*70. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.

31st March, 1867

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

I have had a heavy time of it since I wrote last, in various ways of which I cannot tell you; not that there is anything in my mind which I would not trust you to know, but because there are some conditions of trouble for which one has no business to ask sympathy even from one’s dearest friends.[[1]](#footnote-1) I am now recovering some dim tranquility and writing a few letters on political econ., which I hope you will say it was better to write than not,—though I am too unwell to take pains with them: and the entirely frightful and ghastly series of unnatural storm and frost which lasted through the beginning of this month (far into it, indeed), followed by severe March blights and bleak swirlings of bitter rain, has kept me from any wholesome walking or breathing until I can hardly think or stand.

(4th April) And now I do not know if it is of the least use to send this to Mentone; but I will let it take its chance—the main thing that I wanted to say to you being that I have had to meditate somewhat closely over educational questions lately, and I am more than ever impressed with the sense of the greatness of thegift you could bestow in the good close of all your labour by a summary of your present vision of history, and of its causative forces: not writing the history of any country, but marking the conclusions to which you had come in reading its history yourself; and telling us the events that were of essential significance; & separating them in their true relations, from things useless.

Suppose I were to ask you, for instance, briefly (not being able to read for myself any history of Spain)—what had made the Spaniard of today what he is? You would sit down in your fender-corner, and roll me out an entirely clear and round statement of the main dealings of Providence and of the Devil with him—and of him with them. Now if you were to write down such an answer—of its quarter of an hour’s length—and then amplify & illustrate it as you saw good, it would be a perfect guide to me, for such labour as I could undertake on the subject—but which without a guide would be wholly thrown away—so that indeed I should never undertake it.

Do think of this, in your rambles under the olive trees. I hope, wherever you are, that this weather has found you still in Italy, and that you will outstay the Firefly time. I always think that nothing in the world can possibly be so touching, in its own natural sweetness, and in the association with the pensive and glorious power of the scene, as the space of spring time in Italy during which the firefly makes the meadows quiver at twilight. And then if you were to get up to the lakes, in May! and go back up the Val Formazza over the Gries and Grimsel, and so to the Giesback Inn on the lake of Brientz, you would find that in early June the happiest—coolest—warmest—cosiest—wildest work! and two dear good Swiss girls would wait on you, who would remember my two little girls[[2]](#footnote-2) and me, last year—and do everything they could—& they could a great deal –to make you comfortable.—And now I must say good-bye—and please forgive this nothing of a letter. I might have told you a great deal, that only would have vexed you,—nothing—is better.

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin

*71. Carlyle to Ruskin*

Chelsea, 6 April, 1867

Dear Ruskin,

Yr letter reached me with warm welcome, at Mentone; but nothing of the interesting “gossip,” etc. whh was promised for “next week”! What has become of that?

About a fortnight ago, I got home (if this can now be called a “home”), and have been lying strictly *perdu* ever since, in the hope of recomposing myself a little;—have called literally on nobody, except on Froude taking leave for Spain,[[3]](#footnote-3) and on Forster[[4]](#footnote-4) with whom I had pecuniary “Busss”; nor has anybody (so to speak) called on me. I am very quiet, of humor very somber;—looking, in these days, upon an “April *last*,” whh must be forever memorable to me. My brother John, who was here to receive me, still continues, for I suppose ten days yet; and is the only company I have.

If you durst lift anchor agn (Wedy night,[[5]](#footnote-5) to be exact), you wd be a very welcome appearance here! John, who knows you, and has sense to estimate you, will not be in our way at all:—if he be even *here* on any terms, whh is not certn for that evg.

If you *don’t* write, I shall conclude you are coming.

Yours ever faithfully,

T. Carlyle

My kindest regards to the dear Old Lady & the do young.

*72. Ruskin to Carlyle*

30th May, [1867]

My Dear Carlyle,

I deeply regret, for many not trivial reasons, that you have been induced to write this letter.[[6]](#footnote-6)

It seems to me that the only thing which now in justice remains for you to do, is to furnish me with a succinct statement of what you remember yourself to have said on the occasion in question; and to permit me to substitute that statement, in the edition of collected letters, for the one which has offended you. In any case I shall take no notice of the letter in the Pallmall Gazette, nor of any comments which may be made upon it.

Ever affectionately yours,

J.Ruskin

*73. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S

[1stJune, 1867]

My dear Carlyle

I am under the sorrowful necessity of ignoring your present letter. You have given the lie publicly, and in the most insulting terms possible to you, to the man who probably of all men living, most honoured you. It is *first because* he so honours you but ~~also~~ [*sic*] for many reasons besides—(and, as I said—none of them trivial) that he is compelled to require you to do right in this matter; and the right manifestly is that you either justify the terms of that letter in the Pallmall Gazette, or retract them, and that publicly; and with all convenient speed.

