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Thomas Carlyle, 1795-1881: A Bicentenary Exhibit

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A Bicentenary Exhibit based on the collection at Thomas Cooper Library formed by Rodger L. Tarr

University of South Carolina Libraries  October–November 1995
FOREWORD

This exhibit marks the bicentenary of the Victorian writer Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) and showcases the University of South Carolina's outstanding collection of Carlyle's works, formed by Professor Rodger L. Tarr. Along with a full array of first and collected editions, nearly all in original bindings, the Tarr collection also includes important manuscript and illustrative material that enhances the current exhibit. The collection's importance as a national resource has already helped the University win very competitive federal support for cataloguing our rare books.

Carlyle stands for the interconnectedness of intellectual life. The hero of his early book, Sartor Resartus (1834), was a university professor—not a narrow specialist like Browning's Grammarian, but professor of things-in-general. Carlyle's writings themselves defy modern subject categorization. The exhibit includes Carlyle's work in mathematics, German literature, social analysis, satire, biography, politics, religious philosophy, and, monumentally, documentary history.

Carlyle's writing was not only wide-ranging, but widely influential. As another great Victorian intellectual, George Eliot, wrote in 1855, "there is hardly a superior or active mind of this generation that has not been modified by Carlyle's writings...And we think few men will be found to say that this influence has not on the whole been for good."

Carlyle himself asserted that "The true university of these days is a collection of books." The Tarr collection, formed by a distinguished scholar-bibliographer trained here at Carolina, strengthens both our libraries and the University.

George D. Terry
Vice Provost and Dean for Libraries
and Information Systems
A NOTE ON THE CATALOGUE
The Carlyle exhibit, and this catalogue, can, of course, only include a small proportion of the Carlyle material in the Thomas Cooper Library collection. The exhibit was planned jointly by Patrick Scott and Jamie Hansen, with advice from Roger Mortimer. The catalogue entries draw on the original cataloguing for the library’s on-line catalogue, USCAN, carried out primarily by Jamie Hansen, as part of the 1992-94 Title IIC grant-project award for the University’s extensive Scottish literature acquisitions. That cataloguing, in turn, was able to draw on Prof. Tarr’s authoritative Thomas Carlyle: a descriptive bibliography (Pittsburgh, 1989); the ”Tarr” numbers on many entries refer to this source. Nearly all the items included are first or early editions, or original manuscript and illustrative material; where a reproduction has been used to round out the Carlyles’ story, it is indicated by the item heading being a plain subject description, with details on the artist or source relegated to the annotation. The majority of entries were written by Patrick Scott, with additional entries, especially on illustrative material, by Jamie Hansen. Catalogue details on the library’s full Carlyle holdings are available through the World Wide Web.

Patrick Scott
Jamie Hansen
Department of Special Collections
PREFACE
I am delighted the Carlyle collection that I built up over two decades now belongs to the University of South Carolina, to be available to future scholars for their research. The collection had its start at the University, while I was a graduate student in English. It was John Guilds, then department head, who first gently ordered me, a wide-eyed first year doctoral student, "Work in the 19th century!," and it was in John Bradley’s Victorian Prose seminar that my collecting began.

I remember that seminar meeting vividly. Bradley waved a James Thin catalogue before the eyes of the enchanted. We were all mesmerized. "Nine pounds, only nine pounds," he opined, "One of you should buy it." After class, I managed to approach the professor in Twistian fashion, "Please, sir, what was the name of that Carlyle book," and learnt nine pounds was Thin’s price for a first edition of Past and Present. Frightened beyond words—graduate students were respectful in those days—I hurriedly wrote down the address of James Thin, just as hurriedly sent off a purchase order to Scotland, and, six weeks later, received a strange brown package, with my misspelt name amply repaid by the label titling me "Esq."

Past and Present opened up many doors, not least that of G. Ross Roy, the Burnsonian who soon became my spiritual advisor when it came to book collecting. Many an hour I spent in the Roy home, learning how to love, cherish, and handle rare books, and how to love, cherish, and consume escargot, divinely prepared by Lucie Roy. Ross opened a new world to me. He taught me that books have a certain regality and deserve the most careful handling. I never opened that pristine copy of Past and Present because Ross showed me it was unopened (or ‘uncut’). To this day, it is the finest copy I have ever handled, certainly the finest of the six firsts of Past and Present in what is now South Carolina’s collection.

It still seems amazing to me that the University of South Carolina would house the collection that began here, 30 years ago, with that first daring order to Thin. Coincidence is sometimes lovely to behold. I am very grateful to all who helped me build this incomparable collection of Carlyle. But I am especially grateful to John Guilds for guiding me into the 19th century, to John Bradley for scaring me into buying my first rare book, and to G. Ross Roy for sharing with me his antiquarian spirit. That Past and Present may not now be the most valuable book in the collection, but to me it is definitely the most memorable.

Rodger L. Tartt
Illinois State University
THE EXHIBIT

Thomas Carlyle in 1835

The pencil-and-crayon sketch reproduced here, by Daniel Maclise, is the earliest portrait giving any authentic likeness of Carlyle's appearance. Maclise (1806-1870) was an Irish painter who contributed a long series of almost-cartoonlike sketches, "The Gallery of Literary Characters," to Fraser's Magazine in the 1830s, under the pseudonym "Alfred Croquis." His treatment of Carlyle had appeared in that series in 1833, but this slightly later sketch catches better both the continuity and difference between the young Carlyle and the ancient Sage of Chelsea depicted in Millais's more formal portrait.

