster Lady Ashburton . . . has with her daughter taken up her residence with Mr. and Mrs. Cowper-Temple at Broadlands paying occasional visits, however, to the scene of the fire."

You cannot imagine, dear Carlyle, with what eagerness your letter was received this morning, how bountiful I thought it in its fullness, how rejoiced to have such fair news of yourself, and upon the whole how satisfactory I found it in regard of that excellent Lady and the sorrow that has fallen to her: of which I have been thinking daily and of how little help but from oneself there can be in such grave calamities. After writing to you yesterday I saw Quain, who gave me latest news from Broadlands, very cheery and hopeful as to health, but very sad in respect of all that has been so bravely undergone. If Lady Ashburton would really come to Seaton, I hope you won't leave it (much as I wish to see you here!)—for all this courageous endurance has but too surely its time of reaction, and true friends should not be absent then!—You will give the note I enclosed yesterday, or not—as you please—feeling as I now do, alas more than ever, how idle it is to attempt to say anything!—This is only a hasty line of thanks for this mornings kind arrival—I will write again at end of week. But I wanted at once to say also—that—calling yesterday in Piccadilly, I heard that the “traveller for the house” had been in extreme satisfaction about the Popular Edⁿ of Frederick—and had made a suggestion which Chapman seems to wish to act upon. There will be time enough to settle it on your return—but I said I would at once name it to you. It is, that the Frederick, going into so many volumes, should appear in double-vols, which would average something short of 500pp each, and be charged four shillings; you of course receiving double for each, and the whole completed in 5 months instead of 10. Chapman thinks the “people” subscribers would not object—which I thought the main consideration. Nothing however will be decided until you are here. Most kind regards to your Brother—and ever dear Carlyle's. Most grateful and affec^{te}

John Forster

There is some one here who sends love and thanks for that kind mention of her—



London—17th August 1872
Palace-Gate House.

Kensington. W.

Dear Carlyle

There was indeed the kindest of postscripts to your kindest of letters—I write by this post to Lady Ashburton, warning her not to place too much trust in your judgment of me; but putting at her disposal from me whatever may be thought the most distantly capable of rendering any kind of help at this time. I could not have a greater pleasure—and my only distress would be that she should scruple to ask me anything!