I

A SINGULAR SIGN OF

THE TIMES

“The spirit and purport of these Critical Studies of yours are a singular sign of the times to me, and a very gratifying one.”

Carlyle to Ruskin, March 9, 1851

Letter 1

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LETTERS 1-26

March 9, 1851 through March 15, 1860

Ruskin publishes *Stones of Venice*. He resumes London life after the annulment of his marriage. Publication of Modern Painters, volumes III, IV, and V. his preparations for his new role as social critic.

Carlyle works on *Frederick the Great*

*1. Carlyle to Ruskin*[[1]](#footnote-2)

Chelsea, 9 March, 1851

Dear Ruskin, --

I did not know yesterday till your servant was gone that there was any note in the parcel; nor at all what a feat you had done! A loan of the gallant young man’s memoirs[[2]](#footnote-3) was what I was expected; and here, in the most chivalrous style, comes a gift of them. This, I think, must be in the style *prior* to the Renaissance! What can I do but accept your kindness with pleasure and gratitude, though it is far beyond my deserts? Perhaps the next man I meet will use me as much below them; and so bring matters straight again! Truly I am much obliged, and return you many hearty thanks.

I was already deep in the “Stones;”[[3]](#footnote-4) and clearly purpose to hold on there. A strange, unexpected, and I believe, most true and excellent *Sermon* in Stones—as well as the best piece of School-mastering in Architectonics; from which I hope to learn in great many ways. The spirit and purport of these Critical Studies of yours are a singular sign of the times to me, and a very gratifying one. Right good speed to you, and victorious arrival on the farther shore! —It is a quite new “renaissance” I believe, we are getting into just now: either into final death, and the murk of Gehenna[[4]](#footnote-5) for evermore! A dreadful process, but a needful and inevitable one; nor do I doubt at all which way the issue will be, though which of the extant nations are to get included in it, and which to be trampled out and abolished in the process, may be very doubtful. God is great: --and sure enough, the changes in the Construction of Sheepfolds, as well as in other things, will require to be very considerable! —

We are still laboring under the foul kind of influenza here, I not far from emancipated, my poor wife still deep in the business, though I hope past the deepest. Am I to understand that you, too, are seized? In a day or two I hope to ascertain that you are well again. –Adieu: here is an interruption, here also is the end of the paper.

*2. Ruskin to Carlyle*[[5]](#footnote-6)

Denmark Hill, Camberwell

Monday, 23rd January [1855]

Dear Mr. Carlyle

I am some thoughts of making a true *foray* upon you this evening—having been rendered desperate by Woolner’s[[6]](#footnote-7) telling me that it was *three years* since I had seen you. —but this morning it looks so much as if—could I once get to Chelsea—you might have some difficulty in getting quit of me again till a thaw came—that I will not venture--. Only I warn you that I really must come & see you one of these days, if you won’t come & *see us*.

People are continually accusing me of borrowing other men’s thoughts, & not confessing the obligation. I don’t think there is anything of which ‘I am more utterly incapable than of this meanness—but it is very difficult always to know how much one is I debted to other people—and it is always most difficult to explain to others the degree in which a stronger mind may guide you—without having at least intentionally, borrowed this or the other definite thought.[[7]](#footnote-8) The fact is, it is very possible for two people to hit *sometimes* on the same thought—and I have over and over again been somewhat vexed as well as surprised at finding that what I really *had* and *knew* I had, worked out for myself, corresponded very closely to things that you had said much better. I entreat you not to think when (if you have ever patience to do so) you glance at anything I write, and when you come as must sometimes, on bits that look like bits of yourself spoiled, --to think that I have been mean enough to borrow from you knowingly, & without acknowledgment. How much your general influence has told upon me, I know not—but I always confess it—or rather boast of it, in conversation about you and you will see what—considering the way malicious people *catch* at such confessions, is certainly a very frank one—at the close of the lecture of which I send you a Builder containing a report[[8]](#footnote-9). I have marked the passage, p. 639.

--with sincere regards to Mrs. Carlyle, believe me, my dear Sir,

Most faithfully Yours,

J. Ruskin

*3. Carlyle [[9]](#footnote-10)to Ruskin*

Chelsea, 23 Jan, 1855

Dear Ruskin,

It has been a thousand times a sorrow in my thought that I have not seen you all this time; and the worse as I partly had to give myself the blame of it. I got your sumptuous and excellent gift (Stones of Venice II and III to add to Vol. I); and never had the grace to utter one word of acknowledgement (I do suspect and believe) manifold thoughts and emotions to that effect as I necessarily had! Sinner that I am, --heavy-laden bewildered sinner; not willing one, no; --whom, in your goodness, and candor of merciful judgement, you cannot forgive! —

The truth is, I have been eclipsed into nearly utter darkness this long while, by Prussian dust[[10]](#footnote-11) and other sore sufferings hard and tender; and *done* very little except diligently hold my peace, in hope of better days, --whh on some occasions takes a good deal of doing.

If you will really come and see me any evening or day (especially after half-past 3, --or otherwise giving warning before), it will be a chosen mercy to me, I can answer you. The view of a sincere human soul, even without *thought* in it, is like music to me; how much more if there is an opulence of human thoughts and cheery ingenuities and socialities in it!

We have tea every evg (hardly ever out) about half past 7. If I had a horse, --nay if I had *not* lame foot at present (thanks to the genus *Sutor citra crepidam*,2 with quack *Sutor* powerless to make a *real* shoe!) I wd come to Denmark Hill myself, in a hurry, and seek you out. —Manage to come, speedily, if you will do me a most welcome kindness.

Your truly

T. Carlyle

*4. Carlyle to Ruskin*[[11]](#footnote-12)

Chelsea, 23 May, 1855

Dear, Ruskin

There is clearly nothing to be made of that *Grampus Wake*.[[12]](#footnote-13) The leather jerkin of George Fox has buttoned him up from the sight of the Sun and Moon. We (that is, you) fairly offered him human help, if he would have had it.

I am very sorry to hear of your coughing and continued sickliness. Be patient, quiet; --this is a monition to you to take more time! My impression generally is that you go too fast; in many senses, this; --and that you will have to learn the other side of the business too, --what infinite profit there occasionally is in sitting absolutely down (were it even in a desperate mood, on hest of inexorable necessity), and *doing nothing*. This is very true; and I hope you will learn to believe it: --at all events, act upon it at present, on trust; and be *loyal* to the idle Summer Air, till that has set you on your feet again.

Some afternoon, were you once home, you must come out hither, and take me to your place; I will wander about with you till night; and not fail to make my way *back* on my own resources. That, I suppose, might answer? To myself it would be a pleasant half-holiday; a pause in the sandy wilderness on reaching some convenient stopping-place. Keep it in your eye.

My Prussian affairs are as bad almost as *Balaklava*,[[13]](#footnote-14) and indeed resemble that notable Enterprise of the Turk War in several respects, --in an adventure, with such associates; and that *good* result to it does not seem (for most part) so much as possible! “The longer you look at it,” as Sir John Burgoyne[[14]](#footnote-15) says, “the less you see your way through it.” Really my own experience ought to teach me pity and some touches of forgiveness towards the poor Noodles who are professing to lead armies out there, and publishing the shame of England at home and abroad, in too sad a manner! They too are willing to *die* mutely in the mud, and so expiate their Noodlism in some small degree. A thing worth being laid to heart, by certain others of us! —

Don’t quarrel with Tumbridge![[15]](#footnote-16) I remember it as a place of airy expanses and respectable chalk-hills; where at least the winds blow free about one. Take thankfully what it offers; and let us see you home again, soon, and in sound worthy condition.

Yours ever truly,

T. Carlyle

*5. Carlyle to Ruskin[[16]](#footnote-17)*

Chelsea, 29 June, 1855

Dear Ruskin,

The wife when consulted says Thursday or Wednesday; let it therefore be Wednesday or Thursday, at your discretion, next week.

Of the times, etc. I say nothing; only put down, by way of guidepost, on my side of the border, the following facts:

1. Work ceases with me about 3 ½ in the afternoon, so that if left till towards that time, an adventure does not cost me anything, --tho’ I am willing to spend, too, on a good adventure.
2. I taste no food between breakfast and dinner; dine, with convenience (provided it be with simplicity, on something like a mutton chop), at any hour between 5 ½ and 7 ½.
3. We should like to be home not later than 11; and are capable of shifting easily in that particular.

Arrange all these things as seems good on *your* side of the Border; and please send us a line to say how they are settled, --I mean what the hour of your appearance *here* is.

[signature cut away]

*6. Ruskin to Carlyle[[17]](#footnote-18)*

[ca. October 1855]

Not that I have not been busy—and very busy, too. I have written, since May, good six hundred pages,[[18]](#footnote-19) had them rewritten, cut up, corrected, and got fairly ready for the press—and am going to press with the first of them on Gunpowder Plot day, with a great hope of disturbing the Public Peace in various directions. Also, I have prepared about thirty drawings for engravers this year, retouched the engravings (generally the worst part of the business), and etched some on steel myself. In the course of the six hundred pages have had various remarks on German Metaphysics, on Poetry, Political Economy, Cookery, Music, Geology, Dress, Agriculture, Horticulture, and Navigation, all of which subjects I have had to “read up” accordingly, and this takes time. Moreover, I have had my class of workmen out sketching every week in the fields during the summer;[[19]](#footnote-20)and have been studying Spanish proverbs with my father’s partner[[20]](#footnote-21), who came over from Spain to see the Great Exhibition. I have also designed and drawn a window for the Museum at Oxford; and have every now and then had to look over a parcel of five or six new designs for fronts and backs to the said Museum.

During my above-mentioned studies of horticulture, I became dissatisfied with the Linnaean, Jussieuan, and Everybody-elseian arrangement of plants, and have accordingly arranged a system of my own; and unbound my botanical book, and rebound it in brighter green, with all the pages through-other, and backside foremost—so as to cut off all the old paging numerals; and am now printing my new arrangement in a legible manner, on interleaved foolscap. I consider this arrangement one of my great achievements of the year. My studies of political economy have induced me to think also that nobody knows anything about that; and I am at present engaged in an investigation, on independent principles, of the natures of money, rent, and taxes, in an abstract form, which sometimes keeps awake all night. My studies of German metaphysics have also induced me to think that the Germans don’t know anything about *them*; and to engage in a serious enquiry into the meaning of Bunsen’s great sentence in the beginning of the second volume of the “Hippolytus,” about the Finite realization of infinity;[[21]](#footnote-22) which has given me some trouble.

The course of my studies of Navigation necessitated my going to Deal to look at the Deal boats;[[22]](#footnote-23) and those of geology to rearrange all my minerals (and wash a good many, which, I am sorry to say, I found wanted it). I have also several pupils, far and near, in the art of illumination; an American young lady to direct in the purchase of Turners, --and various little bye things besides. But I am coming to see you.

*7. Jane Carlyle to Ruskin*[[23]](#footnote-24)

Friday [July 1855]

Dear Kind Mr Ruskin,

If “virtue is ever its own reward,” (which “may be *strongly* doubted,” as we say in Edinr) decidedly the same cannot be said of *discretion*! How long might I have been discreet, “silent”, and all that sort of this, without accomplishing any such good for myself, as in blurting that foolish little thought; “I wish *this* had been the 14th”[[24]](#footnote-25)—

Oh yes! Won’t we go with you again, and be glad *to*! “well, my Dear, I desire nothing better to spend another afternoon with Ruskin out there”, and with me, the only possible objecting I could find, were I to assuage all tho’s my female mind, is that I in a manner begged an invitation. But really, I had no such thought at the moment, and you are a man, are you not, who believes what one says, in as much as you mean what you say yourself.