Sir John Everett Millais, 1829-1896: Thomas Carlyle

By 1877, when Thomas Carlyle went to Palace Gate, Kensington, to sit for the original of this portrait, Sir John Millais was a fashionable painter, able to command fees of up to 2000 pounds. In his long and successful career Millais was both a co-founder of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and president of the Royal Academy. Among his most famous paintings are the early Christ in the House of his Parents, and the subject pictures Bubbles and The Boyhood of Raleigh, but Millais was also celebrated for portraits of the best known figures of his day, including William Gladstone, Alfred Tennyson, John Ruskin, Lily Langtry, and Thomas Carlyle. Shown here is a colored engraving or mezzotint by T. Hamilton Crawford of Millais's portrait of Carlyle, published in 1922 by the Museum Galleries. It is signed by the engraver.

James Carlyle and Margaret Carlyle

Jane Welsh Carlyle's two-dimensional, black-and-white silhouettes of Carlyle's parents were cut on a visit in 1831 to their last home, at Scotsbrig. "The Paper Profiles," Carlyle wrote on Oct. 6, 1831, "are very like." James Carlyle (1757-1832), a stone-mason and later farmer in Ecclefechan, was a lifelong member of the Burgher or secession kirk. Long after his own religious views had changed, in this moving memoir, written over a single weekend after learning of his father's death, Carlyle wrote: "He was never visited with Doubt; the old Theorem of the Universe was sufficient for him...Let me write my books as he built his houses...I have a sacred pride in my peasant father, and would not exchange him, even now, for any king known to me...I seem to myself only the continuation and second volume of my father." Thomas Carlyle, Reminiscences, edited James Anthony Froude. Two volumes. London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1881. Tarr A32.1.

Margaret Aitken Carlyle, 1771-1853: Manuscript letter, to Thomas Carlyle, from Scotsbrig, Nov. 2, 1845.

Margaret Aitken Carlyle, James's second wife, much younger than her husband and still illiterate when she married him, was, in Carlyle's words and as this
letter exemplifies, "a pious mother, if ever there was one," who led "a humbly dili-
gent, beneficent and often toilsome and suffering life."

James Carlyle's House, Ecclefechan
The "Arched House," where Carlyle was born on Dec. 4, 1795, the eldost of
nine children from his father's second marriage. Ecclefechan was a modest mark-
town of just over a thousand inhabitants, on whose single street, wrote Froude,
Carlyle's birthplace alone had "pretensions to originality." The house had been
designed and constructed by his father and uncle, with their own hands, one fam-
ily living on each side of the archway. Engraving by C.W. Sherborn, from a sketch
by G. Howard; James Anthony Froude, Thomas Carlyle, a history of the first forty
years of his life 1795-1835. Two volumes. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.,

Annan Academy
Because of his good progress in school at Ecclefechan, Carlyle was sent to
Annan Academy in 1806. A shy, sensitive boy, he was tormented by his school-
mates. He later recalled, "Unspeakable is the damage & defilement I got out of
those unguided tyrannous cubs."

Edward Irving
As a schoolboy at Annan Academy, Carlyle had admired Edward Irving,
when in 1808 the slightly older college student ("self-possessed and enviable") re-
turned to visit his old schoolmaster, Adam Hope. When a few years later, as aspir-
ants to the ministry, the two young men taught in rival schools in Kirkcaldy, Fife,
they became friends, though Irving could not stem the ebbing of Carlyle's faith in
a clerical career. After they left Kirkcaldy for Edinburgh in 1818, it was Irving who
first fell under the teasing spell of Jane Welsh, Carlyle's own future wife, and who
subsequently introduced Carlyle to her. Irving's clerical success (see adjacent item)
was much aided by the Byronic glamour of his appearance; as Carlyle wrote, he
was "except for the glaring squint in his eye, decidedly handsome." The portrait
reproduced here hung in Carlyle's dressing room at Cheyne Row. Artist unknown.

Edward Irving, 1792-1834: Manuscript letter, to Count de la Cruz, from
Edinburgh, Dec. 9, 1823.
"His Excellency" the Count de la Cruz was Portuguese ambassador in Lon-
don, with whom Irving was inquiring about an assumed victim of religious perse-
cution.

Edward Irving: The last days: a discourse on the evil character of these our times:
proving them to be the "perilous times" of the "last days." London: R.B. Seeley and
W. Burnside, 1828.

Later, Irving would become the fashionable and charismatic minister of the
Caledonian Church in London, encouraging his congregation to speak in tongues,
and founding his own church, the Catholic Apostolic Church (or Irvingites). Carlyle was ostensibly reviewing this book in his well-known essay "Signs of the Times." While there are interesting parallels between Irving’s apocalyptic preaching and Carlyle’s social criticism, the Carlyles saw Irving as self-chosen by religious fanaticism; as Jane Welsh Carlyle remarked, “There would have been no tongues had Irving married me.”

Mainhill, Near Ecclefechan

In 1815, James Carlyle gave up his business in Ecclefechan and took a small farm called Mainhill, close by the town. The family lived there for 10 years, and Carlyle visited from Edinburgh each summer. From the sketch by G. Howard, engraved by Sherborn.

The Old Edinburgh University Library

Like many Scottish students in his day, Carlyle entered Edinburgh University as a young teenager, studying as an undergraduate in the arts faculty from 1809 to 1814, and intermittently thereafter in divinity and other subjects. His fictional account of his student days in Sartor Resartus is scathing (“These Professors in the Nameless lived with ease...ours was the worst of all hitherto discovered Universities”), yet Edinburgh’s copyright-deposit library of over 700,000 volumes laid the groundwork for his education: “from the chaos of that Library, I succeeded in fishing-up more books perhaps than had been known to the very keepers thereof.” The picture reproduced here, from an engraving by Lizar and Basire commissioned as part of a funding petition to Parliament in 1823, shows the old library of 1617, soon afterwards replaced as part of Edinburgh’s neoclassical rebuilding.


