

Thomas Carlyle's Journey to the Netherlands and the Genesis of *Past and Present*

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ON 16 MAY 1929, ALEXANDER CARLYLE (1843–1931) WROTE to the Keeper of Manuscripts at the British Library: “I am sending by registered Post tomorrow a small MS. of Thomas Carlyle’s, which he calls ‘A Tour to the Netherlands,’ for the acceptance of the trustees should they approve of the gift.” To the letter, he added a postscript: “If for any reason the Trustees should not care to accept this MS. please return it to me at the address given above” (see below, 36). Alexander’s anxiety that Carlyle’s writing was no longer wanted by archives such as the British Library may reflect the depths to which his uncle’s reputation had fallen a half-century after his death. Fortunately for readers of Carlyle, the Library accepted the gift,¹ for it is one of his most vibrant and compelling narratives, written in August 1842, the same month in which he began the composition of *Past and Present* (1843).

This date marked an important moment of transition for Carlyle. Following the success of his series of lectures on Heroes (1840) and the subsequent publication of *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841), he floundered in his efforts to write a biography of Oliver Cromwell at the same time as he tried to console his wife in the wake of her mother’s death at Templand in late February. By April, Carlyle

¹ The British Library shelf number for the narrative is Add. MS 41741 “The Shortest Tour on Record.” Thomas Carlyle ff. iv + 13.

had completed the duties associated with Grace Welsh's affairs and had retired for a brief sojourn with family at Scotsbrig. On 5 May he sailed from Annan to visit Geraldine Jewsbury (1812–80) in Manchester. He then traveled to Rugby to meet Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), with whom he toured Cromwell's battlefield at Naseby, just a month before Arnold's untimely death on 12 June. From Rugby on 6 May, Carlyle wrote to his mother and reported, "Poor Manchester looked far too *clear*; there was not the third part of the smoke that is usual there; the mills being, so many of them, out of work. Numbers of idle people were visible in the streets. I understand Birmingham is no better: it is a dreary time" (*CLO*; *CL* 14: 181). Upon his return to Chelsea on 9 May, Carlyle resumed his work on the Cromwell book. Soon after, food riots associated with the Corn Laws broke out in Dumfries. He continued to express his concerns about the state of the country to his mother:

The distress that reigns and spreads over many wide spaces of this country is getting absolutely frightful. I would rather sling a wallet and hawk *spunks* [matches], or lie down in the ditch and die, than be a Peel to keep up Corn-laws at such a time! The Landlords and their Peel seem to me to be out of their wits.— Alas, we are all far out of our right wits; not one of us but is a fool and a sluggard, and a *false* servant more than one way: *hence* that misery to one and all of us.— I went one day to the Corn Law Conference: it became painfully clear to me that these poor people too had small chance to do much good. If their Corn-Law repeal were granted them, they would just go on as they had done; amassing money, fulfilling their desires, their appetites and whims; living *without* God in the world; therefore, without sympathy for man in the world; answering of their Brother as Cain did: "Am I my brother's keeper?" I paid my Brother his *wages*, no *money* more can he ask of me; what more have I to do with him?— These men think, and practically believe, there is no other *reality* but money at all. They are terribly mistaken; and will learn it by and by! (*CLO*: TC to MAC, 15 July 1842; *CL* 14: 224–25)

In this passage Carlyle defines a central challenge posed by his Cromwell studies: his desire to re-create the life of a great leader in an age that had lost sight of the meaning and purpose

of leadership. Carlyle's complaints to his mother about the irreligious greed of the opponents to the Corn Laws parallel his attempts to resurrect Cromwell as a heroic, representative theocrat. He ends with what had become for him a persistent warning that if something was not done soon about the working classes, the country would descend completely into chaos and disorder, or worse.

