



Mark Twain's Notes on the Death of Thomas Carlyle

THE NEWS OF THOMAS CARLYLE'S DEATH ON 5 FEBRUARY 1881 SPREAD quickly on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Soon after it reached Samuel Clemens in Hartford, Connecticut, he jotted down his initial reactions to Carlyle's passing on a used envelope that was clearly the first bit of paper he had available. The notes read rather more like an abstract poem than a formal preparation for some longer statement, one that Clemens's alter ego Mark Twain never did make. The front of the envelope is addressed to "S. L. Clemens / Hartford Conn." and is postmarked "Freedonia N.Y. / 8 Feb." On the reverse, the envelope is stamped "Hartford Conn. / 10 Feb." Twain's notes on the death of Carlyle are held at the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville. The editors wish to thank Margaret Hrabe at the Small Library for her kind assistance in arranging for the publication of these remarkable notes.

BEK



[front]

Carlyle is gone. Let us adore
 Like castigated spaniels round his bier.
 He loathed the Yankee all his days.
 The loather of the Yankee name.
 Let's wallow near the sacred dust
 And shed our humble tear
 And droop our tails & drop our humble tear
 He loathed the very Yankee name
 America was not great
 —never did anything great
 —no American was ever great
 or good or worthy in the eyes

of this Scotch
 Supreme Being.
 An opinion he was entitled

[reverse]

to—but when Americans
 called to pay homage it did
 not become him to say so.

The late Scotch Supreme Being

Great Apostle of Force Might
 <T> Shouter for both, <warriors> bloody heroes, ty-
 rants.

Let's do "reminiscences" unto
 him. And "incidents" &c.
 He wrote against the struggling slave
 He wished to see our Union
 div[i]ded—if his loftiness
 too[k] the trouble to concern
 [h]imself about so small
 a matter.

[written vertically down the right margin]
 Great loather of the Yankee name!

[upside down in the bottom margin]
 TREMBLED



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Carlyle is gone ²¹ Let us alone
 like castigated spaniels round
 his heir.
 He loathed the Yankee ^{all}
 his days
 The loather of the Yankee ^{name}
 Let's wallow near the sacred
 dust
 And shed our humble tear
 And ~~drop~~ ^{drop} our tails & shed
 our humble tear
 He loathed the Yankee name?
 America was ^{not} great
 - never did anything great
 - not America was ever great
 or good or worthy in the eyes
 of this Scotch
 English being
 In opinion he was written

Returned
If not delivered within 10 days.

FREDONIA, N. Y.



Under the provisions of any legislation or individual placed in the collections of any institution or person or used by an unauthorized person

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 called to pay homage it did
 not become him to say so.

The late ^{of} Supreme Being

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IR E M B L E D



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great content of the specimen