“For some years,” Carlyle wrote, “geometry shone before me as the noblest of all sciences,” perhaps because John Leslie “alone of my professors had some genius in his business, and awoke a certain enthusiasm in me.” Leslie, professor of mathematics and subsequently natural philosophy at Edinburgh, was one of the models for Carlyle’s professor Teufelsdrockh. This edition of Leslie’s textbook includes (p. 340) Carlyle’s own solution to a geometrical problem, Leslie describing Carlyle as “an ingenious young mathematician, formerly my pupil.” Tar B1.

Edinburgh University: The New Buildings

The rebuilding of the old college, interrupted by the Napoleonic wars, took 40 years to accomplish. This picture of the archway on to South Clerk Street is reproduced from Thomas Shepherd, Modern Athens displayed in a series of views: or Edinburgh in the nineteenth century, London: Jones, 1829.

Carlyle's first book, first issued in 1822. In addition to the translation itself of A.M. Legendre's Elements de Geometrie (1794), in which he was helped by his brother John, Carlyle also provided the 200-page prefatory essay on geometrical proportion. Sir David Brewster (1781-1868) was a freelance Edinburgh scientist, who later became successively principal at St. Andrew's and Edinburgh Universities. Brewster would preside at Carlyle's inaugural lecture at the Edinburgh University Rector in 1866. Partly because of disagreements between Brewster and the publishers, the book sold badly, and all three issues (this copy is the second) are now very rare. Tarr A1.1.a2.

Scotsbrig
Scotsbrig was the home of Carlyle's parents from 1826 until their deaths. James Carlyle, his youngest brother, was tenant farmer there until 1880. Carlyle himself visited regularly. From the sketch by G. Howard, engraved by Sherborn.


The first edition of Goethe's novel, the English translation of which was to be Carlyle's first significant separate literary publication (see next item). When Carlyle first read Goethe's novel, in German, he strode out through the streets of nighttime Edinburgh, feeling that "here lay more insight into the elements of human nature, and a more poetically perfect combining of them, than in all the other fictitious literature of our generation." It is a mark of its impact that, as early as 1821, he shared the book with his future wife, Jane Welsh. Gift by Mrs. William R. Bailey in memory of William R. Bailey.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
Carlyle saw in Goethe both a hero and a forerunner for his own intellectual development; "he, in his fashion." Carlyle would write, "had travelled the steep rocky road before me, the first of the moderns," and, again, "he is a man, and not a dwarf of letters." Carlyle corresponded with Goethe from 1824 onwards till the German writer's death in 1832. The engraving reproduced here, by S. Bendixon, after Carl Christian Vogel von Vogelstein, was sent as a gift to Carlyle, from Munich, in 1828.


In 1823, Carlyle persuaded "Boyd the pursy Bookseller" (of Oliver and Boyd, Tweedale Court) to commission a translation of Goethe's novel ("which I have told
him is very clever"), though he would soon lament that "Translation...is nearly as unintellectual as dyking," bringing money but "no increase of reputation or even notoriety." Thomas De Quincey's "vulgar and brutish" review, in the London Magazine (September 1824), "reviling the book, an' its author, an' its translator," stung Carlyle bitterly ("I see clean over the top of him"); he vowed thereafter to "correct the Scoticism he said were found in my English." Tarr A2.


Carlyle identified strongly with Schiller, and this study, expanded from the series of articles he had contributed to the London Magazine in 1823-1824, might be considered among the earlier of Carlyle's semi-autobiographical fictions, as well as being the first of his several biographical works. "The Artist," he concluded from Schiller, "it is true, is the son of his Age; but pity for him if he is its pupil, or even its favourite...Let him look upwards to his dignity and mission, not downwards to his happiness and his wants." But Carlyle had considerable difficulty preserving this philosophic calm during the actual production of the book; he was to be paid 90 pounds on publication, but "the mischances of bibliopolic and bibliographic life seem to be innumerable," and, after "fighting with incessant ardour for many months against the drivel of printers," he discovered that publication was delayed another month because "the useless Kipper of an engraver" (whom he had himself selected) had botched the portrait. Like all known surviving copies, this one has the corrected state of the engraving. Tarr A3.1.

German romance: specimens of its chief authors with biographical and critical notices. [Translated by Thomas Carlyle.] Edinburgh: William Tait, 1827. Four volumes.

Carlyle contributed a preface to the series, and a biographical introduction to each of the seven authors included. The fourth volume contains his translation of Goethe's Wilhelm Meister's Travels. This set is inscribed "To John Badams, Esq., with the kindest regards of his sincere friend, Thomas Carlyle." The recipient, "Dr." John Badams, son-in-law of the London radical Thomas Holcroft, had studied medicine briefly in Edinburgh in 1811-1813, and worked as a chemist (pharmacist), first in Birmingham and then (from 1828 till his death in 1833) at Enfield, near London, where he was a neighbor of Coleridge and Charles Lamb. When, in 1824, Carlyle had visited him in Birmingham, to learn Badams's dietary regimen for his lifelong dyspepsia, the two men got on well, and after his death, Carlyle wrote, "Badams was among the men I loved most in the world." Tarr A4.


These three signed volumes, two from Carlyle's library, and one belonging to the young Jane Welsh, indicate the wide range, in subject matter and languages, of their early reading.


The German translation of Carlyle's *Schiller*. The frontispiece shows Craigenputtock House, in southwest Scotland, the Carlyles' home from 1828-1834. *Turr A.3.2, variant binding*.