Emerson wrote to Carlyle on 1 July and made the mistake of asking him about the progress on the Cromwell project. Carlyle's response on 19 July was pointed:

You ask after *Cromwell*: ask not of him; he is like to drive me mad. There he lies, shining *clear* enough to me, nay glowing, or painfully *burning*; but far down; sunk under two hundred years of Cant, Oblivion, Unbelief and Triviality of every kind: thro' all which, and to the top of all which, what mortal industry or energy will avail to raise him! A thousand times I have rued that my poor activity ever took that direction. The likelihood still is that I may abandon the task undone.

Carlyle's frustration with the historical record of Cromwell stemmed from his core philosophy as a historian:

There is no use in writing of things past, unless they can be made in fact things present: not yesterday at all, but simply today and what it holds of fulfilment and promise is *ours*: the dead ought to bury their dead, ought they not? In short, I am very unfortunate, and deserve your prayers—in a quiet kind of way! If you lose tidings of me altogether, and never hear of me more,—consider simply that I have gone to my natal element, that the Mud Nymphs have sucked me in; as they have done several in their time!" (*CLO*: TC to RWE, 19 July 1842; *CL* 14: 228–29).

He clearly needed a release, which came not in the form of "Mud Nymphs" but in an invitation from his friend Stephen Spring Rice, a commissioner of customs who was planning a brief working visit to Belgium with his brother Thomas Charles (1817–80) on the revenue cutter *Vigilant*. Perhaps surprisingly, when the invitation came, the beleaguered Carlyle accepted:

It does flash on me with some force of evidence that decidedly I ought to go! Tomorrow, therefore, about

noon, I will endeavour to meet you at the Custom-House, with a small travelling-bag in my hand. / You shall provide tobacco, cigars, and if possible, pipes; you shall undertake to bring me back on Tuesday; and in the meanwhile sail with me whither you will. (*CLO*: TC to SSR, 5 Aug. 1842; *CL* 15: 4).

Carlyle left with the Spring Rices the next day for a four-day whirlwind adventure to Margate, Ostend, Bruges, Ghent, and back again. He returned to Chelsea on 10 August, in time to deliver Welsh Carlyle, who was traveling to Suffolk to visit their old friends the Bullers, to the train station on the next day. On 13 August Carlyle reported his safe return home to his mother: "What I saw there, and what kind of thing it was, you shall perhaps hear better by and by. We had delightful weather, saw many strange things, and I think got good of the business" (*CLO*; *CL* 15: 13). That Carlyle benefitted from the trip was evident from the fact that from 11 to 16 August, in addition his customary tasks of errands, visits, and letter-writing, he also spent significant time writing a travel narrative of his trip to the Netherlands, "The Shortest Tour on Record."

On 16 August Carlyle finished the manuscript and sent it to Welsh Carlyle enclosed with a letter, in which he apologized: "[P]ardon that ugly mass of Manuscript, which you need not read, unless you have *nothing* to do. Indeed it will contain nothing new for you; and is a *fatuity*, little better; but I wanted to have it off my hands for something better: I have hurt all my fingers and thumb in scrawling it, for so many hours: that is the worst ill I have done. Exactly this moment, while the clock strikes *four*, I have done with it" (*CLO*; *CL* 15: 21). The next day Carlyle wrote to his friend Richard Monckton Milnes (1809–85) to report on his trip:

The doll gods and gingerbread idolatries of that people, with the fruit of long centuries of industry and healthy victorious energy growing up beside all that, were very striking to me. *Les braves Belges!* They are a *Deutsch* people; . . . but the educated of them all affect to be a kind of mongrel French, and go about in moustachios and sugarloaf hats,—the blockheads! They have still a remnant of quasi-worship among them (respectabler perhaps than our remnant of "sincere-cant"), and crowds of the nastiest ugly fat Priests, whom you could

not occasionally divest yourself of a horrible passing desire to slaughter, and cure as bacon!" (*CLO*; *CL* 15: 23)