*8. Carlyle to Ruskin[[25]](#footnote-26)*

Chelsea, 3 decr, 1855 –

Dear Ruskin,

Among other things you gave me to think about, since you were here I have been twice or thrice reflecting upon your munificence to those old dames at Deptford.[[26]](#footnote-27) Your Gift of £10, no doubtit was gratifying to your own pious feeling, --but would it not have been safer, in the given case, to have added it to our subscription? The old women have, to my own knowledge, had an amount of £130 (140 with yours) added, this year, to their usual income; and the question, what good it may have done them? Appears to be a little uncertain!

Well, the £10 is gone; but the intended annuity of £5, it is upon this that I will now obtrude upon you my surprise. If your purpose is quite *fixed* in regard to this new eminent piece of bounty, would it not suit as well if you join with us in regard to it; --namely threw in a sum at once which would purchase such an annuity, or enabled us in some authentic way to mark you as a Donor to that annual extent? I am very clear that, for the sake of the two old women themselves, the two adventures ought to be thoroughly *conscious* of one another, and to your project altogether, it would be worth *your* while to consider this suggestion, which it is well worth *our* while to impress upon you!

The truth I have just retrieved from an interview with Forster[[27]](#footnote-28) (who in the temporary absence of Dickens is my sole coadjutor in that matter of the “Miss Lowe Subscription”): Forster reports rather a beggarly amount of the last 18 days, --an increase of precisely £30 (£202..2 this wk);--and in short a clear demonstration that the voluntary Principle has just about exhausted itself; and that in the way of “falling like dew”, £202..2 is nearly what the British Nation can do in this matter. More could be raised, bo doubt, by “aggressive methods” common in such cases, and probably a touch of that (applied at least to the 20 or 25 gentn that signed the Memorial) will be resorted to, as coming within the rule: but farther it will not be pleasant to go, --at least if one can help it at all.

It was in these circumstances that mentioned your bounteous doings; and Forster, headlong mortal, urged me to apply to you as above; which in fact I did not till now see the very great impudence of doing! However, it is done; and I know also you will forgive me, and not call it quite so impudent as I assure you I do myself.

So let us *announce* you Donation, or in some way to join it with our (too limited) “fall of dew”? If you absolutely dislike it, say No, at once, and fear nothing. Yours ever truly.

T. Carlyle

*9. Ruskin to Carlyle*[[28]](#footnote-29)

4th December [1855]

Dear Mr. Carlyle

I *wish* everything to be arranged as you wish it—or rather as you think best—for as you wish in all respects I fear it can never be. I hope however that the first £10 will not be lost as I gave it not to the old lady to buy horses with—or “let a coach be called”[[29]](#footnote-30)—but to Miss Erdman[[30]](#footnote-31)--on the understanding that there was a difficulty in the Washing department—pitiful to hear of in an old ladies house-which said sum might do away with—as I hope it has. For the rest—every autumn at fuel time—my 5 pounds shall be ready, and you shall dispose of them in whatever way you think best[[31]](#footnote-32)--and may inform the public of the same in any manner most calculated to impress them with the propriety of Subscription—I had a happy too short evening the other day. Coming again, soon. Ever affectionately Your Servt Carlyle

J. Ruskin

*10. Carlyle to Ruskin*[[32]](#footnote-33)

Chelsea, 6 decr, 1855

Dear Ruskin,

Many thanks. This is abundantly all that would be wished, --for certain, all that I ever did wish, --and I think it must satisfy Forster himself; to who I now send your announcement,[[33]](#footnote-34) with charge to make it known in the way most advantageous and least obtrusive. And may the Heavens reward you (as I have no doubt they will, in their own fashion) for your piety to the *Manes* [“spirit”] of Turner[[34]](#footnote-35) and compassion for the straits of those old women.

For the rest you must undertake the bestowal of you Annual Bounty yourself: the sole reward I claim in reference to these poor Misses Lowe is that, after this unblessed bother is once all down, I may never in this world or the next hear more of them; --that is a reward I cannot dispense with, nor must you grudge it me! God knows I had no need of new weight thrown upon my poor back just at present; and I have often asked myself, why in devil’s name I, of all mortals, got connected with such a thing? I will take better heed another time!

With regard to Miss Erdman, and the £10 towards washing purposes (for now I see it must have referred to that), there came to me a distracted scratch of writing from the elder Lowe some time since, very high and defiant of the said Erdman, but otherwise quite Sybilline and unintelligible, --for the rest, of no worth whatever: --I have looked for it this morning to read; but I supposed it is gone into the fire. Whither may all nonsense soon go. Amen, Amen!—

I am longing for you Book,[[35]](#footnote-36) the feeling you have about matters is altogether my own; and you have not yet hacked your word blunt in striking at the stony head of Human Stupidity, but rush upon it as if it were *cleavable* or conquerable, --more power to your elbow. It is and will be incumbent… our whole soul, till we die;…[[36]](#footnote-37) that it cannot be cleft, but is unconquerable by the very gods (according to Schiller), and lasts till the Day of Judgement at soonest.

We go into Hampshire for a month (17th Decr, that is , Monday week), and return on here the 17th Jany; observe these dates and remember that you are due here, --payable the sooner the better.

I find a Misses-Lowe annuity of £25 will come rather cheaper than was expected; inspire of the weather symptoms, we can still hope to achieve some approximation to that. That, with your five pounds, solves the problem, therefore, --or at least *absolves* me from it.

[signature cut away]

*11. Carlyle to Ruskin*[[37]](#footnote-38)

Chelsea, 18 Jany, 1856

Dear Ruskin,

Last night your beautiful book was handed in to me; a very handsome welcome indeed on one’s return home. I have already galloped extensively up and down over it; find that it will be an excellent reading for me in the coming nights. That is the real Sermon of the season and Epoch; Sermon “meaning many things,”[[38]](#footnote-39) by the most eloquent Preacher I have heard these 20 years, and who does mean wholly what he says. A beautiful enthusiasm is in him, a sharp flashing insight and very potent melody of utterance; a noble audacity, and confidence in Truth’s gaining the victory, --much *sooner* than it will do! For the odds are terrible against it, in tones of sphere-harmony mixed with thunder, these salutary messages to your poor fellow creatures, --whom (including us) may God pity. I also am, for my own particular share of the booty, grateful, as I may well be, --beyond what shall be written at present.

You will do us a real kindness any night you turn your steps hither, the earlier the better, for all manner of reasons. Also, if you see the good Mr. Furnivall,[[39]](#footnote-40) say I had his letter, but cannot possibly undertake to “talk,” on any terms, to any class of creatures, my usual lodging being about the Center of Chaos (not far from that, just now), which is a very taciturn inarticulate locality.

We wish you heartily “many good New Years.” There are few whom they will suit better. I am always,

Yours with many thanks,

T. Carlyle

*12. Carlyle to Ruskin*[[40]](#footnote-41)

Chelsea, 5 March, 1856

Dear Ruskin,

It is certainly a sad “*land*-change”[[41]](#footnote-42) these words of the Sea-Hero have suffered in the House of Lords. “This bit of work done, or else my life!” into, “That peacock’s feather got, or else’s life lost!” –A most sordid platitude; well worthy of being reprobated and rebuked.[[42]](#footnote-43) In indeed there *is* any public still left to whom you can appeal, on half of the Heroic, against platitudes done in high places and low? Which we are bound to believe there is; tho’, for my share, I often think I do not know where it lives at present, --and in fact have taken shelter by withdrawing out of the dirty welter altogether for the time; and never by any chance look into a morning Newspaper; but keep well to windward rather, while these big Tumbrils of the Spiritual Night-soil are in passage, poisoning the blessed air of the Heaven-sent new Day of one’s life! Do you, therefore, if you still have faith, pitch into that turpitude; and call a dull-nosed public to look at it: I can have no opportunity upon it. I should not have known what you meant, had not a man happened to call yesterday, with some rumour that there had been a Debate (bless the mark!) *about* having a National Picture Gallery, whh has long been an aspiration of mine. “A *Coronet* or Westminster Abbey”: O heavens, Oh Earth! –

You are a happy swift man; I here, slower than the snail or the boring worms and less human, am very unhappy; buried in endless Giant Mountains of Prussian Pedantry, Prussian Stupidity and *in*fidelity; seeking a poor prize after all, even if I should attain it! However, I shall perhaps get *out* one day, and that will be blessedness enough: We must have faith. – Your Book[[43]](#footnote-44) is scattering [*sic*] the astonished cohorts of chaos into strange agitated groups, I perceive. Which is the natural effect of it, and surely a salutary one by way of preliminary. Go on and prosper.

My wife here has caught cold a week ago, and sits prisoner; otherwise we are in the old way. Ought you not to come and see with your eyes now at last?

Yours ever truly,

T. Carlyle

*13. Carlyle to Ruskin[[44]](#footnote-45)*

Chelsea, 27 March, 1856

Dear Ruskin,

I learn for certain (tho’ I have not Southey’s Book by me) that the Stanhope phrase imputed to Nelson is *not* an error, but unfortunately as good as correct: “A peerage or Westr Abbey!” said the admiral, in very deed, before the Battle of Aboukir went off,[[45]](#footnote-46) --a saying proving the existence of not a little wind in the heroic Admiral!

Do not, therefor, pitch into poor Stanhope about it, at least not till you have ascertained!–

Every morning lately there are Denmark Hill Eggs here, rare in quality, and agreeable even to the human *mind*; which pleasantly recall the visit we had. Let there be another at *much* shorter interval, we pray you; --*quam primum* [“first thing”]: why not?

MY wife is still weak; but gets out when the sun is shining or the wind in a safe quarter. – I am pretty nearly brokenhearted in these Prussian Dust-whirlpools; yet shall get out if I live. –

Yours ever truly

T. Carlyle

*14. Carlyle to Ruskin[[46]](#footnote-47)*

Chelsea, 2 May, 1856

Dear Ruskin,

We know not what night you are coming; but hope only it will be soon. I have got your Fourth Volume[[47]](#footnote-48) (best thanks for such a gift), and have not yet time to read it except in snatches, but struggle forward towards a freer day before long. You have an enviable and admirable power of clearing off, in articulate swift piecing utterance, the divine indignation that may be lying in you against the genus charlatan; whereby you can then say *Exoneravi animum meum* [“I have disburdened my soul”), and proceed to new enterprises: it is very different, and I assure you a much worse case, when said indignation cannot be got cleared off, but lies sticking upon a man like burning Sulphur on the skin of him, -- like to drive the poor soul mad till he somehow or other do get rid of it! *Euge*; [“Well done’] –and thankful to heaven.

It seems the genus charlatan has broken out in strong counter-cry, in some of the Reviews, this month: that also is very well, and indicates to a man that the physic has begun griping, [*sic*] –more power to it. I can well understand how a comfortable R.A. reading these Books of yours, may be driven to exclaim, “I, stiff old stager, cannot *alter* according to this Ruskin’s precepts: I must either blow my brains out, or convince myself that *he* is wrong!” –Nevertheless I bid you to be gentle withal; consider that it is a stupid bed rid old world, *torpid* except at meal-time this long; while and never would, in Art or elsewhere, correspond anyway handsomely to the Ideal of its duties. Besides it makes a dreadful squealing, if you whip it too hard; and does you a mischief in the long run. –This is Pot speaking to Kettle, you will say, --and truly with too much reason. Pot had been longer on the fire (that is all), and regrets his extreme blackness, if he could have helped it by any method!

I have a message for you, or indeed two messages. The first is from Lady Ashburton,[[48]](#footnote-49) a very high lady both extrinsically and intrinsically, who invites you hereby to her Party at Bath House for Wednesday Evg next: the place, as you perhaps know, is in Piccadilly (first gate, to left in Bolton Street there), the hour of rally is probably 10 oe after, and the Party I supposed will consist of the usual elements in their highest figure of perfection. Perhaps you will consent to have a look at such a thing in its best perfection, for once? There are very fine Pictures in the House, and many of them, Durer’s Murillos etc., etc: and I certify the Host & Hostess to be themselves highly worth knowing. If you thought of coming, it would be pleasantest if we all went together; --tho’ that, for practical result, is not of the least moment: -- we two (unfortunately, I may well call it) are to *dine* previously that night, somewhere in the Portman Square region, and wd need to be taken up there (with a good loss of distance to you) if you pleased to like that method of entrance. Either way will do, if indeed you decide to go at all; which I may privately hope or not, but have no business to advise or desire in an audible manner.