Always affectionately Yours,

J. Ruskin

Thos. Carlyle, Esq.[[7]](#footnote-7)

*74. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.

[June 1, 1867]

*Private*

Dear Carlyle—I am fearfully sorry about this thing: more fatal and feminine incontinence never yet ruined cause than this of yours.—All the Edinburgh Professors and English fools that live, bellowing with one accord in at my window, would not have made *me* write such words of a man who was my friends!—or of anything which could be indirectly traced or attributed to him. Not for my sake, but for a thousand sakesm you must either write the conversation—or retract or *yourself* explain, your letter—You may soon avert Death, as my determination on this head.—Do not come to see me. We are both alike irritable. You *cannot* restrain your feelings,—& it would hurt me to use the strength necessary to restrain mine.

[J. Ruskin]

*75. Carlyle to Ruskin*

Chelsea, 8 June, 1867

Dear Ruskin,

Last night I sent away to *The Times* a paltry little Note (whh agn, this morning does not please me, and be hanged to it)—after such concoction, rejecting, remodelling, nightly and daily botheratn, and sheer waste of time and means as might have sufficed for a Book of the Iliad almost, instead of a Note to the Newspaper![[8]](#footnote-8) For the beggarly Nothing is of a delicacy and difficulty almost infinite; like that of forging a horseshoe in the middle of crazy powder-barrels,—i.e. of the hardly yet “sleeping” whirlwinds of impious Newspr rumour, capable fo being re-awakended by a wrong word.—This wretched Note you will probably see on Monday morning; and from me, sure enough, it is intended to be *Finis* on the matter.

Your prest state of provocatn does not surprise me at all, still less anger me at all. Excuse me if I say, there is even something of amiable in *it* too (as there has uniformly been in all you have ever done, said or intended towards me); something generous and *filial*; like the poignant sorrow on a very good, but far too headlong *son*, getting his rebuke from *papa*, with the consciousness as yet of only having meant the just [?] papa too well and too kindly; a poignant sorrow whh goes over into sparkles of wrath withal, for the time being. In abt 4 or 5 weeks of silence, I calculate that all this will have vanished and subsided; and the state of the case (one of the absurdest I was ever concerned in) will have become mathematically clear to you, on *both* sides of it; as it has, for the last fortnight or so, completely been to me,—mathematically clear, I answer you, after ample considering; and now *as* inflexible and unalterable “as the 47th of Euclid” or as the *Fifth of Euclid* if we like that instance better! Believe me, my friend, you will find that that letter in the Pall Mall was a necessity and duty on me. Better still, you will find that nothing I cd or can have written, or forbourne to write;—that not even the immortal gods, *can wash you clear of having done*, even thoughtlessly and with intention purely noble and kind,  *an immense imprudence of its sort* (nothing *worse*, but for certn that) a deed done,—whh neither I nor the gods can render *not* done! Of whh there is no conceivable remedy, but what (I hope) you are now on the way towards and will reach in abt 4 or 5 weeks hence, as above said.

If, by that time, you have arrived at complete contritn, resolutn of amendmt, and mathematical clearness on both sides,—right happy shall I be to see yr sunny face agn unclouded as before; but if not, I recommend we both *wait* to try if you can’t and won’t;—and that in the meanwhile that accursed passage be *deleted* form your reprint of the Dixon *Letters.*[[9]](#footnote-9) At prest this is all,—except unabated regard for you, of whh now you need no assurance. You see how mutinous my very hand and pen are!—Yrs ever (whether you acheive “contrition” enough or not),

T. Carlyle

*76. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill S.

10th June [1867]

My dear Carlyle

I have just come in from the country and seen your note to the Times, and I have your’s—for both of which my thanks—but alas, you do not yet *in the least* see into this thing. I never denied the imprudence—discourtesy—Sin—whatever else you like to allege of my Dixon letter. But I emphatically deny its falsehood. And that is—to my utter sorrow—the one question which has to be settled—one way or another—harmfully either way—but the worst harm of all would be its remaining I *un*settled.

—I write in haste—this is private—you will have my formal reply tomorrow. My *chief* wonder is to see how little you have known me all these years!—(No—Not my chief wonder—that is a far deeper one—but yet I am less—though more sorrowfully, surprised at your own conduct in this, than at your estimate of what mine would be.

Ever affectionately Yours

J. Ruskin

Do not fear any *hasty* proceedings on my part,—but my Dixon letters must remain unaltered now. You have put it wholly out of my power to withdraw a syllable. Of which tomorrow.

*77. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.