Carlyle had seen the vestiges of a "healthy victorious" past behind the veil of a depraved present; he did so in his customarily acerbic manner by contrasting the superiority of the Teutonic and the Protestant with the decrepitude of the French and the Catholic. He closed his letter to Milnes with a return to the troubles of Britain:

What a melancholy and strange thing is that Chartist hunger-insurrection in your end of the Island! What a country is it where the Governing Class turns a deaf ear to all considerations, and will hear nothing till it hear the actual alarum-bell droning; see nothing till it see Swing's fires blazing! I declare myself made very sad with these things; it seems to me a long tract of black and ever blacker days is beginning for England. A man ought *not* to vote for Corn-Laws; hang it, no!— But I will not quarrel with Richard Milnes let him vote for what he may. O Peel, Peel!— O Carlyle, Carlyle, for it is *thou* too, and all the world!

Carlyle's trip to the continent was driving him away from Cromwell towards a more general indictment of Britain's present in the context of its own "healthy victorious" past.

Welsh Carlyle's response to her husband's narrative would arrive in a letter the next day. In it, she both chides and attempts to re-direct Carlyle's energies back to his chosen subject, Cromwell: "I have only read the first two pages of your Manuscript (you idler!) Mr Buller saw it in my hand and wished plainly to see what it was all about, so I left it with him while I wrote my letter— It will be very entertaining I have no doubt—but is it not a mere *evading of your destiny* to write tours just now!—with that unladen and unlayable ghost of Cromwell beckoning you on!" (*CLO*; *CL* 15: 26). Cromwell, however would have to wait as Carlyle continued to worry about the hunger riots that had spread throughout England and into Scotland. If Chris Vanden Bossche is correct in contending that Carlyle "probably began writing [*Past and Present*] in August 1842" (xxx), then the book was conceived on the basis of what he had seen and learned during his "Shortest Tour."

In one sense, the narrative of the trip reads as a highly comical adventure. One relishes the notion of Carlyle eating

a wine-soaked dinner with his comrades and the captain of the *Vigilant*: “Of the dinner I recollect nothing except that it in addition to abundant elegant-provisions of the solid kind, it almost superabounded in champagnes in hocks, clarets, and had altogether a very sparkling foamy character; to which the loose-flowing rather bantering sort of talk sufficiently corresponded.” What happens next astonishes readers familiar with Carlyle’s earnest and cranky reputation: “Half past nine being arrived, the ‘boat alongside,’ according to order, announced itself as ready; and we all shortly after left in for a short voyage of recreation to Margate” (see below, 41). Carlyle’s description of Margate in the MS offers a vivid description of a gambling house:

[O]ne narrow winding, but trim smart street was especially populous; luminous with fancy shops, with anomalous, very deep and brilliant toy establishments, into which when you entered you found them ~~superintended~~ plentifully by shewy young women to consist mainly of [~~ship~~]-~~boxes~~ “wheels of fortune” and wares to form the provender of these, plentifully superintended by shewy not openly immodest young women; and a ~~sprinklings~~ of dic-tables [*sic*], ~~with~~ for raffles, with a graver sort of wares,—these latter under the charge of Macassar-oil young men. (42)

It is a description of a “man about town” that is unique in Carlyle’s writings. His excisions themselves reflect the discomfort at finding himself in such establishments, and he continues: “To me the sooner we got out of them it was the welcomer” (42).