The second message is from Lord Ashburton: You made an Address at Manchester lately; which perhaps was printed, separately or at least in the Newspapers: his Lordship (an amiable, clear-minded, *high*-minded man, --uniformly high in volitions at least) desires to see a copy of this address; and bids me ask it of you.[[49]](#footnote-50)Comply if you can; even take a little trouble to comply.

And this is all I had at present: sufficient for the day is the evil thereof![[50]](#footnote-51) You will have to write your determination on those important points. We are out on Saturday Evg, not otherwise, nor like to be except as here indicated.

Yours Always truly,

T Carlyle

*15. Carlyle to Ruskin[[51]](#footnote-52)*

Chelsea, 5 May, 1856

Dear Ruskin,

Our dining place on Wednesday (day after tomorrow) is “72 Gloucester Place Portman Square” (Mr. Rennie’s);[[52]](#footnote-53) and it is now proposed that you should call for us there at 10 ½, --half past 10; -- we will of course come down to you directly, and that will bring us to Bath House in excellt time. To get out of it again, with a carriage –*ille labor hoc opus[[53]](#footnote-54)* (like the route to a certain other place); --but we can advise about that too, if such is your resolution.

I have little doubt the *Oxford* Address is what Lord Ashburton meant, but I could not find him uesterday; on trial; --and it was agreed I should take you to him in person Wednesday evening, and let him tell his own story. Take no trouble therefore about the Address till then, --unless by accident you hear ahain tomorrow, whh is not likely.

Mr. Rennie, 71 Gloucester Place, Portman square; at ½ past 10 Wedy Evg: that is the essential point; --and I will hope a pleasant meeting.

Yours always truly,

T Carlyle

*16. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle[[54]](#footnote-55)*

[ca. November 1857]

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

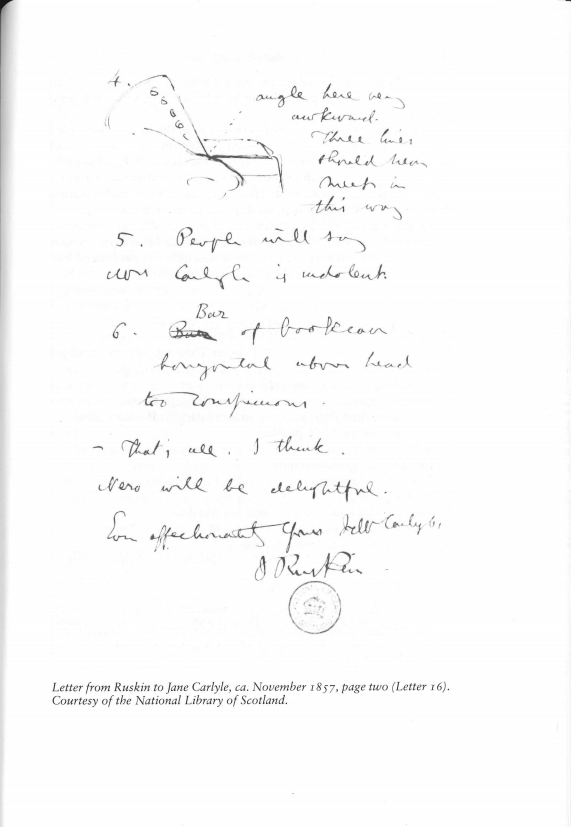
I like this little composition very much, but it isn’t quite right –nor can I suggest what would put it right – I can only do as you bid me, & mention the little things which seem to me wrong.

1st. Books too visible got up for colours sake --& too much in Harlequinad squares. Books should always be grave in colour, especially books behind the head of a historian’s wife. Everybody would want to know what you *could* have been reading.

1. The masses of red in shawl a little too equal in weight, & buff corners of bookcase ditto.
2. Too much instance [*sic*] on slender waist.
3. Angle here[[55]](#footnote-56) very awkward. Three lines should never meet in this way.
4. People will say that Mrs. Carlyle is indolent.
5. Bar of bookcase horizontal above head too conspicuous. –That’s all, I think. Nero will be delightful.

Ever affectionately Yours and Mr. Carlyle’s

J. Ruskin



*17. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle*[[56]](#footnote-57)

[ca. November 1857]

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

The points to be stated in your interior-or finish [?] painter respecting his perspective are simply there. That if he stands at any point he choose in the room, and tries to get his canvas to hide from his eye all that he has drawn of it, he will find that cannot do it. He thus violates the first rule of perspective by making his point of station imaginary, or rather impossible –the perspective is only true for a point within about six inches of the picture’s surface which is at *least* a foot too little. This station point should have been a foot and a half from the surface at least.

The second point to be noted is that even in the supposition of his point of station being possible, I believe the returning distance are not drawn to true scale. I am not *quite* sure of this, but I think he has given the inner room too much recess by an inaccurate use of his measuring line. If he will cut three inches off the top and bottom of his picture however it will be very nearly right.

Kindest regards to Mr. Carlyle.

The book I sent yesterday is of no use to *me*, and is very highly spoken of by the French themselves; but if it is only like the rest –I will take it away again when I come next. Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

Most Truly yours,

J. Ruskin

*18. Ruskin to Thomas and Jane Carlyle[[57]](#footnote-58)*

[after Thursday, March 17, 1859]

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Carlyle,

When may I come & see you?

Friday–Saturday–Monday–or Tuesday evening?

I’ve been in Yorkshire. In, also, lands of figurative Rock and moor[[58]](#footnote-59) --hard work --& peat bog puzzle.

No end visible.

Not getting on with German

Frederick yet unread

Nothing done.

All sorts of things undone –Stitches run down.

Entirely dim notions about what ought to be done. Except –that I ought to come and tell you about it.

Always affectionately Yours,

J. Ruskin

*19. Carlyle to Ruskin[[59]](#footnote-60)*

23rd Nov. [1859]

Dear Ruskin,

We are in great misery here: my poor wide, after escaping all winter, has fallen into the worst cold I have ever seen her have; and suffers very much; *weak* too as an infant, --tho’ I strive to flatter myself, *not* growing worse, but contrariwise. I caught a cold on the same occasion (last paroxysm of july-December weather), --or rather *renewed* a cold I have always obscurely had since a “bathe in the Baltic” last autumn;[[60]](#footnote-61) but I try to keep it at the staff’s end, and do not hithermore allow it to interfere with business. Absolute *silence* being the rule here just now. –I will come riding to Denmark Hill, on Thursday (day after tomorrow): and call you over the coals for half an hour, if you will be at home. Near 5 P.M.; --no, let us say “4.20 or so”, and be away before 5 again. Don’t write *unless* you have something to object.

That heaving about, and circling among the eddies, is not a pleasant process; but you will (to your astonishment perhaps) have various bouts of this kind in your wide voyage; and they are not unsalutory [*sic*], still less can be dispensed with, tho’ so disagreeable to the natural man.

If the Natural Man is *totally* at a loss for a career, let him read with attention this American Letter whh came this morning; --surely that opens a career *talens qualens* [such as it is! As the letter is not to be answered, you can burn it for the poor young Lady’s sake.[[61]](#footnote-62)

Yours always,

T. Carlyle

*20. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle[[62]](#footnote-63)*

23rd Nov. [1859]

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

I have had to go down into the north since I came from abroad,[[63]](#footnote-64) and have been sharply unwell since and am still confined to the house, but unless I hear from you to the contrary I shall come first evening in next week that I am well enough. –I have been nearly crushed by the badness of German painting & all that it signifies of worse evil. “Vanity, the clearest Phasis of the Devil in these days.”[[64]](#footnote-65)

--I think I shall have to give up painting–writing–talking everything but reading –and I read little now but Mr. Carlyle. –Fiction sickens me, because it is fiction. I am weary of it. Truth depresses me –because it is true. Not that one can find much very plainly written. And it depresses me also never to have had a line from you, thought I heard you were both on the whole well, in Scotland.

I trust I may find you in good truth, when I come.

Ever with sincere regards to Mr. Carlyle.

Faithfully and affectionately Yours,

J. Ruskin

*21. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle[[65]](#footnote-66)*

[December 3, 1859)

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

I hope I shall hear that you are better –I have been looking over my Burer’s and find an impression of the melencholia[[66]](#footnote-67) which, though not a first rate one, is good enough to show the principal characters of the plate –and I having no better –(it is a matter of great difficulty to get fine impressions of this plate) –can only *hope* Mr. Carlyle may think it worth placing in a house where so much noble work has been done –this being, as I supposed, intended for the type of noble earth labour.

The next time I come, I will bring a number of Durers with me, to look over –I am so selfish as to want to hear what Mr. Carlyle says of them.

--I hope Mr. Carlyle caught no cold by his unmanageable conduct at the door –that snowy evening.

(Best love to Nero –with *condolences[[67]](#footnote-68)*)

Always affectionately both y’s—

J. Ruskin

*22. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle[[68]](#footnote-69)*

[December 1859]

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

I am so very glad you liked the things & especially the flowers –for indeed the Melancholy is not exactly likeable. What it means –no one *knows*. “Cavernous meaning” is just the word for it.

In the main, it evidently means the full sense of the terror-mystery –turmoil –responsibility of the world, ending in great awe & sadness –and perpetual labour – (as opposed to French legrete [*sic*] –lightly crowned with budding hay –winged –as in true angelic service – (The Wolf hound of fiercer sorrow laid asleep at her feet.) Strong bodied. Having the Keys of all knowledge. Compare Tennyson’s –

Seemed to touch it into leaf,

The Words were hard to Understand[[69]](#footnote-70)

Ever affectionately Yours,

J. Ruskin

Poor little Nero. But he will love you just as much, even when he is blind –and move his little paws just as prettily.

*23. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle[[70]](#footnote-71)*

[Late December 1859]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

This weather hardly lets one manage one’s pen; much less one’s horse: We never hoped for you on Sunday: I am only sorry you had the trouble of writing about it: --don’t do so any more –I only want you to come precisely when you are in the way & the liking thereof. I am always at home by dinner on Sunday, at latest; my father generally all day: of course till the frost ends we have no hope: But I can’t come but at nights either in this bitter weather –at least unless it drives one to extremities. I *must* come, somewhere about Tuesday or Wednesday to wish you happy New Year. I’m going to make Christmas & New Year’s presents of “Past and Present” chiefly. I find everything that has to be said on any matter is all in that, and other people may forever hold their Peace. (I’ll hold mine; --if I can get a little to hold.) My hands are too cold to write. Love to Mrs. Carlyle. Ever devotedly Yours,

J. Ruskin

*24. Ruskin to Carlyle[[71]](#footnote-72)*

3rd February [1860?]

Dear Mr. Carlyle

I should have come long ago –but it is really a shame to take horses about in wet weather & on such ground. I cannot enough thank you for your kind letter. I will come to tea the moment the weather breaks a little –With sincere regards to Mrs Carlyle.

Ever respectfully & gratefully, Your

J. Ruskin

*25. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle[[72]](#footnote-73)*

Monday [1859? or 1860?]

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

I am hindered this evening but hope to come tomorrow & to find cold better. Ever yours & *his* affectionately.

J. Ruskin

*26. Carlyle to Ruskin[[73]](#footnote-74)*

Chelsea, 15 March, 1860

Dear Ruskin,

The door had no sooner closed on you than the maid brought in her Cigar Box, --the third that I have had from that cornucopia of a House: a shame to think of! This is what may be called *cigarring* a man for his difficult adventure, as they talk of “coaling” a steamer to go thro’ the seas. Truth is, I am not yet half way thro’ the First Box, tho’ I carry something of it daily in my pocket; and the Horse of himself pauses at the fit places, inviting me to smoke and be thankful. I can only say, and think you are very good.