Jane Welsh Carlyle

Jane Baillie Welsh (1801-1866), daughter of a wealthy physician from Haddington, near Edinburgh, married Thomas Carlyle in 1826. Shown here is a reproduction of an engraving from the miniature portrait of Jane Welsh, as a ringleted Regency beauty of 25, by Kenneth McLeay.

Thomas Carlyle: Translator of 'Wilhelm Meister'

Daniel Maclise completed the sketch for the caricature-portrait reproduced here in about 20 minutes, in the publisher James Fraser's back parlor. It was originally published in Maclise’s series “Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters” in *Fraser’s Magazine.* Although Carlyle claimed to dislike the dandified pose and asserted that the face was "not at all like," he nonetheless gave out copies of the engraving to family and friends.


This review of John Gibson Lockhart's *Life of Robert Burns* (1828) was among the first of Carlyle's essays to attract widespread attention. Its sense that "in the modern arrangements of society," a "man of genius" will often go unrewarded; its description of how Burns, entertained by the "Edinburgh Learned . . . at their tables and then dismissed," "gloomily sums up his gains and losses and meditates on the chaotic future;" and its assertion that Burns's greatness lay, not in fame, but "in a life of truth and the inexpugnable citadel of his own soul"—all reflect Carlyle's own situation in the Craigenputtock years and mark out themes that would echo through his major writings in the following decades. More than a century after its first publication, EB. Snyder, Burns's biographer, could assert that "all in all, if one were forced to limit one's reading about Burns to a single essay, one would do well to choose Carlyle's." *Roy Collection*.
Francis Jeffrey

Francis Jeffrey (1773-1850), a Scottish advocate and later judge, had been one of the founders of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802. His patronage as editor in the 1820s greatly helped Carlyle to establish himself as a reviewer. The portrait reproduced here is from an oil by Colvin Smith.


Arguably, Carlyle's literary essays gave him a wider and longer-lasting readership than his weightier and more controversial writings. This reprint of *Burns* could stand for hundreds of similar cheap popular and educational reprints in the second part of the century. The second in Chapman's projected series of "Biographical Essays by Thomas Carlyle," it was issued in paper wrappers at a shilling and marketed as "Reading for Travellers" on the new railways. *Tarr A24.1.*


In the period between Catholic Emancipation, in 1829, and parliamentary reform in 1832, British politics were in an up roar. Carlyle's essay, in the leading moderate reform periodical, echoed in its title the response of millenial preachers like his friend Edward Irving. He aimed to look behind the hubbub to discern the underlying character of his time, which he denotes the Mechanical Age, not only in industrialism and the new technology, but even in politics, religion, literature, and the media: "There is a deep-lying struggle in the whole fabric of society...the thinking minds of all nations call for change." *Tarr C21.*


The first collected and attributed edition of Carlyle's anonymous literary journalism, guided, though not actually edited, by Emerson, who also contributed a preliminary advertisement to the first volume. Because so many early 19th-century review-essays were anonymous, collected reprints such as this were very important in making visible the extent and range of a writer's achievement. The American edition was reissued in London in 1839, by James Fraser, with a variant title-page. The familiar series of English editions started with Fraser's five-volume set in 1840, with the plates transferred to Chapmain and Hall after Fraser's death, for their 1842 and subsequent editions. *Tarr A10.1.1a.*

Thomas Carlyle, ca. 1838.

Reproduced here is the crayon-drawing by Samuel Laurence (1812-1834), who was then establishing his reputation as a portraitist with pictures of well-known writers. Usually considered a better likeness than Laurence's oil-portrait (in the following island).
Jane Welsh Carlyle, ca. 1838.

Reproduced from the crayon-drawing. Laurence drew and painted the Carlyles several times and became a close friend. Mrs. Carlyle wrote to him, "As for doing me; do you really take me for good simpleton enough to believe that my face... is one that any artist out of bedlam would dream of drawing."

Craigenputtoch House

Jane's father Dr. Welsh had bought the remote estate of Craigenputtoch (or Craigenputtock) as a country home, and at his death in 1819 left it to Jane. The Carlyles moved there from Edinburgh in May 1828, partly for financial reasons, and stayed until their flitting to London in June 1834. Carlyle's brother Alick farmed the estate as tenant, but it was 16 miles from the nearest large town, Dumfries, and in spite of visits from Jeffrey, Irving, and numerous relatives, both Carlyle and Jane found its romantic isolation palled, especially in winter. Moreover, living there was unexpectedly expensive; Craigenputtoch had, wrote Carlyle, "a wide throat for money."

The Fraserians

This group portrait by Daniel Maclise of the contributors to Fraser's Magazine includes on the right the young tousled Carlyle along with Maginn, Hogg, and other distinguished writers. It was Fraser's that took the risk of publishing Carlyle's Sartor Resartus in periodical form (see adjacent case). Reproduced from Maclise's Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters.


Widely-regarded as Carlyle's most original work, Sartor Resartus combines a semi-satiric exposition of a parodic German philosophical theory, the Philosophy of Clothes, with Carlyle's semi-autobiographical but parodically-earnest "biography" of its inventor, Professor Diogenes Teufelsdrockh, professor of Things-in-General at the University of Wessmichtwo. Within the satire, in the central chapters from the alienation of "The Everlasting No" to the renewed assertion of "The Everlasting Yea," lies Carlyle's own spiritual experience and the root of his strong appeal to young Victorians beset with religious doubt. Following repeated rejections by John Murray, Longmans, and other publishers, Sartor Resartus first appeared as a serial in Fraser's Magazine (November 1833-August 1834). As one reviewer noticed with wonder, "the most radically Radical speculation upon men and things... appeared... in a violent Tory periodical." Only 58 copies were produced of this rare privately-distributed first book edition, printed from the Fraser's plates with new pagination and reset running heads. The University of South Carolina collection includes two copies, the second inscribed for presentation by Carlyle. Tarr A5.1.
The Old-Clothes Shops of Edinburgh: St. Mary's Wynd

Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* ("The Tailor Retailored") pictures old philosophies and theologies as "old-clothes," to be discarded as worn-out. The Edinburgh street pictured above, James Britton reported in 1829, "is appropriated...to a clothes-mart, vulgarly called Rag-fair." Reproduced from Thomas Shepherd: *Modern Athens displayed in a series of views: or Edinburgh in the nineteenth century*, London: Jones, 1829.