If Carlyle felt uncomfortable experiencing the nightlife of Margate, then he had no better luck when he decided to go sea-bathing on a hot day in Ostend. When he jumped from his swimming “machine” stark naked, he created a veritable stir, not knowing that men and women at that place were bathing together:

I opened my door and plunged forward to one of the most beautiful tepid sea baths, tho’ as yet somewhat shallow. Alas, I made only some three plunges and a stroke or two of swimming, when the Blue Blouse, in a state not far from distraction, came riding into the waves after me, vociferating with uplifted hand I knew not what. “Wow! Gow! Wow!” nay at length something

like “Police! Wow! Gow!” and evidently expressing the intensest desire that I should come out of the water again. Clearly I had no alternative, with a man in Blue Blouse mounted in that manner. On entering I could not burst into laughing. I found that men and women we were all bathing here in a heap, and that among my apparatus were not only two huckabuck towels, but a jacket and breeches of blue gingham, which I decidedly ought to have put on first. (48)

A still-satisfied and refreshed Carlyle was able to avoid the “Police, Gow-Wow” and to rejoin his friends for dinner.

Other portions of the narrative exhibit Carlyle’s sharp wit and cranky demeanor in full dress. While still at Margate, Carlyle and his companions ended up at a dance-hall, at which there was singing of the popular Scots ballad “‘Auld Robin Gray’ sung badly by a very ill-looking woman solo.” Carlyle complained, “How comes it, I asked myself, that this same Robin Gray was never yet sung otherwise than badly in my hearing, never yet but with more or less of affliction to me?” (43). Once on the continent, Carlyle is afflicted further by his arch-nemesis, noise:

Shortly after four the profound clang of church-bells, reinforced and succeeded by the baying of dogs, crowing of manifold cocks and cockerels, and close below in our courtyard by the rumble of some big omnibus or waggon getting awake and under way, forbade any farther sleep. How the ear of man is tortured in this Terrestrial Planet. Go where you will, the cock’s shrill clarion, ~~not to~~ the dog’s harsh watch-note, not to speak of the melody of jack-asses, and on streets, wheelbarrows, wooden clogs, ~~vociferous men~~ loud-voiced men, perhaps watch-men beat upon the hapless brain; and ~~to~~ as if all were not enough, the “piety of the middle ages” has founded tremendous bells, and the hollow triviality of the present age, far worse, has everywhere instituted the Piano! Why are not ~~at~~ at least all those cocks and cockerils boiled into soup, into everlasting silence? Or, if the Devil, some good night, should take his hammer, and smite into shivers all and every the Pianos of our European world, so that in broad Europe there were not one Piano left soundable, would the harm be great; would not on the contrary the relief be considerable? (61)

Bitingly humorous, the passage also includes what can be described as the serious focus of Carlyle's travel narrative, the intermingling of the past—here defined by the great accomplishment of bells—and the nefarious present, defined by the insufferable noise of the city, and especially of pianos, from which he was at this time also suffering in Chelsea. He goes on to complain bitterly about the amount of time the young woman next door to the Carlyles spent “simply and solely . . . raging, from dawn to dusk, to night and midnight, on a hapless Piano, which it is evident she will never in this world learn to render musical,—more musical than a pair of barn-fanners: the miserable young female! The sound of her through the wall is to me an emblem of the whole distracted ~~mis~~ hollow misery of this age; and her barn-fanners rhythm becomes all-too significant” (62). Emblem of the age or not, Carlyle bought his wife a piano just two years later.²

It is in the churches he visits that Carlyle more seriously recognizes emblems denoting the interplay between past and present. For example, he sees small paintings of the stations of Christ: “of small merit generally as paintings, but full of an earnest childlike significance,—mournfully pointing for us into the Past, into what once had significance!” (68). Carlyle is both fascinated and bemused by Catholic relics and rituals, as he describes in his visit to St. Nicholas's church in Ghent:

By the side of the shrines there generally hung, on some black slab with gilt frame, a set of votive offerings (exactly in the old heathen style), tiny figures of teeth, legs, horses, hands, jaw-teeth, in mother-of-pearl or perhaps in silver or gold,—grateful acknowledgements that by the saint there inhabiting such and such limbs or possessions had been freed from pain or peril. Wealthy liberality, simple-heartedness, and thick darkness of ignorance strangely looked out upon you as from past ages, here in your own age.