The new *Durer* is hung up in fine light, and I study to make acquaintance with it before it returns home. The invincible grave simple *Ritter,[[74]](#footnote-75)* Industriously riding on his way, with such a load of sorrow whh he makes not the least complaintof, pleases me more and more –less and less I am pleased with his two detestable companions;[[75]](#footnote-76) who, I incline to think, lie beyond and below the real domain of Art, who’ they are very true to Nature, too, and attend any man, tragically visible to *him*, if *not* to others. The Picture I guess to have no other meaning than that universal symbolical one. –Of the other Durers which you showed us, the Scarlet Woman, with the flames bursting out, and the universe all going to live rubbish (like cheese to mites) under her guidance, --is his most vivid in my memory; but by far the most pleasant there, is St. Hubert in the primeval woods of Liege, so beautifully sculptured out, he and they, and what they contain for aa devout simple heart. Excellent pious Durer, who made himself an ornament to this world in his day and generation! –

I wish you were not going off in May to paint pine needles! Are there not plenty of unpainted needle-woods and beautiful umbrageous creatures nearer home?? “The finest trees that grow in the Temperate Zone” stand all about not far from Denmark Hill, I am told! *Cor inquietum est* [“the heart is restless”

I expect to ride out again, in the interim, some day soon.

Yours most truly

T. Carlyle

II

A MINORITY OF TWO

“Meantime my joy is great to find myself henceforth

in a minority of *two* at any rate! –“

Carlyle to Ruskin, October, 1860

Letter 27



Letters 27-79

October 29, 1860, through June 25, 1867

Ruskin publishes *Unto This Last* and “Essays on Political Economy” (later *Munera Pulveris*). He travels to Switzerland. Publication of *The Cestus of Aglaia, Ethics of the Dust*, and *The Crown of Wild Olive*. Courtship of Rose La Touche. Quarrel with Carlyle during publication of *Time and Tide by Ware and Tyne.*

Carlyle finishes *Frederick the Great*. Jane Welsh Carlyle’s declining health and death. The governor Eyre Defense Committee. Trip to Menton. Work on the *Reminiscences* and “Shooting Niagara and After.” Carlyle’s niece, Mary Aitken, comes to live at Cheyne Row

*27. Carlyle to Ruskin[[76]](#footnote-77)*

Chelsea, 29 Octr, 1860

Dear Ruskin,

You go down thro’ those unfortunate Dismal-Science people,[[77]](#footnote-78) like a Treble-x of Senna, Glauber and Aloes;[[78]](#footnote-79) like a fit of British Cholera, --threatening to be fatal! I have read your Paper with exhilaration, exultation, often with laughter, with “Bravissimo!” – Such a thing flung suddenly into half a million dull British heads on the same day, will do a great deal of good.

I marvel, in parts at the Lynx-eyed sharpness of yr logic, at the *pincer­­*-grip (red hot pincers) you take of certain bloated cheeks and blown-up bellies: --more power to yr elbow (tho’ it is cruel in the extreme)! If you chose to stand to that kind of work for the next 7 years, and work out there a result like what you have done in painting: yes, there were a “something to do,” –not easily measurable importance to these sunk ages. Meantime my joy is great to find myself henceforth in a minority of *two* at any rate!

The Dismal-Science people will object that their Science expressly *abstracts* itself from moralities, from &c &c: but what you say, and show, is incontrovertibly true, that no “Science” worthy of men (not worthier of dogs or of devils) has a right to call itself “Political Economy,” or can exist at all except mainly as a fetid nuisance and public poison, on *other* terms than those you now shadow out of it for the first time.[[79]](#footnote-80)

On yr last page, and never till then, I pause slightly, not too sorrowfully, and appeal to a time coming. Noble is the spirit then too, my friend; but alas it is not Philanthropisms that will do then, --it is Rhadamanthisms[[80]](#footnote-81) (I sorrowfully see) whh are yet at a very great distance! Go on and prosper. I am yours always (sleeping a little better, & hoping an evng soon)

T. Carlyle

*28. Carlyle to Ruskin[[81]](#footnote-82)*

Chelsea, 24 decr 1860

Dear Ruskin

I am very sorry I did not write on Saturday, as it was my thot to do; but the old groom predicted “a thaw tomorrow,” and that there wd have been at night, --and please Heaven, there are others coming.

As yr carriage horses must have got prepared before this, --the plan will now be that *you* come across (positively!) one of these silent evenings. No Xmas here; perfect seclusion, --but great readiness for a visitor of luminous type.

The wife is prisoner; I too in a sense, --but am to ride today, and hope to recover some. Yours ever truly

T. Carlyle

*29. Carlyle to John James Ruskin[[82]](#footnote-83)*

Chelsea, 4 March 1861

Dear Mr Ruskin,

Many thanks for yr kind charities and good offices. I have sealed up the first Bottle of yr exquisite Cognac, much more have lest this second under the wax, and have set them safe aside, --that this house, in case of real emergency, may never be witht Brandy *that can be depended on*. Meanwhile, the Leith people, in return for my late questionable (or rather *un*questionable) stock, have sent me an *old* sort, deep drown, whh I was acquainted with; --whh, witht the least pretension to fineness of flavor, is at least genuine grape-brandy (I believe), --or at least does not give me a headache when I apply to it. That is the essential; and we may for the present rest thankfully there.

“Martel”, I think, was the name given to that late spurious stuff, whh came from Leith; --evidently *whiskey* in good part. *Right* Brandy, I doubt, is hardly procurable at all just now. But as matters stand, --especially with such Tobacco as I boast, --one can in some measure defy an evil world!

With many sincere thanks for you ready helpfulness, and friendliness in this and other matters, I remain always

Yours faithfully

T. Carlyle

*30. Carlyle to John James Ruskin[[83]](#footnote-84)*

Chelsea, 27 March, 1861

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for your new Gift of Brandy: surely you are very kind to take so much trouble about that matters for me. If it do rank at present among my necessaries of life (whh luckily it does in a small way for the time being), I must admit that I am now well provided. I hope to report favourably of this new specimen when we next meet.

The absence of the Junior Mr. Ruskin has of late been frequently commented upon in this house: we request you to dispatch him hitherward directly on his return from Cheshire.

With many thanks & regards,

T. Carlyle

*31. Carlyle to John James Ruskin[[84]](#footnote-85)*

Chelsea, 23 April 1861

Dear Mr. Ruskin,

The wife was not with me on Friday Evg last: --but if she had been? It is a literal fact, I, for my own part, found the Discourse[[85]](#footnote-86) a genial, wholesome, welcome one, --and was very well *pleased*. A failure as a “Lecture” (if you will), as a Discourse tied all up into sheaves, and able to stuff itself mostly into the space of 60 minutes, filling that and no more; --failure that way; but otherwise, I can assure you, quite the reverse of “failure.” It did contrive [?] to tear up the big subject (by *explosion* if not otherwise) for one’s behoof; gave me the liveliest desire to hear that man talk *for a month* on “Newleaves”; --and to me individually (tho’ you must not mention it in Albemarle Street) gave, so far as I can calculate, more such satisfaction than any the neatest of the many neat Discourses I have heard in that place. “A failure” from over-opulence (*embarrass des richesses*): Heaven send us many, very many, of precisely the like kind! These are facts I can myself bear witness to. I recommend, therefore, that everybody return to “the Arms of Murphy” as if nothing were wrong at all or had been: indeed it never struck me that the *Chief Culprit* cared the least abt it; or I shd have been distressed for the moment, in one transient particular; whh I was not at all. This is my affidavit: whh I could not have written except to yourself; but I had something else to write this night for the younger to yourself; but I had something else to write this night for the younger Mr. R.; & will now append it here; wiz:

That he, said R. Junr isdue, and overdue, for weeks back, at this House; and that we expect to *see* him within two or three nights, or *any* night he likes

The Glasgow Brandy was exquisite, --perfect, so far as I cn judge.

Yours sincerely,

T. Carlyle

*32. Ruskin to Carlyle[[86]](#footnote-87)*

Holyhead,

Wednesday, 28th August, ‘61

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

I was *so* glad to get Froude’s letter, with your little endorsement[[87]](#footnote-88) and I would have set to work instantly, but you can’t think how ill I am; indeed I’ve not been able to do a sentence of anything all this summer. The heaviest depression is upon me I have ever gone through; the great questions about Nature and God and man have come on me in forms so strange and frightful –and it is so new to me to do everything expecting only Death,[[88]](#footnote-89) though I see it is the right way –even to play -- & *men* who are men, nearly always do it without talking about it.

But all my thoughts and ways are overturned –so is my health for the present –and I can do nothing this year.

I’ll write to you and to Mrs. Carlyle from Ireland where I’m going today[[89]](#footnote-90) --wind and weather serving.

I have written to Mr. Froude by this post and I am ever your & Mrs. Carlyle’s affectionate servant – (thought you have Charlotte[[90]](#footnote-91) too).

J. Ruskin

*33. Carlyle to John James Ruskin[[91]](#footnote-92)*

Chelsea, 29 Octr, 1861

My dear Sir;

You are abundantly kind and obliging. If it please Heaven, I will come to Denmark Hill some day again, and *stay* dinner! Shd November 17th prove favourable in point of weather, --more especially a certain paltry little “breast-cold” whh I have caught, be tolerably shaken off, --Novr 17 shall be the day. In the opposite case, I will at least be punctual to give notice the day before. So that if *you hear nothing*, it is all right.

Yours sincerely

T. Carlyle

*34. Ruskin to Thomas and Jane Carlyle[[92]](#footnote-93)*

Lecurne, 7th November, ‘61

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle

Two days before hearing from my father of Mr. Carlyle’s kind little visit[[93]](#footnote-94) I had sent an underlined charge of gravest character, to let me know how you both were. I should have written myself, but was for a month after leaving home this last time, in a state of stupid depression which there was no use in giving any account of. I am now settled here, with a bright room –fire –and view of lake. I draw and paint a little every day –very little, but what I do is now accumulative and I hope will come to something. I am gaining strength gradually; --and learning some Latin & Greek.[[94]](#footnote-95) I do everything as quietly and mechanically as I can. I have little pleasure –and no pain –except toothache sometimes. I forget, resovedly, all that human beings are doing of ridiculous, or suffering of its consequences; try to regret nothing –and to wish for nothing. I am obliged to pass much time in mere quiet –and standing with one’s hand behind one’s back is tiresome –I make up my mind to be tired and stand. The nights –if one wakes in them, are sadly long –one tries to think “after all –it is life –why should one wish it shorter” –and one is thankful, in spite of such philosophy, when the clock strikes— (I wonder if one would be –or wild be –when it is a passing bell that strikes –which will be the same thing, once for all.) When I’ve read Xenophon’s economist[*sic*], and Plato’s republic and one or two more things carefully, I shall finish –if I can –my political economy –of other plans, or hopes, I have none for the present. These is enough, and a great deal too much of myself. Mr. Carlyle will be angry with me for not going on with German, but it is impossible among Germans; the people make me – (or *would* make me if I contemplated them) too angry to endure their language. Switzerland is degenerating –at least its people are –(and the lakes are not so clear as they used to be) – The Peasantry seem still nearly what they were –(that is to say, little more than two-legged cattle). The townspeople imitate and hate the French, having neither dignity enough to stand on their own ground, nor beauty or modesty enough to respect these they borrow from. By rifle practice, and much drinking, and making disgusting noises in the street at night, they are preparing themselves against French invasion. But what of silent and worthy is yet among them I do not see, and have no business to abuse them in general terms.