The first trade edition of Carlyle's book was published in America, edited by Charles Stearns Wheeler, with a preface by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Tarr, *Bibliography*, p. 41, points out that the text appears to be taken from Emerson's own annotated copy of the 1834 private printing, now at Harvard. "What we chiefly prize in it," wrote the Boston *Christian Examiner*, "is its philosophic, spiritual, humane cast of thought...thorough opposition to the materialism and mechanism of our grooved and iron-bound times...here are true 'Materials for Thinking.'" Carlyle was so pleased with the "true perception" in *this* American response that he bought a copy to send to his mother ("it was three shillings," he noted, "very dear"). *Tarr A.5.2.*

Moray Street, Edinburgh

Carlyle had lodgings in this rather grim street, off Leith Walk, Edinburgh, when, in June 1821, "a feeble unit in the middle of a threatening Infinitude," he experienced the "Everlasting NO" of *Sartor Resartus," and shook base Fear away from me forever." This later Victorian photograph is reproduced from Ian Campbell: *Thomas Carlyle* (1974).


The first British trade edition, four years after serial publication. Even then, after *Sartor's* success in America and Carlyle's recent smash hit with *The French Revolution*, the publishers required a pre-publication subscription for 300 copies before taking the book on. *Tarr A5.4.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The New England transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) was one of the earliest champions of Carlyle as a spiritual prophet. His surprise visit to the Carlyles at Craigiputtoch in 1833 was followed by sponsorship for the American publication of Carlyle's books, from *Sartor Resartus* onwards, providing Carlyle with needed literary income. During Emerson's lecture-trip to England in 1847-48, he was repeatedly at Cheyne Row, and he visited Carlyle again in 1872-
73. It was largely Emerson's prestige and advocacy that led to Carlyle's rehabilitation among Northern intellectuals after the Civil War, and Harvard's award to him of an honorary doctorate.


The English publication of Emerson's essays provided an opportunity for Carlyle to reciprocate Emerson's prefatory notices to the American editions of his own Sartor and Critical... Essays. It was selfconsciously a kind of repayment for Emerson's support: "there man!," Carlyle wrote to him, "Tit for tat!" Tarr B4; Tarr B5, Myerson A16.2 (fourth printing).

Tin for Carlyle Tobacco, Martin's Ltd, n.d.

This tin depicts a probably apochryphal vignette from the first meeting of Carlyle and Emerson, when the latter visited at Craigenputtoch in August 1833. The story on the tin relates that the two men sat in profound silence the whole evening, broken only by a request to pass the tobacco. As Emerson was about to take his leave around midnight, Carlyle shook his hand warmly, declaring, "Mon, we've had a fine time." According to Emerson's own accounts of the meeting, however, Carlyle had discoursed in "the broad Scotch" on subjects ranging from literature through history to modern social problems, "holding his extraordinary powers of conversation in easy command," telling jokes and repeating humorous anecdotes from his wide reading. Carlyle himself also described the visit, in a letter to his mother, as one of three little happinesses that had befallen the Carlyles (the other two were the tuning of the piano and letting the shooting on their farm for five pounds a year); Emerson, he wrote, "stayed till next day with us, and talked and heard talk to his heart's content, and left us all really sad to part with him."


This small cigarette card, number 79 in the Ogden series, uses a late photographic portrait, probably ca. 1870, though the card itself is probably early 20th century. The caption describes Carlyle as author of The French Revolution "and many famous Historical and Philosophical Works."


This booklet, number 5 in Cope's Smoke Room series, was intended to be sold by tobacconists as well as by bookstores. The upper cover bears a sketch of Carlyle wearing his well-known broad-brimmed hat and smoking a pipe. Along with advertisements extolling the virtues of Cope's various tobacco products, including Bristol Bird's Eye, Rosebud Rifle Cake and Golden Shag, the pamphlet
contains an essay on Carlyle as a conversationalist and more than 30 pages of quotations from his writings. Shown here are two pages of Carlyle's remarks on tobacco, "one of the divinest benefits that has ever come to the human race."

Thomas Carlyle

The oil portrait by Samuel Laurence reproduced here was painted ca. 1838. It did not please Carlyle, who called it "a likeness as of one in the doleful dumps with its mouth all sheyled [twisted] and its eyes looking fiercely out; meant to be very tragical."

Thomas Carlyle: Manuscript letter, to Mrs. Austin, from Craigenputtoch, March 20, 1834.

In 1834, the Carlyles decided, in Jane's words, to "burn our ships," leave the remote Craigenputtoch, and move to London, centre both of intellectual life and the book-publishing trade. Carlyle had asked a London friend, Sarah Austin (1793-1867), to help locate a house for them. This striking letter describes his preferred future home ("Housekin"), with its "little bed-quilt of garden," in terms very like the Cheyne Row house where they would live the rest of their lives, and it also expresses the "Bodings of a huge, dim, most varied character" with which he approached the move to London.