12th June, [1867]

My dear Carlyle

I cannot write the formal letter today, any more than I could yesterday, being variously occupied out in the sun:—but I more & more wonder at your not being able to distinguish between your lava-current of a mind—tumbling hither & thither and *cooling* in the odd corners of it at necessary periods—and my poor little leguminously climbing-tendril of a vegetable-min—subduable and flexible by a touch—but utterly unchangeable and *implacable*  in its poor wounded way—and changeless of temperature. One of the things that has struck deepest into me, in this, is the heartlessness with which, when I had told you that I was fighting a batter of bitterest pain, now at the very crisis when of all things it was [necessary?] that all probable honour should be done me by all who loved me, for my love’s sake—that you should have forgotten and trampled all this under foot—just because you could not bear some newpaper gabble—and written the most dishonouring words that could be set down in public sight—

I know you did not mean them—and that you did the whole thing frantically, But see what a deadly *fact*, this phrenzy is to me, in the new reading it gives me of *all* your doings—Your books have from this one thing—become at once at a tinkling cymbal to me[[10]](#footnote-10)—and whatever the commonest wretches now assert against them—I am powerless *now* to deny! What you have said of me—I know now, when the humour is on you—you would say of any one. It is the saddest thing.—

And I always suffer this kind of thing from those I have most cared for, and then I *cannot* forgive, just because I know I was the last person on earth they ought to have treated so. *Turner* did something of the same kind to me. I never forgave him, to his death.

Well, some day soon I will write the next necessary letter—you don’t seem yet to understand that I intend the correspondence to be published, if necessary. Your two present letters are irrelevant, and shall not be held part of the series, unless you chose but *after this*—remember—answer, or refusal of answer, most be for possible publication.

J.R.

*78. Carlyle to Ruskin*

Chelsea, 13 June, 1867

Dear Ruskin,

With a Poet’s temperament, you immensely exaggerate this miserable, but intrinsically small and paltry matter. “The most dishonouring words ever spoken of you” are, as you will understand by and by, simply to the effect, that you in yr headlong incautious way, with the best and truest intentions in the world, strode into one of the foolishest practical puddles recently heard of and dragged a most unwitting friend along with you, —who refuses to lie there with you (especially to lie *undermost*, as he chanced to be), and, finding you took no steps and did not even recognize the puddle much has striven honestly to save first himself and then his more or less blameable compann too,—really with his best endeavour, and utmost stretch of faculty and skill, exerted in an element infinitely foreign and unpleast to him. So that *he*  is now out, and getting his mind *cleaned*; and you too are out (if you will be wise) with only an infinitesimal minimum of *smutch* upon you,—such as all the sons of Adam catch to themselves from time to time and are all absolved from *so soon* as they heartily acknowledge it. For the man that never made a “mistake” was not heard of hitherto.[[11]](#footnote-11) And these are “the most dishonouring words that ever” &c &c. Oh dear, oh dear!—

But on the whole, I too, my friend, have had my abundt vexation, botheratn, and distresses abt this small and miserable matter—which is so extraneous so infinitely *incongruous*, and come intruding on me with such a ghastly contemptibility, amid the serious, sad and solemn matters whh are *my* constant occupatn otherwise (especially sad in these weeks),—that I find it at last unbearable; and decide to have done with it at once, till it take a quite new figure! Please *don’t* send me any “formal Letter”; but take this as my ansr to it beforehand,and the only ansr I will make to it or any other on that subject, as matters now stand betn us:

First, therefore, I never told you, nor cd tell or have told any mortal, that “Mr. Carlyle” was liable to be insulted on the streets of London or Chelsea; the constant *fact* being that I have the natural liberty of all quiet persons to walk the streets unmolested, and if need were, protected & defended; and that in no street, lane or place of London or ay other City, Town or region, did “Mr. Carlyle,” when personally recognized, meet with anything hitherto but an evidt  respect far beyond what was his due, or what was in the least necessary to him. This is the steadfast fact; and this you have carelessly tumbled heels over head into a statement incredible to all who hear it, and monstrous to imagine. Secondly, I do tell you that, by order of the Doctor, I had *discontinued* my midnight walks, whh used to have a sombre soothing charm, and to seem salutary, as the last work of the day. This I perfectly remember telling you. And what mad reversal you have made of this you cannot have forgotten! A domestic picture unexampled in British History or biography. The wretched dreary old Dotard and Coward peering tremulously out of door at midnight, If he might now steal a little exercise,—and not substance enough left in him even to kill himself if he cdn’t alter such a state of matters. *Papae, proh pudor*! [Alas, th shame of it!] If a man were on the outlook for “dishonouring words,” or cared much abt them when they came, here by accidt they *are*, in richest measure for him.