² Jane Welsh Carlyle wrote happily to her cousin Helen Welsh on 25 September 1844: “I have bought a new piano to compose my soul with—it is to be home on Saturday— Some money turning up unexpectedly out of America is to be invested in the purchase and the thing called “*Yankee-doodle*” So Carlyle wills—” (*CLO*; *CL* 18: 221). The piano, visible at the left edge of R. S. Tait's painting *A Chelsea Interior* (1857), remains at Carlyle House, Chelsea.

In addition to religious contexts, Carlyle discerned and praised the accomplishments of the past. In Bruges, for example, Carlyle marveled at the engineering ability of the ancient Belgians, and the benefits their work continued to afford to the present:

Honour to the long forgotten generations; they have done something in their time: this city, nay this country is a work of theirs. Sand downs and stagnating marshes, producing nothing but heath, but sedges, docks, marsh-mallows, and miasmata: so it lay by nature; but the industry of man, the assiduous unwearied motion of how many spades, pickaxes, hammers, wheel barrows, a mason-trowels, and ten-thousandfold industrial tools have made it—this! A thing that will grow corn, potherbs, warehouses, Rubens pictures, churches and cathedrals. Long before Caesar’s time of swords, the era of spades had ushered itself in, and was busy. “Tools and the man!” “Arms and the man” is but a small song in comparison. Honour to you, ye long forgotten generations, from whom at this moment we have our bread and clothing. (51)

Even when Carlyle seems most disgusted, he sees in this Catholic culture a certain worth created by its relation to the past. In Ghent he describes the priests as “very ugly men, and much too fat. At bottom, one cannot wish these men kicked into the canals; for what would follow were they gone? Atheistic Benthamism, French editorial “Rights of man” and grande nation, that is a far worse thing, a far untruer thing. God pity the generation in which you have to see deluded and deluding Simulacra, Tartuffes, and Semi-Tartuffes, and to stay the uplifted foot, and not kick them into the canal, but go away near weeping,—in silence; alone, alone!” (56) Carlyle’s oscillation between disgust and reverence continues throughout the narrative until his return to the reeky environs of London: “thus again were we swiftly reabsorbed into the great smoky simmering crater, and London’s soot-volcano had again recovered us” (78)

After Carlyle sent the manuscript to his wife on 16 August 1842, he never saw it again until after she died. When he rediscovered it, Carlyle wrote on the back of a letter sent to him by his niece Mary Aitken Carlyle: “[Notes of a 3-days Tour to the Netherlands, Aug^t 1842 / (written then,—one page sheet of it read now 9 Aug^t

1866!—was in Her box).” The history of the manuscript then became a matter of editorial interest. James Anthony Froude published significant portions of it in his *Life of Carlyle* (1: 259–73). Carlyle’s nephew Alexander Carlyle later published the complete manuscript in two parts in the *Cornhill Magazine* (1922). In his introduction he attacks Froude’s editorship:

The manuscript of the Tour consists of twenty-five foolscap pages, distinctly written and carefully punctuated, without erasure or mistake of any consequence. No part of it has ever been printed before, except a few extracts given by Mr. Froude in his ‘Life of Carlyle,’ which amount in all to considerably less than a quarter of the whole. His extracts are inaccurately printed, and his commentary often faulty and, moreover, the Tour must be read in its entirety that it may have any chance to be thoroughly appreciated, the full effect be essentially cumulative. It is here printed exactly as it was written. (493–94)