This picture post card set, with its original envelope, was sold only at the Carlyle's House museum in Chelsea and at his birthplace in Ecclefechan. After Carlyle spent many hours househunting in London in early 1834, he liked best this old house, number 5 Cheyne Row, which Leigh Hunt located for his friend, in the then-unfashionable neighborhood of Chelsea. It was, Carlyle wrote to his wife, "a most massive, roomy, sufficient old house," with a rent of just 35 pounds a year. Although Jane Carlyle had some reservations about the nearness to the river with its unhealthy fogs and damp, she replied to her husband's letter that her "chief enjoyment [would] always be in the society of my own heart's darling, and within my own four walls." The Carlyles would remain at number 5 for the rest of their lives. Soon after moving in, Jane Welsh Carlyle wrote that "we have a garden (so called in this language of flattery) in the worst of order, but boasting of two vines which produced two bunches of grapes in the season, which 'might be eaten,' and a walnut tree, from which I gathered almost sixpence worth of Walnuts." Carlyle duly purchased a set of tools and did his own gardening. He often sat in the garden to read and occasionally wrote there.

Cheyne Walk

This reproduction of an engraving shows the almost-rural neighborhood which would have been familiar to Carlyle on his daily walks or rides. The Thames embankment was not built until the 1870s. From an engraving by Arthur Severn.
Thomas Carlyle: Manuscript printer's copy from *The French Revolution*.

As early as "Signs of the Times," Carlyle had written that Europe was undergoing "a boundless grinding collision of the New with the Old," and that the French revolution of 1789 "was not the parent of this mighty movement, but its offspring." In 1833, he had written to John Stuart Mill that "a right History...of the French Revolution were the grand Poem of our Time." It was Mill who had to tell Carlyle that the only manuscript draft for the first part of *The French Revolution*, loaned to Mill, had been burnt by a housemaid, and it was Mill who loaned Carlyle money while he rewrote it.


Carlyle's first real critical success, dramatizing in the historic present the slow inexorable triumph of anarchy where aristocracy had grown hollow and the Body Politic diseased. John Stuart Mill, in the *Westminster Review*, claimed it was "not so much a history, as an epic poem...no work of greater genius, either historical or poetical, has been produced in this country for many years." William Makepeace Thackeray, in the *Times*, linked it to Britain's social crisis, noting its "timely appearance, now that some of the questions solved in it seem almost likely to be battled over again." Like a fashionable novel, it was priced at 31s. 6d. for the three volumes. *Tarr A8.1.I-III*.

Thomas Carlyle

Carlyle in his period of greatest fashionable success, soon after publication of *The French Revolution*. In May 1839, the flamboyant French-born dandy Count Alfred D’Orsay (1801-1852) dashed off in 20 minutes the sketch of Carlyle sitting in Lady Blessington's aristocratic drawing room. The lithograph reproduced here, by J. Sartain based on D’Orsay's sketch, was published in June that same year.

Thomas Carlyle: *Chartism*. London: James Fraser, 1840.

Chartism, the popular movement for further parliamentary reform and full adult suffrage, seemed after the Newport Rising of 1839 to threaten revolution. Typically, Carlyle sought to redirect the focus of both government and the working-class reformers away from the immediate violence, which he regarded as a mere symptom of a diseased society, towards the underlying issue, "The Condition-of-England Question." Mocking official reliance on statistics, the New Poor Law, and "constabulary rural police," he advocated strong leadership and interventionist programs of emigration and education. It is perhaps a sign of his increasingly individual voice in politics that this long essay appeared as a separate work, not in one of the established reviews such as Lockhart’s *Quarterly* or Mill's *Westminster*. Carlyle himself viewed it as a pamphlet, but, as he told Emerson, his publisher Fraser "gilt it, &c.," and turned it into the five-shilling book displayed here. *Tarr A11.1a*. 

14
First American edition, in printed paper wrappers, one of four variant binding styles. *Tarr A11.2, binding D.*


This gift is interesting evidence of Carlyle's recognized authority on class relations and the Condition of England in the "hungry forties." Earlier, Helps had been associated with Carlyle on the founding committee for the London Library. Losing almost all his money implementing "the dignity of labour" in a clay-mining experiment on his estate, Helps subsequently became Clerk of the Privy Council, editing Prince Albert's *Speeches* and correcting the grammar for Queen Victoria's *Leaves from the journal of our life in the Highlands*.


Elliott, a master-founder from Sheffield, and a Chartist supporter until 1839, is now perhaps best known for his "People's Anthem" ("When wilt thou save the people...not thrones, or crowns, but men"). Carlyle's essay "Corn-Law Rhymes," praising Elliott as "an earnest, truth-seeking man,...clear-sighted, also brave-hearted," had appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* (July 1832), in spite of the editor's reluctance to include an article on "so obscure a Rhymet."

**Ticket for "Mr. Carlyle’s Lectures on Heroes and the Heroic." Signed by the lecturer.**

For an early 19th-century author, ticketed public lectures during the London social season were a useful source both of income and publicity. Though he suffered badly before public appearances, Carlyle had first lectured, largely ex tempore, in May 1837, on German literature, and followed up with courses on general literature, in 1838, and on modern revolutions in 1839 (which earned him over 200 pounds). This ticket is for his best-known and final series, delivered in the spring of 1840.


In book form, Carlyle's brief lectures on heroes became one of the most frequently-reprinted and widely-influential of his works, selling, according to Dyer, a steady 5,000 copies a year. Carlyle's lecture topics ran from the Norse god Odin and the prophet Mahomet to the heroic men of letters with whom he himself identified, Dr. Johnson and Robert Burns, but his theme is constant, that history is "the History of the Great Men who have worked here." *Tarr A12.1.a.*
Thomas Carlyle: Manuscript passage from Past and Present, Book IX, chapter 4.