In fine, so far as I can recollect those unlucky 10 minutes of loose talk, whh memory took so little charge of, and whh are now several weeks away, our discourse did not turn upon public streets, thorough-fares or *walking*, but almost wholly on my experiences in *riding*, thro' the unfrequented slums and waste-lying outskirts of London (tempted thither by the soft ground, or the immunity from wheels), where the lower populace or canaille inhabit: nor, agn, was my experience there the least definiable as “Mr. Carlyle’s,” but simply as that of A. or B., riding, seemingly for his amusemt, and from his age or gravity of aspect, not very likely to use his horsewhip in reply (whh more than once proved a miscalculatn, too, and had firm effect on the individual two-legged *canis*, if he chanced to stand within reach). These are the precisest certain *facts* (as precise as I can now give them) of that it of private dialogue betn us.

And had you, instead of carelessly, hastily and heedlessly *reversing* these, stated the whole of them with the accuracy of an affidavit, and then printed my name to them, —what cdb I have called it but the absurdest oversight, and foolishest “practical blunder” that ever dropped upon me of its own accord, from any man of sense, in all my days! And this is the last word I intend to write upon a subject, whh has already cost me a great deal too many.

For I have had, not on my own acct alone, to manipulate in my sad and sick Soul, this paltry bit of nonsense not a little, to tear it carefully down to its elemental fibres, and to sight and survey it on all sides till I cd completely reckon it transparent to me, but something of *you* too, my friend, and of the mad world’s ways with you and me; and in fine “to forge my miserable horse-shoe” (as I told you), nay in successn my two horse-shoes, “in the middle of leaky powder-barrels”: and I now thank God to have done with it altogether: Further words upon it, especially betn you and me, what good be cd be in them, till a considerable change come; till, as I once said already, we *both* of us come to see *both* sides of the matter? Till each see, in a perfect and quietly transparent manner, not only his own grief and whether he brot it wholly on himself, but also on his neighbour’s and whether *he* did so! If I am so egregiously in *error* to suppose that “six weeks” will work this salutary change in you, I shall be profoundly sorry (and much surprised withal, for it is still my belief); but the actual coming of the change does not now depend on me at all; and till it do come we must wait.

The tone and new style of yr last letters, especially of yr one, has been perhaps or seemed a little singular; and I want no more of that fashion soon. But as to “*implacability*” &c&c., it is, to myself, void of meaning or conceivability; and on such a score as you assign, it wd savour to me of utter madness;—nor do I believe it of you at all nor will unless forced. If I *had* in any degree injured a certn interest [[12]](#footnote-12) (of whh I was not thinking at all), that wd indeed have been a cruel and most forbidding circ[umstanc]e in my necessity; but that was not there; nor do I now believe (whatr your wildly exaggerative mind may do) that it will habe the weight of a fly’s wing in the beautiful resolute and candid soul on whose vote you alone depend: —nay if it did, if she did see it to proceed from a too headlong habit &c, and to require a little censure and attempt at amendt, might it not be *better* that she know it nowm before closure of the bargn than after it? There is for you!—

Adieu, my friend. Since you won’t accept any counsel on that mutual plunge into the puddle, I must leave you to yr own. *Quod faustum sit* [“May it be beneficial”]. I conside it still possible that by this accidt we may become “better friends than ever”; more sincere, more frank, ruggedly *veracious*, much more humanly helpful to one another: But the chance depends now altogr on yrself, and I can’t control it farther.[[13]](#footnote-13) Adieu: none of yr fine qualities and talents, nor of yr uniformly amiable procedures, are forgotten by me at this moment, nor have much chance of ever being.

Yrs sincerely (so far as *you* will permit),

T. Carlyle

P.S. Please send me that Ms. Of Edwd Irving[[14]](#footnote-14) at yr convenience. I want it for a reason, but not till you have quite done with it.

*79. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.

Tuesday 25th June, 1867

My dear Carlyle

I am going into Scotland for a week or two on Friday, and I want to see you before I go—if I may, without any reference to newspaper business. Don’t think there is any change in my notions respecting *them*,—but between you and me, they ought not to come.

Only,—please understand this—I come to you, exactly as I should vome to my Father, if he were alive—and I should say,

“Now, Father, if you are going to speak or teaze me, on such and such matters, I won’t come; I have no mind to come, merely to be scolded—still less to find fault with you. If you were not my Father, I would not come at all, but being so, and because moreover you love me, and I love you, I want to see you—but you are not to say a word on such and such matters, nor to think that I shall in any wise act differently in them because I want to see you.

I have a great deal to see to and shall be a little later tomorrow evening.[[15]](#footnote-15) Don’t have tea for me, but I’ll run in about nine o’clock and tell you where I’m going and anything else that I can, pleasant.

Ever affectionately yours.

J Ruskin

*80. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.E.

Saturday, 24th April, ‘69

Dear Mr. Carlyle

May I come to night a little after eight, for a talk in the old way? I am going to Verona, and back through Germany (Rhine east border) and want to tell you about some plans relating to the first volume of Frederick.

Ever affectionately Yours,

J. Ruskin

*81. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.

[1869?]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

If you *like* the book I send, I’ll send you a copy—I should like you to have it from me—so would its author—if not—I’ll bring it away in great discomfort, next Thursday.