In Alexander Carlyle’s editorial justification, one immediately recognizes the squabble now known as the Froude-Carlyle controversy.³ In part, he is correct; Froude did take liberties with his use of Carlyle’s narrative, and one need look no farther than the first excerpt in the *Life* to find an example. After setting the scene for Carlyle’s trip, Froude includes the description of the revenue cutter *Vigilant*: “The cutter *Vigilant*, which rocked here upon the waters, is a smart trim little ship of some 250 tons, rigged, fitted, kept, and navigated in the highest style of English seacraft; made every way for sailing fast, that she may catch smugglers. Outside and inside, in furniture, equipment, action, and look, she seemed a model—clean all as a lady’s work-box” (1: 260). In addition to a few changes in punctuation, Froude also has dropped the middle portion of this passage. After the word “smugglers” Carlyle writes a semi-colon and continues his thought: “we were informed, had for the last year, such was the prowess of her, and the terror of her inspired by her, had reduced itself almost entirely to overawing smugglers, and frightening them from work on those shores” (40). Froude’s desire to have the *Vigilant* catching smugglers instead of scaring them off implies an editorial desire to heighten the drama of Carlyle’s adventure.

³ See Brent E. Kinser and David R. Sorensen, in particular 89–91.

Another illustrative example occurs in Froude's version of Carlyle's leaving the Church of St. Bavon in Ghent: "At the door sate squatted a poor beggar-woman, to whom I gave my sou" (1: 269). In Alexander's version and in the manuscript, the passage reads differently: "At the door sat squatted a poor beggar-woman with nearly famished child, to whom I gave my sou, and walked off" (635 [73]). In the church, Carlyle had been horrified by the people praying to two "dolls" standing in for the Mother of God and "God" (72). He soon left in disgust after witnessing an old "drudge" of a man enter and pray to the dolls. Froude's version of the coin episode conveys a different impression from the description in the manuscript, which Alexander transcribes accurately. It is as if Froude wishes to represent the scene as an indication of Carlyle's disdain at having to pay for the right to see the church. His giving of the coin to a starving child, however, seems more like a spontaneous act of charity and compassion.

If Froude's general neglect for accuracy in the interest of his own preconceptions makes his account questionable, Alexander Carlyle's claim that the version he published in the *Cornhill Magazine* is "here printed exactly as it was written" must also be treated skeptically. His first error occurs in the opening words of the narrative: Carlyle writes in the MS "On Friday, 5th August" (37), whereas his nephew publishes "On Friday, 5th of August" (495). A small mistake, certainly, but later alterations on his part are more substantive, and assume the air of a loving nephew correcting and protecting a beloved uncle as he determines what Carlyle intended to write. For example, as Carlyle traveled down the Thames on the Margate Steamer, he records that "Men went in front (abaft do they call it?), and smoked cigars" (38). Alexander changes "abaft" (the rear of a ship) to the correct term, "*Fore*" (496). In another passage Carlyle complains that at a market in Ghent "a woman sold me bad cigars in fluent enough French. It seems to me again a very miserable thing this of an honest Deutsch people struggling to deny its Dutchhood, and become a kind of mongrel Gallic Celts. . . ." (635-36). The ellipses implies an omission that is confirmed by the manuscript. Carlyle underlines the word "Deutsch" and ends the sentence with an exclamation point, both of which suggest his enthusiasm for the Germans and his frustration with the French. He concludes with a dire prediction for the future of the French

state entirely omitted in his nephew's version: "Fanfaronade has carried the Grande Nation a great way, among nations; but seems as if it would not go much farther in our days." Perhaps Alexander felt that Carlyle's statement was simply too much given the state of relations among Germany, France, and Great Britain in the aftermath of World War I.

Throughout his version, Alexander regularizes Carlyle's use of "&c" and "thro" as "etc." and "through." He excludes the names of people, perhaps recalling the damage done by Froude's publication of the *Reminiscences*. Alexander corrects spellings, spells out numbers, removes hyphens, changes em-dashes to periods, and shifts the capitalization of words and phrases to alter meanings, all with the effect of undermining the break-neck, impromptu quality of the narrative that he himself recognized as an essential quality of it. In the manuscript, Carlyle describes his return to the swimming hut in Ostend: "On entering I could not burst into laughing" (48), which Alexander changes to "I could not but burst into laughing" (504). Carlyle did not laugh, and Alexander's version of the narrative is not "exactly as it was written."