If in America the philosophico-theological Sartor Resartus has always appeared Carlyle’s central work, in Britain Carlyle’s achievement has generally been defined by the social critique of Past and Present. Starting from the appalling specter of “two millions of men sitting in Poor-Law Bastilles” [i.e., workhouses for the poor], Carlyle builds up a satirifying satiric contrast between the sham game-preserving aristocracy of his own time and the strong leadership of the medieval Abbot Samson. For new national leadership, he looked to industrialists, the Captains of Industry.” His wife judged it “a great book—calculated to waken up the Soul of England if it have any.” Emerson in The Dial called it Carlyle’s “Iliad of English woes,” a political tract as great as those of Burke or Milton. Turr A13.1.a.


The book that provided the Past in Carlyle’s Past and Present. Jocelin of Brakelond’s Latin chronicle of the medieval abbey of St. Edmundsbury, and of how in the late 11th century it was rescued from anarchy by the strong rule of Abbot Samson, caught Carlyle’s imagination as he toured the misery and unemployment of that same district in the early 1840s. His book, he wrote to a friend, would be “a Tract for the Times,” though “not in the Pusey vein”; Carlyle commends Samson’s religion, summed up in the motto Laborare est oreare (“To work is to pray”), as “the ism of all true men in all true centuries.” The Camden Society, named for the 16th antiquary William Camden, was founded in 1838 to publish British historical documents; the Chronica, edited by John Rokewode (1786-1842), was already their 13th publication. Roy Collection.

Contrasted Residences for the Poor

Augustus Welby Pugin’s graphic contrast between medieval benevolent paternalism and the cold Utilitarian workhouse that faced the Victorian poor aptly summs up the central thesis of Carlyle’s Past and Present, though Carlyle would not have endorsed the traditionalist religious moral drawn by Pugin, a Catholic convert and noted Gothic Revival architect who worked on the Houses of Parliament. Reproduced (and reduced) from A.W.N. Pugin, 1812-1852: Contrasts; or a parallel between the noble edifices of the middle ages and corresponding buildings of the present day, revised edition, London: Charles Dolman, 1841.

One of the most original early critical assessments of Carlyle, this co-authored chapter is reported to be largely the work of the invalid poet Elizabeth Barrett. Both Horne and Barrett were deeply interested in the Condition of England, he in his work for the *Report on the Employment of Women and Children*, she in such poems as "The Cry of the Children," yet their essay stresses, not Carlyle's social concerns, but his imaginative and philosophic vision.


Carlyle's influence shows in many of Dickens's books, including *The Chimes*, 1844; the prison chapter of *David Copperfield*, 1850; and, most obviously, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1859. *Hard Times*, a scathing Carlylean satire on utilitarian philosophy and industrial hardship, acknowledged this debt in its dedication "Inscribed to Thomas Carlyle."


Carlyle immediately recognized a close kinship with this closely-observed novel of working-class suffering in industrial Manchester, judging that it "deserves to take its place far above the ordinary garbage of novels...a real contribution (about the first one) towards developing a huge subject, which has lain dumb too long." Gaskell responded that "Mr. Carlyle's letter...has given me almost the only unmixed pleasure I have yet received" from her novel's publication.

**Geraldine Jewsbury**

The Manchester-born author, Geraldine Jewsbury (1812-1880), a follower of the French writer George Sand, wrote several widely-read novels, including *Zoe* (1845) and *The Half-Sisters* (1848, advertised in the adjacent Gaskell item, and published by Chapman & Hall, who also published both Gaskell and Carlyle himself). At first a literary acquaintance of Thomas Carlyle, Jewsbury developed in the early 1840s a fiercely-possessive friendship for Jane, who found her shocking: "she is far too anatomical...on the passion of love." Jewsbury would later be one of James Anthony Froude's chief sources on the unhappiness of the Carlyles' married life. The photograph reproduced here was taken in 1855.

Robert S. Tait, fl. 1836-1875: *Original photographs of Thomas Carlyle and Jane Welsh Carlyle*.

Two of several photographs taken, ca. 1854-55, before Carlyle grew his beard, by Tait, a Scottish artist and photographer. He also painted the Carlyles at home in his *A Chelsea Interior*, a reproduction of which is shown elsewhere in the exhibit. These photographs were given to the Carlyles' friends, Mr. and Mrs. E.T.B. Twistleton, who considered them excellent likenesses.

John Ruskin (1819-1900), the most famous art critic of his time, and like Carlyle a fierce critic of Victorian social developments, in such works as *Unto this last*, 1862. In the 1850s and '60s he became a loyal friend of the Carlyles, and described himself as Carlyle's "loving disciple—son—I have almost a right now to say." This volume provides interesting evidence of Ruskin's long-standing interest in Carlyle's work; the inscription dates from the period of a brief but bitter and widely-publicized misunderstanding between the two men. *Tarr A12.3.a.*

**Bookplate of Thomas Carlyle**

"Wonderful and worthy are the things we call books," Carlyle had written in *On heroes*. "Those poor bits of poor rag-paper with black ink on them; from the Daily Newspaper to the sacred Hebrew Book, what have they not done, what are they not doing?" The motto he chose for this bookplate, *Humilitate*, expresses this reverence for the printed book itself as well as his desired attitude to his historical sources.


A request for the loan of two sources Carlyle needed for his projected *Cromwell*, Heath's *Chronicles of the Civil War* ("a dim, close-printed, scraggy old folio"), and Dugdale's *On the Imbarkment of Fens* ("or any Book that will give one an idea of Oliver's locality"). Overleaf, Carlyle exclaims against "the stupidity of those old dead books" such as Heath.