Ever your loving

J. Ruskin

My remembrance to your little niece.[[16]](#footnote-16)

*82. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Vevay. 1st May.1869

Dear Mr Carlyle

I just got the Frederick in time; it is so nice to have it in this manageable form. with my own marked edition safe at home[[17]](#footnote-17) I have been travelling every day since—I could not write before—nor now—for the sunshine and fresh air of the last four days have made me dull with their excess of brightness.—only just this word of thanks.

I have the Sartor with me ~~too~~ [*sic*] also—it belongs to me now—more than any other of your books.

I have nearly all my clothes to make, fresh—but more shroud-shape than any other.[[18]](#footnote-18)

I’ll write again soon.

I was very thankful to be with you again

Always affectionately Yours,

J Ruskin

*83. Carlyle to Ruskin*

Chelsea, August 17, 1869

Dear Ruskin,

Your excellent, kind, and loving note from Vevey reached me, but nothing since, not even precise news at second-hand, which I have much desire. The blame of my not answering and inditing was not mine, but that of my poor rebellious right hand, which oftenest refuses altogether to do any writing for me that can be read; having already done too much, it probably thinks! I did practically want a little thing of you at *Baireuth*, if you should pause there: *Photographs* of two portraits of Wilhelmina[[19]](#footnote-19)which I had heard of;—but the *right* *hand* mumbled always, “You *can* do without them, you *know*!” and at length I lazily assented.

What I wish how is to know if you are home, and to see you instantly, if so. *Instantly!*  For I am not unlikely to be off in a few days (by *Steamer some* whither) and again miss you. Come, I beg, *quam primum*!—

Last week I got your “Queen of the Air,” and read it. Euge, Euge! No such Book have I met with for long years past. The one soul now in the world who seems to feel as I do on the highest matters, and speaks *mir aus dem Herzen* [“to me from the heart”] exactly what I wanted to hear!— As to the natural history of those old Myths,[[20]](#footnote-20) I remained here and there a little uncertain; but as to the meanings you put into them, never anywhere. All these things I not only “agree” with, but would use Thor’s Hammer, if I had it, to enforce and put in action on this rotten world. Well done, well done! and pluck up a heart, and continue again and again. And don’t say “most great thoughts are dressed in *shrouds*:” many, many are the Phoebus Apollo celestial arrows you still have to shoot into the foul Pythons and poisonous abominable Megatheriums and Plesiosaurians that go staggering about, large as cathedrals, in our sunk Epoch again.

I have had a great deal to do with *insomnia*, etc.,etc., since that last Wednesday evening;—come back, I tell you, while it is still time. With kind regards to your dear old Mother,

Yours ever,

T. Carlyle

*84. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill S.E.

2nd September [1869]

Dear Mr Carlyle

I am at home at last—I only got your lovely letter today—it was sent to a wrong address abroad—as well as Joan’s[[21]](#footnote-21) account of all your goodness to her.

I will come to morrow evening if I may.[[22]](#footnote-22) I would have come to night but it is my mother’s birthday.

I should have written to you again and again from abroad, if all things had not been full of sadness to me—and of labour also—detaining me for this year from my happy work on your German castles. Italy is in a ghastly state of ruin and I did all I could on a few things I shall never see more.—Your German Castles will, I think, be yet long spared—but I hope to get some of them next year.

Just send a verbal “Yes” by the bearer if I may come to morrow.

Ever your affectionate, J. Ruskin.

*85. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill S.E.

6th September 1869

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

I meant to come today but it is gusty & wet & I hope better for tomorrow—I will come tomorrow about ½ past one, be it wet or dry

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin

*86. Carlyle to Ruskin*

Chelsea, I Octr 1869

Dear Ruskin,

We have been here, away bodily from Addiscombe, [[23]](#footnote-23) since Monday gone a week,—situatn a little “improved” by that change; I struggling, for my own poor hest [?], to beard [?] the faculty of  *sleep*,—hitherto with quite imperfect success. Don’t neglect to call on me the first time you are in Town—, the sight of yr face will be a comfort; and I long for it, & a little farther talk on the problems you are occupied with.

At prest, after 2 p.m., I am not a certainty here;—note that, and *come*;—and let us settle for *some* [?]  *weekly Evg agn*: why not!

Yrs ever Truly,

T.Carlyle

*87. Ruskin to Carlyle*

[October 2 or 3, 1869]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

Thanks so much for kind note. I am so sorry for the sleeplessness.—I cannot come on Thursday in the afternoon, but I will if I may, on Saturday.

I saw how wrong it was that you were disturbed that evening. You will think I never notice anything you say.—But when I came at 3 to the Croydon farm, it was inevitable too late of an accident—and last Thursday I had indeed *noticed*, but mistaken, your warning ½ past eight, and thought it was “eight,” and put myself to some inconvenience that evening to come early!