The most notable editorial sin of omission in the narrative, however, was committed by both editors. Froude called Carlyle's narrative "the lightest and brightest of all tourist diaries" (1: 273), an opinion shared by Alexander Carlyle, who called it "one of the best examples of Carlyle's light, easy and rapid style of writing, and shows well the extraordinary alertness of his eye" (493). Both Froude and Alexander are correct. Carlyle's ability to capture what he sees on the trip in vibrant pen portraits is on display throughout his telling of the story. Unfortunately, however, both Froude and Alexander omit a last, brief two-sentence paragraph from their versions: "Alas, while I scribble down these things, all Lancashire is risen in Chartist Hunger insurrection. Can a thinking Englishman, in these hours, find nothing suitable to write! / Chelsea, Tuesday, 16 August, 1842" (78). Carlyle literally and figuratively has returned home to his inescapable present. During his "Shortest Tour on Record" he saw both the past and the present in a new light, which in turn prompted him to think of subject matter that was "suitable." Four days later, on 20 August, Carlyle reported to Welsh Carlyle, "I am writing, writing; God knows what at precisely" (*CLO*; *CL* 15: 31). His Dutch sojourn had prepared the ground for the first draft

of *Past and Present*. According to Michael Cotsell, the “tour to the Lowlands played some part freeing and engaging Carlyle’s imagination in a way that the Cromwell project was failing to do. It helped him toward a vision of a Catholic past that was not mere superstition, but which expressed a combination of human enterprise and devoutness that might presage what a future could be. Ghent and Bruges challenged him to look at Europe’s past through other than narrow Protestant or even puritan ways” (89). Cotsell simultaneously recognizes the importance of the trip to Carlyle’s thinking and articulates the central argument of *Past and Present*. The restored final paragraph confirms the narrative as anything but the idle bit of “*fatuity*” he had reported to his wife on 16 August. “The Shortest Tour on Record” served as an essential moment of genesis for one of Carlyle’s most important and influential works.⁴ It is here published for the first time, not “exactly as it was written,” nor as an attempt to demonstrate the editorial deficiencies of Froude and Alexander Carlyle, but with Carlyle’s text, excisions, errors, punctuation, and spelling presented as they appear in the manuscript.

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⁴ Chris R. Vanden Bossche divides the composition of *Past and Present* into three stages beginning in late 1841: inception and early writing (until August 1842); research and drafting (until November 1842); and final composition (until April 1843). Vanden Bossche mentions the closing of Carlyle’s 17 August letter to Milnes—“O Peel, Peel!—O Carlyle, Carlyle, for it is *thou* too, and all the world!” (*CLO*; *CL* 15: 24)—and writes, “In shifting from Peel’s guilt to his own, Carlyle implied that he ought to be doing something to remedy the situation” (xxxvii). The restored final paragraph of the “Tour” provides explicit evidence for Vanden Bossche’s conjecture, although he makes no mention of the “Tour”; see *Past and Present* xxx–xliv.

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AC to the Keeper of Manuscripts, British Museum; 16 May 1929; ALS, 2 pp.

16 May, 1929

30 NEW BATTLE TERRACE
EDINBURGH

The Keepers of the MSS. At the British Museum

Dear Sir,

I am sending by registered Post tomorrow a small MS. of Thomas Carlyle's, which he calls “A Tour to the Netherlands,” for the acceptance of the trustees should they approve of the gift.

As I published it in the “Cornhill” for 1922, prefixing a brief description of it, I need not say more of it here. It is a good specimen of Carlyle's writing and extends to twenty-five foolscap pages closely written in his characteristic hand.

This little gift, is intended as a small acknowledgment of my uncle's gratitude to the British Museum for its invaluable services and conveniences it offered him for many years.

Kindly acknowledge receipt

Yours faithf^y

Alex.^r Carlyle.