--I hope to get home before Christmas: but will write again as soon as I know about time. It would be a great delight to me if Mrs. Carlyle would send me just the merest line to Schweizer Hof, Lucerne, saying how you are both --& that you still believe me to be affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin

*35. Carlyle to John James Ruskin[[95]](#footnote-96)*

Chelsea, 14 Novr, 1861

Dear Mr. Ruskin,

I really am ashamed under your munifcences as to cigars! I was still *two Boxes* strong: and hare has another come today. All I can say is, you are very kind; and I return you many thanks the best I have. The Flowers[[96]](#footnote-97) also are praised as “superlative”, --tho’ my poor wife is not able to pu them in their bottles herself today as she wd otherwise have taken a half-holiday in doing. She has caught cold, in these inclemencies of weather; & keeps her room, and even her bed, all day.

It is a poor return for such kindnesses to say, what has been forcing itself upon me as too probably lately, that I actually must not venture on Sunday. This weather is of such a raging character; that *bosom-friend* (in the windpipe) still keeps such hold; the poor wife is so ill &c &c: in short, I will postpone it till “the Prodigal” (so let us call him in figurative language) returns from his Swiss wanderings; --and then, I shall be seriously unwell, and things very perverse about me, if I fail! We had a Letter from Lucerne the other day; very kind and pleasant; shadowing out a *hermit*-life among the Mountains yonder, --solitary, affectionate, not without a trace of sadness, but wholesome, diligent, and leading towards *good* that I foresee. So soon as *he* returns --! —

Believe me always, Dear Sir,

Yours sincerely

T. Carlyle

*36. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle[[97]](#footnote-98)*

Lucerne, 24th Nov. 61.

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

Indeed I was just going to write again, and did not expect any answer, for I knew you were ill,[[98]](#footnote-99) but it’s so good of you, and I’m sure it made you worse –Doing nice, good things always makes people worse. Only it’s wicked of you to teaze me so about that romantic thing –so perhaps it wouldn’t hurt you after all.

No, I can’t come home yet. There’s a difference I assure you –not small –between dead leaves in London Fog –and living rocks, and waters—and clouds—I never saw anything sso entirely and solemnly *divine* as the calm winter days are, here—Dead –or living—calm whichever you choose to feel—or call it—Intense sunshine—the fields green, as in summer, on the slopes sunward—but sparkling with dew, frost—and the white hoarfrost on their shadowy sides—mounded and mounded up and far to the pines—They all lost in avenues of light—and the great Alps clear—sharp—all strength and splendour—far round the horizon—the clear streams, still unchained, ringing about the rocks and eddying into green pools—and the lake, taking all deep into its heart under the hills. It is like the loveliest summer’s morning at five o’clock—all day long. Then in ordinary weather, the colour of the beech woods and pine on the cliffs—and of the rocks in the midst of the frost clouds! —I never saw such things—didn’t know what winter was made or meant for, before—I walked through the Reuss the day before yesterday, just for delight in its clear green water—not many people can say they’ve done that, for it is the fourth river of the Alps (Rhine—Rhone—Aar—Reuss): and it would have given a good account of me if I had tried it in the summer time—even as it was, it ran like a mill race in the middle, and needed steady walking. No—Ican’t come home yet—must manage it by New Year’s Day, thought, I believe. —Yes, it is quite true that I not only don’t know that people care for me, but never can believe it somehow. I know I shouldn’t care for myself if I were anybody else. —Yes, we’ll bring home a Lion[[99]](#footnote-100)--and I think we shall have some satisfaction in looking at it.

I’m just away to-morrow deeper into the Alps, to Altorf [*sic*]—to see how the grimmest of them look in the snow. I’m better than I was, a good deal. —Still very sulky—and reading Latin Greek, or rather beginning to learn them—but a little comforted in feeling that I am really learning *something* and in the entire peace—and rest—and being able to swear at people and know they’re out of hearing.

There’s more cracking of whips and barking of dogs than I like—than Slender would have liked, and there are no Ann Pages.[[100]](#footnote-101) The Swiss are frightfully ugly—but when I get tired of it, I can always get away into the pine woods—where it is quiet as the night—or row into the middle of the lake—where there is often not a ripple. It would be good for both of you to come here to finish Frederick—you would have no influenza—and Mr. Carlyle might enjoy his pipe in peace.

I’ll write again from among the deeper Alps. –Mind & get the head & martyrs all right. –Ever affectionately Mr. C’s & yours,

J. Ruskin

*37. Carlyle to John James Ruskin[[101]](#footnote-102)*

Chelsea, 30 Novr,1861

Dear Mr. Ruskin,

The Publisher has sent me the Book of “Selections”,[[102]](#footnote-103) as promised; and it is my constant companion, these evenings, in the few leisure hours I have; --awaking in me, seriously, the wish that every drawing-room in her Majesty’s dominions were provided with a Copy, and able to read it with feelings similar to mine! It is many a day and year since I met with any Book the spirit of whh (to say nothing of its lively felicitous expression) is so accordant with what I reckon best & truest. –the idea of the Publisher was surely altogether good: multitudes of people, who could not get access to the big expensive books, will be furnished with this as a kind og manual; and no ingenuous soul will read any bit of it (at least any bit I have fallen in with) whh will not have a tendency to do him *good*, as well as give him pleasure. The Book is well printed, unusually *correct* for most part; the Portrait has a good resemblance *a la Richmond*:[[103]](#footnote-104) it is altogether a pleasant little companion, and a profitable in these bad times; --and I am much obliged to you for my individual share in the adventure.

My wife continues *room*-fast, sometimes *bed*-fast (whh she does not easily consent to be); but is never yet what we can call very ill. There has been a sad tragedy next door to us (a poor Mr. Gilchrist,[[104]](#footnote-105) a young literary man; one of his children took it; and within 5 days illness, the Head of the House is himself lying dead of the disorder); --this of course has been an agitating circumstance on our side of the wall, and has done my own poor Patient a sensible mischief. I believe yr last flask of perfect Brandy (let that be yr Thanks for it) went across to poor Gilchrist as *medicine*. I do not think a nobler use cd have been made of it, tho’ it proved unavailing. —We had another Letter from Switxerld, with nothing but cheery news. Send my best regards when you write. Yours sincerely,

T. Carlyle

*38. Ruskin to Thomas and Jane Carlyle[[105]](#footnote-106)*

[Lucerne,]

[December 23, 1861]

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle,

Only to wish you as happy a Christmas as anybody has any business to have. Nice peace on earth and good will to men we have preached and practiced—this many a day—have not we? But I do wish that people had feeling enough, when they want a word synonymous with beed and pudding, to use a less olemn one. My father sent me Mr. Carlyle’s love, and it came quite nicely. —I’m coming home for New Year’s Day at any rate, D.V.[[106]](#footnote-107)

I write you cheerful scraps, because it makes me cheerful to think of you –buit it was very cool of Mr. Carlyle to say I was leading a life “with a trace of sadness” in it. I’m entirely miserable—that’s all; but it’s all right—and believe I’m stronger than I was. —It is not muscular power that I want so much, though I’ve no large allowance of that: but the least over though—above all, the least mortification or anxiety—makes me ill so quickly that I shall have, I believe, to live the life of a monster for some years and care for nothing but grammar. If I could make a toad of myself and get into a hole in a stone, and be quiet, I think it would do me good. –My eyes –(and toads have got those too) and ears—(which asses have also)—are too much for me. –“Non veder—non sentir m(e) (sarabbe) gran ventura.”[[107]](#footnote-108)

I can’t write letters—but I love you both, and would if I could, and long ones. I’ve got the Lion,[[108]](#footnote-109) photographed—and engraved—and neither are the least like—and it doesn’t matter, for the real thing is good for nothing—like the useless “fidelity”—(query “stupidity” &”obstinacy”?) which it commemorates. I’ve no patience with the Swiss, now,--nor with anybody:--myself included. Goodbye—Ever your affectionate.

J. Ruskin

*39. Carlyle to Ruskin[[109]](#footnote-110)*

Chelsea, 30 June, 1862

Dear Ruskin,

It was, and is yr duty to send some tidings of yrself to this address. We are more concerned abt you than you seem in the heart to believe; --and therefore reigns no despair here upon the black state you are evidently in: nothing is considered the least essential but that your bodily health shd keep good, and clear itself of those superficial presences wh have been annoying of late. Take every precaution *then*, I do earnestly counsel you! The want of every such counsel to myself, or of my following any such, has been such an item in the general invoice to me (invoice highly considerable, you wd say if you knew it) as swallows *all* the others, and how fitly has with a shudder when I look back on it! […?] *de expect*. If you are wise you will. –For the rest, you ought to write *regularly* to Chelsea; some kind of answer will be sent (quite regular ansr, if we were once thro’ this Book); and if no ansr come, still you are bound to write.

I am finishing vol IV; busy as a poor spent costermonger’s ass getting its head over the *last* hill but *one*. For years past I have ceased writing Notes pretty nearly altogether: -- not a wise step, I begin to see but it now cannot be mended. Well, and the case at present is: I have read, a month ago, you *First* in *Fraser;[[110]](#footnote-111)* and ever since have had a wish to say it to you, *Euge, macte nova virtute*.[[111]](#footnote-112) I approved in every particular; calm definite, clear; rising into the sphere *of Plato* (our almost best), whh in exchange for the sphere of *Macculloch* [*sic*],[[112]](#footnote-113) *Mill and Co*. is a mighty improvement! Since that, I have seen the little *green* Book, too;[[113]](#footnote-114) reprint of your *Cornhill* operations, --abt 2/3 of whh was read to me (*known* only fromwhat the contrdictn of sinners had told me of it); --in every part of whh I find a high and noble sort of truth, not one doctrine that I can intrinsically dissent from, or count other than salutary in the extreme, and pressingly needed in Engld above all. This “wish” has been steering me more than ever since the green Book. So now I have written. We are tolerably well. Adieu, write!

Yours ever T. Carlyle

*40. Ruskin to Thomas and Jane Carlyle[[114]](#footnote-115)*

Christmas Evening (not eve), ‘62

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Carlyle,

I’m sitting by a bright wood fire—which flickers on the walls of a little room about twelve feet square –somewhat stiff in finger, as you may see by the try of pen above[[115]](#footnote-116) --and in limb, from a long walk in the frosty sunshine up and down along the piny [*sic*] banks pf this river of mine, the Arve, now green and clear, though in summer, “drumly”[[116]](#footnote-117) with glacier dust. The snowy mountains form an unbroken chain beyond the elevated plain, above which my own hill rises some five or six hundred feet up to my doorstep –and two thousand feet behind me. –I got into my cottage yesterday, and am congratulating myself (somewhat sadly in an under tone) on being out of the way of –Everything.

The month in London was mischievous to me. I got “off” my quiet work, and now my books seem a little dull to me, and the evenings long—and yet life seems to pass in nothing but dressing and undressing—going to bed and getting up again, a night older.

I saw Lady Ashburton[[117]](#footnote-118) in Paris for a few moments, and promised to write to you, and did not—having no hope to give you, and thinking that you might as well be anxious as hopeless.

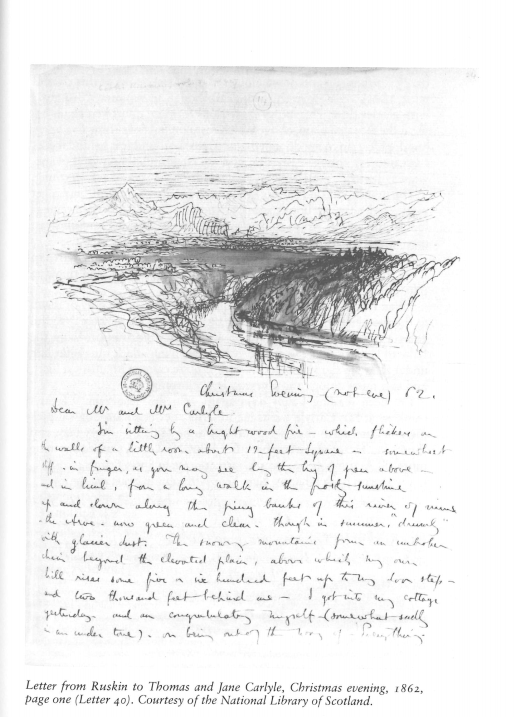
I then travelled on through the night and came in the grey of dawn to the roots of the Alps. While, I see by the papers, there were dreadful gales in England, a keen, but healthy north wind was breaking the Lake of Genova into chequers of white and blue—dark blue—far laid under the rosy snows of Jura. Now it is quite calm, with clearest light, and soft mists among the pinewoods at morning.