Ever affectionately Yours,

J. Ruskin

*88. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.E.

4 October [1869]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

I am so *very* glad, always to have a note from you, but I *can’t* get out in the evening now as I used to. I am always *so* weary; but I’ll come some morning, when my poor wits are yet with me. I’ve so much to ask you about my work.

Ever your loving

J. Ruskin

*89. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.E.

[November 30, 1869]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

I have been unwell and Joanna has been in anxiety—ending in sorrow. Her newly married sister is dead.[[24]](#footnote-24)—She was very good, and very useful, living. I wish I could think she was so still.

May I come and see you on Thursday—Friday—or Saturday evening?

Ever your loving

J. Ruskin

*90. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.E.

[December 3, 1869]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

I cannot venture to come out in this weather: I am so hard at work that the energy of me, such as it is—all spent in the morning—leaves me obliged to ie quiet in the afternoon unless the weather is warm and fine.—but I am oftern wit you, in reality for I am reading the French Revolution again, to my mother.—It reminds her of old times, and I find more aphorism in that, at present useful to me […] lectures for Feburary[[25]](#footnote-25)—to say to the schools of England what Painting means— and may be, if done by wise creatures.

—Enough to tire me?

[J. Ruskin]

*91. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.E.

30th December

1869

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

Partly evil weather, partly my mother’s more heavily pressing need of some evening comfort—and the equally pressing need, to *me*, of the unbroken morning for what I have to prepare for a very real duty at Oxford, have kept me from coming to you. Might I come at ½ past 8 tomorrow, bringing with me a good, clear-headed, clearsighted—and to you most reverent and faithful—young English Merchant:—the son of my father’s nephew[[26]](#footnote-26)—who will I think work with me with all his heart in the sphere of a gradually widening West Indian Commerce—carrying it on, as English commerce should be done. His first ship he has named the “sesame”,—she sails her first voyage early in the year. And he has no desire more earnest than that of being permitted to see your face—and hear your voice.

May I bring him?

The Woolwich lecture[[27]](#footnote-27) went well

Ever your affectionate

J. Ruskin

*92. Ruskin to Carlyle*

Denmark Hill, S.E.

Monday [1870]

Dear Mr. Carlyle,

Might I come about ½ past 8 this evening?—I have not been able to get across in the middle of the day this week, to my sorrow.

Your loving J.R.

1. *Letter 70*. MS: NLS, 555.30. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVI, 526.

   Cook, II, 114, quotes Ruskin on his condition at this time: “In 1867 the first warning mischief to my health showed itself, giddiness and mistiness of head and eyes, which stopped alike my drawing and thinking to any good purpose.” Ruskin’s diary entries for this period confirm his remarks, and one must also remember that at this time he was feverishly counting the days until the 21st birthday of Rose La Touche, when he was to receive an answer to his proposal of marriage made in Feburary 1866. J.L. Bradley, in his edition of *The Letters of John Ruskin to Lord and Lady Mount-Temple* (Columbus, Ohio, 1964), pp.111 and 113, notes that Ruskin had received hostile letters from Rose’s parents in February and March, and had been thus put in a state of “black anger”. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Joan Agnew, Ruskin’s cousin, and Constance Hilliard, niece of Lady Trevelyan, both of whom had accompanied Ruskin and the Trevelyans during their Continental trip in April 1866. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Letter 71*. MS: Rylands, English MS 1191/6. Pbd: Sanders, p.225.

   J.A. Froude went to Spain to do more research for his *History of England*, which was not completed until 1870. He had made a trip there in 1861 for the same reason. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. John Forster. See note to Letter 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ruskin, *Diaries*, II, 615 and 616, has the following “April 10th. Wednesday…At Carlyle’s this evening.” and “April 17th [1867] … At Carlyle’s in evening. Tell him about R[ose].”

   *Letter 72*. MS not located. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XVII, 480-81. The text of this letter is based on the holograph of the first draft in Ruskin’s diaries at Bembridge School, collated with the Cook and Wedderburn version. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ruskin was then publishing in his *Time and Tide*, written in the form of letters to “a Working Man of Sunderland,” in the Manchester newspapers. In one of the letters he reported a conversation in which Carlyle had said that he could not walk in the streets of Chelsea “without being insulted, chiefly because he is a grey, old man; and also because he is cleanly dressed…” This paragraph was printed in many newspapers, and drew shocked inquiries from several working men to Carlyle. On May 22, Carlyle wrote a public letter to “a working man at Rochdale,” in which he said that “the thing now ‘going the rounds’ is untrue, diverges from the fact throughout, and [is]… ‘incredible’” On May 28, he wrote the following letter “to The Editor of the Pall Mall Gazette”: “In reference to a Newspaper Paragraph now idly circulating, with my name in it as connected with ‘insults on the streets’ and other such matter,—permit me to say that it is an untrue Paragraph, disagrees with the fact throughout, and in essentials is curiously the reverse of the fact; a Paragraph altogether erroneous, misfounded, and even absurd.” (MS: Dr. Frederick. W. Hilles.) The letter was printed in the *Gazette* on May 29, and Ruskin’s diary for that date records a “foolish letter of C in papers” (*Diaries*, II, 619). The above letter is Ruskin’s answer to it, starting a brief but bitter quarrel, which runs through the next few letters in their correspondence. See also the Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Letter 73*. Addr. Mr. Carlyle, Esq./ 5 Cheyne Row/Chelsea. Pm: London, June 1, 1867. MS: Bembridge. Pbd. with omissions in Cook II, 117. On the front of the envelope Carlyle has written: “The *Ruskin Newspapr Rubbish* (june 1867)—judiciously trampled out!”

   *Letter 74*. MS: Bembridge. Hitherto unpubd. The MS has “PMrk. 1 June 67” in another hand, and “After C’s letter to Times?” in a third hand. Ruskin’s signature is not on this one-page MS, and there may be a second page which has not been located.

   [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *Letter 75*. MS: Estate of Mrs Helen Gill Viljoen. Hitherto unpubd.

   The letter was printed in the *Times* on June 8, and addressed to its editor this limited retraction:

   Sir,

   I could still wish, by way of marginal note to your friendly article of Monday last (the *Times* of June 3), to add, for my own sake, and for a much-valued friend’s, the two following little bits of commentary:—

   1st. That I by no means join in heavily blaming Mr. Ruskin, and, indeed, do not blame him at all, but the contrary, except for the almost inconceivable practical blunder of printing my name, and then of carelessly hurling topsy-turvy into wild incredibility all he had to report to me—of me, and indirectly of the whole vast multitude of harmless neighbors, whom I live with here—in London and its suburbs, more than 2,000,000 of us, I should think, who all behave by second nature in an obliging, peaceable, and perfectly human manner to each other, and are all struck with amazement at Mr. Ruskin’s hasty paragraph upon us.

   2nd. That in regard to the populace or *canaille* of London , to the class distinguishable by behaviour as our non-human, or half-human neighbors, which class is considerably more extensive and miscellaneous, and much more dismal and disgusting than you seem to think, I substantially agree with all that Mr. Ruskin has said of it.

   I remain, Sir,

   Your obedient servant,

   T.Carlyle

   See R.H. Shepherd, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Carlyle*  (1881) II, 251-52. Excerpts are also given in Cook, II, 117. The MS of Carlyle’s first draft of this letter is in the possession of Bembridge School, and is dated June 7, 1869, by Carlyle. Under this date Carlyle has written two notes. The first seems to be addressed to J.A. Froude at a later date and declares:” From *Ruskin* of 1 June in adjacent (I think there was one before, but I have by mistake destroyed it;—it essentially said (with …[word illegible] provocatn) ‘Tell me what you did say then?’—Impossible!” The second note says “No.4 (Letter to ‘Times,’ in consequence of No.3). Today (8 june) have sent a *Note to Ruskin* (rigorous but good-humoured—as absolute *Finis* to the paltriest absurdity I was ever dragged into as if in my sleep!)” [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *Time and Tide*, which was reprinted in book form later in the year, was addressed to “a workman,” who proved to be Thomas Dixon. The passage was deleted in the edition.

   *Letter 76*. MS: Bembridge. Hitherto unpubd. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Letter 77.* Addr: Mr.Carlyle, Esq./ 5 Cheyne Row/Chelsea. Pm: London, June 12, 1867. MS: Bembridge. Hitherto unpubd. On the front of the envelope Carlyle has written: “(*Ultimate* last word!)”.

    See I Corinthians 13:1 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. *Letter 78*. Addr: John Ruskin, Esq/etc.etc./Denmark Hill. Pm: London, S.W. June 14, 1867. MS: Yale University Library. Pbd: Sanders, pp.227-29.

    In the MS of the first draft of this letter, in the possession of Bembridge School, Carlyle has at this point written vertically across the rest of the sheet: “*ended* now, and be-hanged to it! (For the 4th and positively *last time*!)—(T.C.) 14 june.” The rest of the MS of the first draft is written across the face of a blank proxy of the Great Eastern Railway Company. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Rose La Touche, who was to decide upon Ruskin’s marriage proposal in 1869. See Introduction. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. This letter evidently did not habe the effect Carlyle wished for. Ruskin noted in his diary: “June 14th. Friday ….ugly letter from Carlyle in evening.” (*Diaries*, II, 620.) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. On May 1, Carlyle had lent Ruskin the MS of the article on Edward Irving that he had written during the winter. See Ruskin’s *Diaries*, II, 617.