I’ve been reading Latter days again—chiefly “Jesuitism.”[[118]](#footnote-119) I can’t thin what Mr. Carlyle wants me to write anything more for—if people don’t attend to that, what more is to be said? Ifeel very lazy, and think—in fact, I’m sure—that after February I shan’t write anything more till Autumn again. I can’t correct press in Spring time.

I wish you both a happy New year with all my heart.

Ever your affectionate,

J. Ruskin



*41. Ruskin to Thomas and Jane Carlyle[[119]](#footnote-120)*

[Geneva,]

[January 5, 1863]

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Carlyle,

I mean Mrs., particularly, but I wish you both all feasible happiness, this New Year. But Mrs. Carlyle, I want you to be very kind and good, and to show that little miniature you did when you were 14 to a friend of mine—a wise, intelligent, energetic, schoolmistress, of a girls school,[[120]](#footnote-121) where I go sometimes when I want to be—whatever you call it—flattered—or petted—or what not—But I’ve been much too sulky to stand petting this long while, and haven’t been there, and have left all my pupils at a stand still—But I want Miss Bell, and one of the girl governesses, if she can come too, to call on you, and to see that miniature, that it may show them what a child of 14 can do, when she’s going to be a Mrs. Carlyle. And if you like them, I wish you would ask them to tea. You couldn’t give a greater pleasure to two more deserving people, and you would give some to a very undeserving one, in Savoy. But this woman, Miss Bell—educated her two brothers—and they went, like idiots for missionaries, and died, and she got the world to fight with by herself now—and does it nobly, and her school is thoroughly useful and nice. She talks perhaps a little too much generally—but won’t with you, and its never nonsense.

I’m a little better—This weather marvelous for beauty and silence—no calm like winter calm. I was up 4,000ft. above sea today, in deep snow, and was quite too hot when I got down again.

Ever you affectionate,

J. Ruskin

*42. Carlyle to Ruskin[[121]](#footnote-122)*

[early April 1863]

…There is a felicity of utterance in it here and there, such as I remember in no other writer, living or dead, and it’s all true as gospel. …What enlightened public will make of it I know not. To be visited with such a dividing joint and marrow! so quiet, so sudden, fatal as the sword (here a proper name for sword I could not read)[[122]](#footnote-123) to the unhappy smith who only knew he was killed by feeling the iron in his inside, and had to shake himself before he fell in two. *Euge*! I tell you I know nothing like it for felicity of expression; John Mill keeps not closer to his dialectics and he but with one gift, while here are so many; --a man who comes on etymologically, phantastically, prophetically (I am not sure of this last word—could not decipher it; if it Is right, it means ‘eloquently,’ but is stronger) all at once. Glad I am that you are in for a continuance—I care not now at what interval: I have lived to see it said clearly that government— (I forget the exact phrase following, but it meant the assertion of authority generally over mob.)

*43. Ruskin to Carlyle[[123]](#footnote-124)*

Denmark Hill

28th June [1863?]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

The fine weather has really come at last, it seems, and I may claim your promise—I cannot tell you how much pleasure your letter gave me. Will you send me a single line to say when I may come and make prey of you. I should have done so months ago, only one does not like to be so importunate as to take the last excuse for staying at home out of the mouth of a reverted friend—or I should have taken that of *the distance* out of yours, long ago.

--Any day next week—perhaps you had better give me choice of two, in case of any inevitableness turning itself up meanwhile—at your own time, I will come & carry you & Mrs. Carlyle off—Truly—our place here looks green & the hay is deep—and we are on the whole at our best. With sincerest regards to Mrs. Carlyle—believe me most faithfully and gratefully Yours,

J. Ruskin

Thomas Carlyle Esq

*44. Carlyle to Ruskin[[124]](#footnote-125)*

Chelsea, Thursday, 8p.m.

[late 1863]

Dear Ruskin,

Your benevolent Cousin[[125]](#footnote-126) has been so very obliging as to call; and –I & the ill Chance, lo, we have made such a mess of it as was never seen!

At dusk when I came home from my ride, there was a whirlpool of people in and about the house, one of whom I privately learned was Dr. Quain[[126]](#footnote-127) I retired to the Kitchen, to smoke perdu, and waylay Dr. Quain. Have had a word from him, I stole up to my bedroom for the usual nap of sleep. I had not got to sleep there, when the maid came knocking with “a Letter, Sir” (your letter, I did not learn *by* whom.) I read the letter, with the bad candle and the bad eyes, --*failing* to make out the first line;--I conclude it was you man Crawley that had brot it; and I sent a verbal ansr as if *by* Crawleyfor *you!* Not till half an hour ago, on reading the Note deliberately after dinner, did I ascertain for myself what an unutterable absurdity there had been committed;--to my own and especially my poor Wife’s very great disappointt:--with the question still in the rear, Is it forgivable and reparable, or is it?

I at once apprise you, at any rate and beg to make a thousand and a thousand apologies to the kind Dr. for what I unwittingly did.

Yours in great confusion

T. Carlyle

*45. Ruskin to Carlyle[[127]](#footnote-128)*

[February 26 or 27, 1864]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

I have been very far from well—I meant to have come over today, but the weather is wretched & my father has been suffering very grievously and made us even rather anxious—he is better, but I’m not sure when I can get over—would you send me the *merest* line to say how Mrs. Carlyle is? It would be *very* kind of you.

--Ever affectionately Yours,

J. Ruskin

46. Ruskin to Carlyle[[128]](#footnote-129)

[March 1, 1864]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

So many thanks—I should have been over to see you, but my father is sharply ill and has needed me to be with him the past two or three days—it *was* all this dreadful frost.—I’ll write again as soon as he is better.

Ever affectionately Yours,

J. Ruskin

*47. Ruskin to Carlyle[[129]](#footnote-130)*

12th March [1864]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,--You will not think it was out of thoughtlessness or disrespect that I have not written to you. You had enough sorrow of your own, and could by no means help us in ours.[[130]](#footnote-131) To-day I have a note from Lady Trevelyan[[131]](#footnote-132) saying Mrs. Carlyle is much better—this gives me courage to ask for you both. My mother and I are in all practical and necessary ways able for what has come upon us. *She* is very wonderful to me; I have little doubt but that I may yet, if I am spared, procure her some years of no false or slight, but peaceful and hopeful, *happiness*.

Ever affectionately yours,

J. Ruskin

*48. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle[[132]](#footnote-133)*

Denmark Hill, S.

[December 23, 1864?]

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

This is the kind of thing I wondered how anybody could be got to print—One of them comes about once a month—here—to my great pride in the distinction above mortals who are beneath the level of prophecy.

Ever yours affectly,

J. Ruskin

Dear love to Mr. Carlyle and happy Christmas to you both.

*49. Ruskin to Jane Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.

Wednesday [1865?]

Dear Mrs. Carlyle,

Indeed it is long, but I have just done a little bit of work which needed me to keep quietly at it: and I was ill in the middle of it which threw all back.

And I thought Mr. Carlyle would have enough to do, & be bothered:--and now it is all right, and I hope to bring him my bit of a book on Saturday, if I may come.

Don’t write if I may, only I mayn’t.

Ever affectionately Yours,

J. Ruskin

1. Letter i. Approximately half of the MS, from “The spirit and purport of these Critical studies…” to “Adieu: here is an interruption,” is in the possession of the estate of Mrs. Helen Gill Viljoen. Pbd complete in Collingwood, I, 175-76 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Probably a reference to Sir Herbert Edwardes (1819-68), who, as a young lieutenant, had bravely led English troops to victory at Kinyeri, India, in 1848. Edwardes 9now a major) was in England in 1850-51, and in the winter of 1850 had published them under the title *A Knight’s Faith* as part IV of *Bibliotheca Pastorum* (1885). Carlyle, in a letter to Charles Kingsley on March 21, 1851 (MS: MLS,3823.243), mentions having just read Edwardes and calls him” a gallant brisk young fellow.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Ruskin’s *The Stones of Venice*, volume I, published in March 1851. For “Sermon in Stones,” see Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, II.i.17: “Sermons in stones and good in everything.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Gehenna, one of Carlyle’s favorite words, refers to the valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem. It was a place of abomination where fires were continually kept burning to destroy the city’s refuse, and it thus became a synonym for Hell in the New Testament. Carlyle’s handwriting here makes my use of the word “murk” disputable. Collingwood (I,175) has “mask”, which may be right: and Peter Quennell, *John Ruskin: The Portrait of a Prophet* (1949, p.74), has “marsh,” which seems incongruous. Another possible reading is “mark” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. *Letter 2*. MS: MLS, 55.1. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVI, 183-84; and in Cook, I, 476-77. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Thomas Woolner (1825-92), English sculptor and poet. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Ruskin had been accused, for instance of borrowing from Pugin, in an anonymous review of *The Stones of Venice* in *The Ecclesiologist,* XI (August 1851), 276. These accusations gave rise to Ruskin’s essay on “Plagiarism,” which he appended to volume III of *Modern Painters* in 1856 (*Works*, V, 427-30), and which includes a further discussion of the nature of Carlyle’s influence. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. A report of Ruskin’s lectures on “Decorative Colour.” For this and the “passage,” see *Works*, XII, 507 and n. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. *Letter 3.* MS: Rylands, English MS II9I/I. Pbd: Sanders, pp. 210-11 <https://carlyleletters.dukeupress.edu/volume/29/lt-18550123-TC-JRU-01> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. 1Carlyle had been working hard since 1852 on his *History of Frederick the Great*.