    *Letter 79.* MS:Bembridge. Hitherto unpubd. Pm: London, June 25, 1867. Addr: Thomas Carlyle Esq. / 5 Cheyne Row/ Chelsea, S.W. Carlyle has written on the envelope: “Ruskin: [Nichts, hardly read. June 25, 1867].” [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ruskin, *Diaries*, II, 621: “June 26th. Wednesday [1867] . . . At Carlyle’s in Evening with Scotch Provost.” [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Letter 80. MS: Bembridge. Hitherto unpubd. The MS has, in Carlyle’s hand: “ Ruskin’s *return* (By a messenger this morng (24 April 1869).”

    *Letter 81*. MS: NLS, 555.36. Hitherto unpbd. The letter is undated, and the notation “? 1869” appears on the MS in another hand.

    Mary Aiken, who was staying with him. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Letter 82*. MS: Bembridge. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works, XXXVI, 565*

    Carlyle’s *Frederick*  was published by Chapman and Hall in London in 1869, in seven volumes (19cm.,12mo). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. A reference to the translated title of Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus*—“the Tailor Re-Tailored.” [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Letter 83.* MS: Estate of Mrs. Helen Gill Viljoen. Pbd. Ruskin’s *Works*, XIX, lxx-lxxi; and with omissions in Collingwood, II, 370-71.

    A reference to Wilhemine (1709-58), sister of Frederick the Great, who married Friedrich, Markgraf von Brandenburg-Bayreuth in 1731. Her daughter, Friederike, was the first wife of Karl Eugen, Duke of Württemberg (1728-93). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Ruskin’s *Queen of the Air* is (nominally at least) a study of Greek myths of storm—especially the myth of Athena. Ruskin must have enjoyed Carlyle’s praise well, for he had called this book “the best I ever wrote” and “the last which I took thorough loving pains with” (Cook, II, 159).

    *Letter 84.* MS: Bembridge. Pbd: Ruskin’s *Works*, XXXVI, 589. The MS has “1869” in another hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Joan Agnew (later Mrs. Arthur Severn), Ruskin’s cousin. See Letter 107, n.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Carlyle probably refers to this visit in a letter to Froude on September 14, 1869: “One day, by express desire on both sides, I had Ruskin for some hours. Really interesting and entertaining, a much improved Ruskin since he went in May last. He is full of projects, of generous prospective activities, some of which, I opined to him, would prove chimerical. There is (in singular environment) a ray of real Heaven in poor Ruskin;—passages of that last book (Queen of Air) went into my heart like arrows.” (Cook, 11, 164-65; also in Froude, IV, 383.) A letter written the next day to Lady Ashburton (MS: Marquess of Northampton) repeats this opinion, claiming Ruskin “much improved by his N. of Italy sojourn.” [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. *Letter 85*. MS:Bembridge. Hitherto unpubd. Addr: Tho. Carlyle, Esq./Addiscombe Farm/*Croydon*. Pm: London S.E., X SP6, 69.

    *Letter 86.* MS: Strouse Collection, University of California, Santa Cruz. Pbd: partially in Cook, II, 165. Addr: John Ruskin, Esq./ Denmark Hill. Pm: London, S.W., Oct. I, 1869. A typescript of the MS is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford (*English Letters,* LII, 12).

    A country estate in Croydon owned by Lady Ashburton and frequently visited by Carlyle and Ruskin. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *Letter 87*. MS: NLS, 555.35. Hitherto unpbd.

    *Letter 88. MS: NLS, 555.31* Hitherto unpbd. The MS has “1869” in another hand.

    *Letter 89.* MS:NLS 555.32. Hitherto unpbd.

    Joan’s sister Kate, who had become Mrs. Simson. She died in November 1869. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. *Letter 90.* MS: NLS, 555.33. Hitherto unpbd. The ellipsis in the middle of the letter indicates some words Ruskin omitted when he began a new page in the MS. The MS has “3 December 1869” in another hand.

    The “Lectures on Art,” delivered throughout February at Oxford. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. *Letter 91*. MS: NLS, 555.34. Hitherto unpbd.

    ApparentlyWilliam George Richardson (1839-77), the son of Dr. William J. Richardson and the grandson of Ruskin’s “Sunt Jessie” Richardson of Perth. In a letter to J.R. Severn on December 30, 1869, (MS: Bembridge) Ruskin says, “Tomorrow George dines with me and we go together to Carlyle’s, Bess having long wanted to go. Bess has bought a ship all his own—and calls it ‘Sesame.’” (“Bess” was Ruskin’s nickname for George.) In Ruskin, *Diaries*, II, 692, he says, “Jan Ist. Saturday [1870]. Last night at Carlyle’s with George. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. “The Future of England” delivered at the Woolwich Arsenal on December 14, 1869, and included in later editions of *The Crown of Wild Olive*. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)