    Carlyle underlines the word “*citra*” twice, and the phrase is thus roughly translated as “shoemaker *without* shoe.” It is a play upon a familiar Latin proverb—“Ne sutor supra crepidam”—that nineteenth-century schoolboys found in Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History* and translated as “let the cobbler stick to his last.” Its more literal translation, with the addition of Pliny’s verb *judicaret*, means “let the shoemaker not judge beyond shoes,” and Carlyle’s phrasing thus describes a cobbler who could not even judge shoes, or never made a good shoe to “stick to.” When Ruskin published his *Unto This Last* in 1860, an anonymous critic in *Fraser’s Magazine* (November 1860, p.659) suggested changing the title to “Beyond the Last.””We never knew a more signal violation of the good old rule, ‘*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*,’” he grumbled. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. *Letter 4.* MS: Rylands, English MS II9I/2. Pbd: Sanders, pp. 211-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. Unidentified. Sanders (p. 211) believes this may be Henry T. Wake, an engraver whom both Carlyle and Ruskin knew. He adds, however, that he has found “no hint of his being a Quaker or of any difficulty which would have caused Carlyle to call him a Grampus (fish of the dolphin family).” The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists another meaning for “Grampus” which was in use by 1836— “a person who breathes loud.” Wake may thus have “spouted off” and got into trouble somehow. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Scene of the infamous “Charge of the Light Brigade,” which took place on October 25, 1854, during the Crimean War. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Sir John Fox Burgoyne (1782-1871). The quotation has not been identified. Carlyle may have seen it in a newspaper, or heard it from Burgoyne himself. Burgoyne, who was inspector-general of fortifications and was second in importance to Lord Raglan during the Crimean War, had been recalled to England in February 1855, and the British press had made him a scapegoat for advising the disastrous march to the southern side of Sebastopol in 1854. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Ruskin was at Tumbridge Wells, being cured of an illness by his cousin, Dr. William Richardson. See *Praeterite,* part III, chapter 1, paragraph 11 ( *Works*, XXXV, 484). [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. *Letter 5.* MS: Rylands, English MS 1191/3. Pbd: Sanders, p.212 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. *Letter 6.* MS: not located. Pbd in above form in Collingwood (rev.), pp. 158-59. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Volumes III and IV of *Modern Painters*, in which most of the subject Ruskin mentions here are found. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Ruskin taught a landscape-drawing class at the Working Men’s college from October 1854 to May 1858. He frequently had his class come with him to sketch in the country during the summer term. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. Pedro Domecq, one of John James Ruskin’s partners in the wine trade, was Spanish and owned vineyards at Xerez (now Jerez de la Frontera), though he lived in Paris. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
21. Christian, *Freiherr* Bunsen (1791-1860). The reference is to his *Hippolytus and His Age*, 4 volumes (Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, 1852), II, 38. In appendix 11 of volume III of *Modern Painters*, entitled “German Philosophy,” Ruskin calls Bunsen’s phrase concerning “finite realizations of the infinite” “a phrase considerably less rational that “a black realization of white.’” See *Works*, V 424-25. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
22. Ruskin went to Deal to make studies of shipping for use in the preface to his book on Turner’s *Harbours of England*, published in 1856*.* See *Works,* XIII [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
23. *Letter 7.* MS: Duke University. Hitherto unpbd. The back page of the letter has “Mrs T. Carlyle / July 1855” In Jane Carlyle’s hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
24. July 14 was Mrs. Carlyle’s 54th birthday. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
25. *Letter 8.* MS: Duke University. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
26. Carlyle and Ruskin, with several other notable literary men, were starting a fund to help the aged and indigent Misses Lowe, one of whom was the goddaughter of Samuel Johnson. A manuscript fragment by Carlyle, in Yale University’s Beinecke Library, Identifies the ladies as “Ann Elizabeth Lowe (born 29 septr), the *God-daughter”* and “Frances Meliora Lucia Lowe (born 20 jany 1783),” daughters of the man mentioned in Johnson’s will as “Mauritius Lowe, Painter.” See Carlyle’s “Statement and Appeal for a Certain Miss Lowe and Her Sister,” *Times*, November 1, 1855. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
27. John Forster (1812-76), biographer of Dickens, Goldsmith and Landor, was Carlyle’s good friend and a member of the “Misses Lowe” committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
28. *Letter 9.* MS: Victoria and Albert Museum, 65a. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
29. Probably an echo of *Hamlet*, IV.v.72-73: “Come, my coach! Good night ladies, good night, sweet ladies…” [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
30. Miss Erdman was the custodian of the Misses Lowe Fund. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
31. A line inserted here, in Carlyle’s handwriting, reads: “this I have quite declined. T.C.” [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
32. *Letter 10.* MS: NLS, 1796.93. Pbd: Sanders, p. 213. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
33. On the same day, December 6, Carlyle wrote to John Forster: “Here is Ruskin’s answer: he does not give us the money all at once, but makes the Annual £5 sure (during his life at least), and even permits us to announce it in good time: really that is about the same thing, and we ought to be content with it. I have told him *you* were to have charge of making it known to the Public in the way most advantageous and least obtrusive.” (MS: NLS.) [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
34. The painter J. M. W. Turner had died in 1851. Ruskin had, of course, praised and discussed Turner in every volume of *Modern Painters* to date, and had recently done work on the *Harbours of England*. In addition, he had been made one of the executors of Turner’s will, and was awaiting cessation of litigation over it so that he could begin the exhausting job of cataloguing Turners remaining drawings for the National Gallery. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
35. Volumes III and IV of *Modern Painters*, published in 1856 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
36. Part of letter cut away. The reference to Schiller is undoubtedly to the quotation cited by Joseph Slater in his edition of *The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), p.145 Slater cites Schiller’s *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, act III, scene vi, as the source of the quotation, translated by Carlyle in his *Life of Schiller* as “Stupidity can baffle the very gods” (Carlyle’s *Works*, XXV, 164). [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
37. Letter 11. *MS: Rylands English MS 1191/4. Pbd: Sanders, p.214* [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
38. Volume III of *Modern Painters* was subtitled “Of many Things.” [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
39. Frederick James Furnivall (1825-1910), English scholar of philology and literature, who was at the time teaching, and helping to administer, at the Working Men’s college. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
40. *Letter 12.* MS: MLS, Acc. 3187. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
41. A pun on “sea-change” See Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, I.ii.399-401: “Nothing of him that doth fade/ But doth suffer a sea-change/ Into something rich and strange.” [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
42. On March 4, 1856, a debate was held in Parliament on a motion, introduced by Philip Henry Stanhope (the fifth Earl Stanhope) to create a British National Portrait Gallery. The motion was passed, and somewhere during the proceedings Stanhope delivered the quotation from Lord Nelson that Carlyle refers to in this letter. Carlyle’s letter to Lady Ashburton in this same month tells us more of the incident: “Ruskin is in a great passion with Lord Stanhope and the poor House of Lords for that Reading of Nelson’s last speech: ‘A coronet or Westminster Abbey’ said his poor Lordship, instead of ‘Victory or Westr Abbey,’ nobody correcting him; which sets the high moral small-beer of Ruskin all into a froth. Instead of ‘this piece of work done, or else my life!’ to make it ‘that peacock’s feather got, or death in seeking it!’ What a platitude and turpitude, thinks Ruskin and decides to ‘pitch into it’ (as he says) asking me first to do so; who refuse utterly, tho’ in a benevolent manner. *Ach Gott, ach Gott*!” (MS: Northampton.) [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
43. Volume III of *Modern Painters.* [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
44. *Letter 13*. MS: NLS, Acc. 3187. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
45. The actual words of the great admiral were “Before this time to-morrow, I shall have gained a peerage or Westminister Abbey.” See Robert Southey, *The Life of Nelson* (1890), p. 122. The occasion for the remark was the dinner the Nelson gave for his officers, his “band of brothers,” just before entering Aboukir Bay in the late afternoon of August 1, 1798, where he would completely annihilate the French Mediterranean battle fleet in what later came to be called the Battle of the Nile. Nelson’s expectations were quite correct. Having survived the engagement with but a superficial wound to the head, he was created Baron Nelson of the Nile and of Burnham Thorpe by letters patent as soon as news of the victory reached England.

    [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
46. *Letter 14*. MS: NLS, Acc. 3187. Hitherto unpd. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
47. Of  *Modern Painters*. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
48. William Bingham Baring, second Lord Ashburton (1799-1864), and his wife Harriet Mary (1805-57), both mentioned in this letter, were old and dear friends of Carlyle. (See also Letter) 40, n. 3.) [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
49. The “address at Manchester” was actually Ruskin’s “Address to the Workmen at the Oxford Museum,” delivered in Oxford on April 26, 1856. See *Works*, XVI, 431-36. Subsequently, on May 16, Carlyle wrote to Lord Ashburton (Ms. Northampton), enclosing an “old newspaper” that Ruskin had given him, containing “Ruskin’s speech at Oxford to his assembled mechanics.” [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
50. See Matthew 6:34. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
51. *Letter 15.* MS: Duke University. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
52. George Rennie (1802-60). Sculptor and politician. A Haddington man who had known Mrs. Carlyle from the time of his youth, he had just returned from the Falkland Islands, which he had governed since 1848. For a description of the event mentioned in this letter, see Wildon, V, 216-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
53. *Aeneid*, VI, 129: “hoc opus, hic labor est.” The reference is to Aeneas’ eventual return from Avernus. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
54. *Letter 16.* MS: NLS, 555.2. Hitherto unpbd This letter has no date but the watermark on the paper is dated 1857. This letter, and its successor, both describe a painting by R. Tait called “A Chelsea Interior.” Tait began the painting in the spring of 1857 and finished it in late November or early December. Ruskin had been in Scotland with his parents until mid-October, and so could not have seen the picture until then. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
55. Ruskin draws a figure here. See the accompanying illustration. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
56. *Letter 17*. MS: Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Hitherto unpbd. See note to the previous letter. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
57. *Letter 18.* MS: NLS, 555.3. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVI, 304. In a note on the same page, Cook and Wedderburn add: “The letter is undated; but the first two volumes of Carlyle’s *Frederick* were published at the end of 1858, and in March of 1859 Ruskin was in Yorkshire! See Vol. XVI, p. Ixvi.” Ruskin, in fact, returned home from Yorkshire on Thursday, March 17, 1859. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
58. Ruskin had visited Yorkshire from February 25 to March 1, in order to check the topography of J. M. W. Turner’s Yorkshire drawings. Before that, he stopped at Buxton Moors in Derbyshire, then went to Manchester on February 21 to deliver his lecture “The Unity of Art.” See Burd, *Winnington*,p. 98 n. 3; p. 103 n. 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
59. *Letter 19. MS: NLS, 1796.97. Pbd: Sanders, p.215* [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
60. Actually in late August of 1858. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
61. The young lady cannot be identified. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
62. *Letter 20.* MS: NLS, 555.4. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
63. After his return from Continent, Ruskin spent the latter part of October and the early part of November at Winnington Hall, a school for girls in Cheshire. He had first visited the school in the previous March, having apparently been invited to do so by Miss Margaret Alexis Bell, the headmistress. Ruskin enjoyed his visit there so much that he paid many calls there in future years, and the school became important to him. Two of his works –*The Elements of Perspective* and *Ethos of the Dust* –grew directly from his experiences there. For an admirable record and discussion of his entire experience at Winnington, see Burd, *Winnington*. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
64. The quotation is from *Sartor Resartus*: “It would go to the pocket of Vanity (which is your clearest phasis of the Devil, in these times)” (Carlyle’s *Works*, I, 191). The thought was repeated in an earlier letter to Clarkson Stanfield on August 22, in which Ruskin said that German painters “have much real feeling and extensive knowledge and considerable power of thought, the whole rendered *utterly* valueless by the intensest, most naïve, most ridiculous, most absorbing, most helplessly ineradicable vanity that ever paralysed Human art” (*works*, VII, Iiii). [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
65. *Letter 21*. MS: NLS, 555.4. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
66. The famous *Melencholia* I, by Albrecht Durer (1514). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
67. Nero, Mrs. Carlyle’s dog had been run over by a cart two months earlier, and was severely injured. He died in January 1860 [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
68. *Letter 22.* MS: NLS, 555.6 Pdb: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVI,328 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
69. See *In Memoriam*, Ixix, 18-20. Ruskin has omitted line 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
70. *Letter 23*. MS: NLS, 555.7. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
71. *Letter 24*. MS: Berg Collection, New York Public Library. Hitherto unpbd. Ruskin does not give the year in which this note was written, and I have placed it in 1860 only because of its slender meteorological relevance to the letter before it. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
72. *Letter 25.* MS: NLS, 55.9. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
73. *Letter 26. MS: Rylands, English MS 1191/5.* [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
74. Durer’s Der Ritter (generally known as Knight, Death, and Devil). Ruskin has a lengthy discussion of this and the *Melecholia I* in volume V of *Modern Painters*. *See* Works*, VII, 310-12* [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
75. I.e., Sin and Death. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
76. *Letter 27*. MS: Yale University Library. Pbd with omissions in *English Illustrated Magazine*, IX (November 1891), 105-6, and in Wilson, V, 406-7. Pbd in full, with discussion of text, by M. H. Goldberg in *TLS*, May 16, 1935, p. 313, and by Van Akin Burd in *Boston University Studies in English*, III (1957), 51-57 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
77. Believers and preachers of utilitarian doctrines of political economy. Carlyle seems first to have used the phrase in 1849, in “The Nigger Question.” See his *Works,* XXIX, 354. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
78. Senna, Glauber’s salt, and aloes were three purgatives popular at the time. Carlyle is referring to Ruskin’s *Unto This Last,* which was appearing in the *Cornhill Magazine.* [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
79. Responding to Carlyle’s evaluation in a letter to Dr. John Brown on November 11, 1860, Ruskin said that “the value of these papers on economy is in their having for the first time since money was set up for the English Dagon, declared that there never was nor will be any vitality nor godship in him, and that the value of your ship of the line is by no means according to the price you have given your guns, but to the price you have given for your Captain. For the first time I say this is declared in purely accurate scientific terms; Carlyle having led the way, as he does in all noble insight in this generation.” (MS: Bembridge.) [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
80. Severe judges and judgements. Rhadamanthus was one of the judges of the underworld. For a repetition of both the word and the thought, see Carlyle’s “Model Prisons,” in *Works,* XX, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
81. *Letter 28.* MS: Yale University Library. Pbd: Sanders, p.217. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
82. *Letter 29.* MS: Bembridge. Hitherto unpbd. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
83. *Letter 30.* MS: Yale University Library. Pbd: Sanders, p.217 [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
84. *Letter 31.* MS: Rylands, English MS 1191/8. Pbd: Sanders, p. 218*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
85. Ruskin’s lecture “Tree Twigs,” delivered on April 19 at the Royal Institution on Albemarle Street. See *Works*, VIII, lix. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
86. *Letter 32.* MS: NLS 555.10. Pbd in Ruskin’s *Works,* XXXVI, 382. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
87. At Carlyle’s instigation, James Anthony Froude had written a letter to Ruskin in which he praised Ruskin’s work on political economy. The MS is not available. For the results of this encouragement, see Letter 39. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
88. That is, without hope of life after death. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
89. Ruskin went there to pay his first visit to the home of Mr. Mrs. John La Touche, in Harristown, County Kildare. Since 1858 he had been engaged as art teacher for the three La Touche children. His interest in Rose La Touche, the youngest child who was nuine years old in 1858, grew and deepened so much that he prposed marriage to her in 1866 (see introduction and Letter78). Ruskin’s description of his first visit to Harristown is in his *Works*, XXXV, lxvii; his brief but touching discussion of Rose is in pp. 525-34 of the same volume (*Praeterita*) [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
90. Charlotte Southam, one of the Carlyle’s servants. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
91. *Letter 33.* MS: Yale University Library. Pbd: Sanders, p.218 [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
92. *Letter 34.* MS: NLS, 555.11. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVI, 391. Addr: Mr. Carlyle / 5 Cheyne Row / Chelsea, / London / Angleterre. Pm: Lozern, 8 Nov. 61, Nach M. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
93. A letter from Ruskin to his father on October 31 refers perhaps to this “kind little visit” and its questionable effects: “Account of Carlyles most pleasant. In general however with these sort of people I fancy you would be most comfortable of the two uncomfortablenesses by keeping them, but it did not matter a bit. I will write to them by next post.” (MS: Yale University) [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
94. For the past few months Ruskin had been helping Rose La Touche learn Latin and Greek, and had been trying to learn German again. For a discussion of Ruskin’s studies at this time, see Cook,11, 41 [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
95. *Letter 35.* MS: Yale University Library. Pbd: Sanders, p. 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
96. In June of 1861, Ruskin had instructed his young friend George Allen to “let flowers be taken as often as possible to Mrs. Carlyle…,” Who, he added,” has been very ill.” See *Works*, XXXVI, 399). [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
97. *Letter 36.* MS: NLS, 555.12. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVI, 394. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
98. Ruskin’s father had so informed him. “I’m glad to hear of Carlyle –must write again as Mrs. Carlyle is ill,” Ruskin wrote to him on November 16, 1861 (MS: Yale University Library). [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
99. Probably a photograph or engraving of the *Lion of Lucerne*, a monument to the Swiss Guards by Thorwaldsen. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
100. See Shakespeare’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1.i.79-104: “How does your fallow greyhound, Sir?” etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
101. *Letter 37.* MS: Yale University Library. Pbd: Sanders, pp. 219-20 [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
102. *Selections from the Writings of John Ruskin*, published by Smith, Elder in 1861. Ruskin’s disapproval of this book is expressed in a letter to his father on November 9, where he calls the book “a form of mince-pie which I have no fancy for.” On December 1, however, Ruskin’s father sent him this letter from Carlyle, and Ruskin’s answer reflects the measure of Carlyle’s influence upon him: “I have your nice and kind letter of 1st December, enclosing Carlyle’s most interesting and kind (herewith returned). As *he* says the extracts are right, I have not a word more to say against them. It is the books which must be wrong.” (Ruskin to his father, December 5, 1861; both letters are in Cook, 11, 42.) [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
103. The portrait of Ruskin on the frontispiece was by George Richmond, Ruskin’s friend. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
104. Alexander Gilchrist (1824-61). Sanders (p. 220) adds that Gilchrist’s *Life of Blake* was published in 1863, and that Gilchrist’s “widow Anne Gilchrist wrote *Mary Lamb* (1883). See also *The Letters of Anne Gilchrist and Walt Whitman* (1918) and *The Letters of William Michael Rossetti to Anne Gilchrist*, ed. C. Ghodes and P. F. Baum (1934).” [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
105. *Letter 38.* MS: NLS, 555.13. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVI, 400. The letter is undated, but a letter from Ruskin to his father from Lucerne on December 23 seems to warrant my ascription of the same date here. In it Ruskin starts by saying, “This was a beginning of a Christmas line to Mrs. Carlyle—I changed it to ‘Dear Mr. & Mrs.’ And forgot it was on the side of the sheet” (MS: Yale University Library). [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
106. *Deo volente* (“God willing”). [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
107. Roughly, “not seeing and not feeling would be very fortunate for me.” The quotation is from a famous quatrain by Michangelo entitled “La Notte” (“Night”), the third line of which reads “non veder, non sentir m’e gran ventura.” Ruskin’s allusion is most appropriate. The poem (written in 1545-46) is an answer to a quatrain by Giovanni Strozzi, which praised the lifelike qualities of Michelangelo’s sculptured figure of *Night* on the timb of Giuliano de’ Medici, Duc de Nemours, youngest brother of Pope Leo X, in the New Sacristy of the church of San Lorenzo in Florence. The sleeping figure of *Night* awakes and says:

     While all about one harm and shame and woe,

     How good to sleep and be but marble block!

     Not to see, not to hear is my great luck;

     So do not rouse me then, but please speak low.

     The translation is by Jospeh Tusiani, in his *The complete Poems of Michelangelo* (Neew York, 1969), p.96. For the Italian text see the edition of Michelangelo’s *Rime* by E. N. Girardi (Bari, 1960),, p.117. See also Harold I. Shapiro, ed., *Ruskin in Italy: Letters to His Parent* 1845 *(Oxford, 1972), p. 154.* [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
108. A photograph Ruskin had promised the Carlyles. See Letter 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
109. *Letter 39.* MS: Mr. L. E. Brown. Pbd: with omissions in Collingwood (rev.), p. 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
110. The first of Ruskin’s “Essays in Political Economy” (later published in book form as *Munera Pulveris*) had come out in the June 1 issue of *Fraser’s Magazine*. J. A. Froude, who was editor of the magazine, had already come to know Ruskin (see Letter 32, n. 1), and a letter from Carlyle to Froude on April 4 explains the reason for Ruskin’s articles: “Ruskin, I have got to understand, is at last beginning upon his Political Economy. I think, if you were to send him a word or two of incitatn, you might actually get a Paper out of him for yr next No, --whh wd be a beautiful thing to begin the Summer with!” (MS: Dr. Gordon N. Ray.) See also the Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
111. A significant and revealing quotation from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, IX, 641-42. Apollo, addressingthe youn Ascanius after a victory, says, “Macta nove virtute, puer; sic itur ad astra!” (“May you prosper in your new-found virtue, boy; thus one goes to the stars!”) [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
112. John Ramsay McCulloch (1789-1864P), Scottish economist and author of *Principles of Political Economy* (1825). [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
113. Ruskin’s *Unto This Last*, which had been published in book form in June. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
114. *Letter 40.* MS: NLS, 555.14. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVI, 427. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
115. Ruskin has drawn a sketch at the top of the page. See the accompanying illustration. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
116. Muddied, shadowed, or gloomy. See *Works*, XXVIII, 758 [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
117. Louisa Caroline Mackenzie (1827-1903), the second wife of Lord Ashburton (see Letter 14, n. 2). She had been one of Ruskin’s pupils before her marriage in 1858, and remained his close friend thereafter. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
118. The last of Carlyle’s *Latter-Day Pamphlets* (1850) [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
119. *Letter 41*. MS: NLS, 555.15. Pbd: Burd, *Winnington*, pp. 392-93. Int the upper lefthand corner, the MS has “Switzerland, Jany 1863 (A.C.)? [PMk Geneva 5 Jany, 63]” in another hand, probably Alexander Carlyle’s. Addr (cited in Burd, *Winnington*, p. 393): Mr Carlyle / 5. Cheyne Row / Chelsea, / London / Angleterre. Pm (cited in Burd, *Winnington*): GENEVE / 3 JANU 63; [LOND] ON / JA 5 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
120. Miss Margaret A. Bell, headmistress of the Winnington Hall school for girls, which Ruskin visited frequently. See letter 20 and n. 1. Mrs. Carlyle’s “little miniature” has not been identified, but a note in the margin of the MS says “\* qu. The Little Tragedy wh’ Miss Welsh wrote when 14 years old? A.C.” If so this would be “The Rival Brothers,” which Jane Welsh Carlyle wrote in 1815. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
121. *Letter 42.* This is Ruskin’s attempt to reconstruct a letter from Carlyle that he had accidentally destroyed. The letter was written soon after Ruskin’s last *Munera Pulveris* essay appeared in *Fraser’s Magazine* at the beginning of April, and Ruskin had copied some sentences to send home to his father. These sentences, and others he remembered, were included in letters from Ruskin to his father dated April 7 and 11, 1863, published in *Works*, XVII, lxx. The source for the first sentence of the text above is the MS of the April 7 letter in the Yale University Library. I have been unable to locate the MS of the April 11 letter. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
122. The story of the sword Mimung (or Balmung) is told by Carlyle in his essay “The Niebelungen Lied.” The sword was forged by Siegfried’s foster father Mimer, who at one time was challenged by the smith Amalias to forge a sword that would piece his impenetrable mail.” When the time came, Mimer struck Amalias with Mimung. The smith then said “there was a strange feeling of cold iron in his inwards. ‘shake thyself,’ said Mimer; the luckless Wight did so, and fell in two halves.” (Carlyle’s *Works,* XXVII, 223.) [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
123. *Letter 43.* MS: NLS, 55.8. Hitherto unpbd. Ruskin gives n year, and my dating of 1863 is admittedly arbitrary. Ruskin had not been at Denmark Hill during June since 1857, and in the summer of 1864 John James Ruskin was dead, and Mrs. Carlyle was too ill to be asked to travel [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
124. *Letter 44.* MS: Edinburgh University Library. Hitherto unpbd. The date of this letter is conjectural. The Dr. Quain mentioned in it is known to have attended Mrs. Carlyle from September to December of 1863, when she was suffering greatly from neuralgia and other ailments of her age. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
125. Probably a reference to Dr. William J. Richardson of Perth. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
126. Dr. Richard Quain (1800-87), surgeon and professor of anatomy. A member of the Royal College of Surgeons and a Fellow of the Royal Society, Richard Quain had been professor of general anatomy of physiology at University College, London, since 1830. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
127. *Letter 45*. MS: NLS, 555.19. Hitherto unpbd. The MS has “P. Mk 27 Feb. ‘64” in another hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
128. *Letter 46* MS: NLS, 555.16. Hitherto unpbd. The MS has “P. Mk.: 1st March ‘64” in another hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
129. *Letter 47.* MS not located. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works, XXXVI, 472.* [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
130. John James Ruskin died on March 3, 1864 [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
131. Pauline, Lady Trevelyan, who, with her husband Sir Walter Trevelyan, had been a close friend of Ruskin since 1850. The Trevelyans also became close friends of the Carlyles. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
132. *Letter 48*. MS: NLS, 555.18. Hitherto unpbd. The MS has “P.Mk. 23 Dec. ‘64” in another hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)