Following the success of *The French Revolution*, Carlyle turned his historical ambitions towards the English revolution of the mid-17th century. Initially, he planned to write a full biography of the Puritan military commander and Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), then still much vilified and little known. However, after interruptions for other literary and political projects, he turned instead to producing a documentary portrait, editing Cromwell's extant letters and speeches (though with constant commentary). It was, wrote Carlyle's biographer James Anthony Froude, himself a distinguished historian, "the most important contribution to English history which has been made in the present century." *Tarr A14.1.1-11.*


Carlyle's earlier American publications had been supervised by Emerson, but for *Cromwell*, George Putnam seized the initiative in a direct agreement for early sheets with Chapman and Hall. Since there was no international copyright, Wiley
and Putnam immediately faced rival cheap American editions, and this part-issue, at only 25 cents a part, sought to preempt such competition. American critical response, perhaps because of the Puritan heritage, was remarkably good. Henry David Thoreau commented that Carlyle’s book was “a practical comment on Universal History;” “he has dug up a hero who was buried alive in his battle-field… not only a lost character has been restored to our imaginations, but palpably a living body, as it were, to our senses.” The “grandeur and heroism” of Cromwell’s speeches, Thoreau asserted, “might go right into the next edition of the Old Testament, without alteration.” *Tarr A.14.2.1-IV.61.*


As soon as Carlyle’s edition appeared, new Cromwell letters began to turn up, necessitating expanded second and third editions. Shown here is the separate supplementary volume that Carlyle insisted his publishers issue for purchasers of the original version. *Tarr A15.*

Thomas Carlyle: Manuscript letter to J. Langton Sandford, Jan. 12, 1846.
Sandford had been copying letters for the Cromwell *Supplement.*

Harriet, Lady Ashburton
In the late 1830s, Carlyle was introduced to a fashionable couple, the Bingham Barings, soon to become Lord and Lady Ashburton, and from 1844 he became a regular visitor to their country homes, Addiscombe and The Grange. He was on friendly terms with the husband, but, in James Anthony Froude’s disapproving summary, “Lady Harriet became his Gloriana, or Queen of Fairy Land, and exercised a strange influence over him for good and evil.” When, eventually, Jane Carlyle met this “Intellectual Circe,” she was agreeably reassured, both by Harriet’s wit and her appearance (“she is immensely large”). Harriet died prematurely of heart disease in 1857.

Frederick the Great
Friedrich II (1712-1786), grandson of George I of England, succeeded to the Prussian throne in 1740, and built Prussia up as a strong military power through the Seven Years War. Carlyle had been a life-long admirer of Frederick, first proposing a biography to an Edinburgh bookseller in 1830, and in 1840 listing him as a possible lecture-subject for the series *On heroes.* Reproduced here is an engraving from the portrait of Frederick by Anton Graff.

Thomas Carlyle: Manuscript research notes for *Frederick the Great.*
Carlyle began reading for his monumental biography of Frederick late in 1851, and the self-imposed task occupied him for the next 14 years. He twice visited Germany to visit archives and view Frederick’s battlefields, and at home he labored through “the enormous rubbish-mountains” of published scholarship.
(with some help from volunteer assistants). It was for work on this book that in 1853 the Carlyles' built the famous "sound-proof room," with double walls and a skylight in place of a window, in the attic story of Cheyne Row.


"All History," Carlyle writes in his poem, "is an imprisoned Epic, nay an imprisoned Psalm and Prophecy," and the task of the imaginative historian is to disimprison it. Certainly Carlyle wrote his *magnum opus* on a more than epic scale. While he had identified strongly with Frederick in youth, he became, as he inched forward, less sympathetic towards "the lean drill-sergeant of Europe." His self-imposed task became, he told Emerson, a "wrestle with...subterranean hydram," and an "unutterable horror," both to him, and through his unhappiness, to Jane. She confided to her sister in 1859 that Carlyle "ought never to have tried to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." Yet it is filled with characteristic Carlylean phrases and passages, and the years Carlyle struggled with *Frederick* were financially profitable; the first editions alone gained him over 1,000 pounds per volume (when the Cheyne Row living costs seldom totalled more than 300 pounds a year). The recipient of this set, Erasmus Darwin, the shy neurasthenic brother of Charles Darwin, first visited Carlyle in 1835 and rapidly established himself, in Fred Kaplan's phrase, as "an elder brother or an uncle to Jane." *Tarr A25.1.1.a.*


In the late 1840s, Carlyle became increasingly strident about the failure of his contemporaries to confront the apocalypse he predicted. A visit to Carlyle in 1845 from a group of Young Irishers, led by Gavan Duffy, and the horrors of the Irish Potato Famine, persuaded Carlyle to intervene directly in current political debate. Repeal of the 1801 Act of Union (i.e., Irish home rule), he argued, would be an abdication of British responsibility to relieve the "fierce actual Starvation," only to be cured by strong leadership. Carlyle's vehemence undermined any possible political effect. "There is no Newspaper that can stand my articles," he wrote to his mother, after he had to split his Irish essay into three to place it with the *Examiner* and *Spectator*. The broadsheet reprints shown here symbolize his marginality to mainstream political debate. *Tarr A17: A 18.*


The most controversial of Carlyle's directly political writings, damaging his public influence both in Britain and America for the next decade. To his biogra-
pher, J.A. Froude, Carlyle’s “savageness was but affection turned sour,” but even the sympathetic David Masson, in the *North British Review*, described the pamphlets as “more irritating and blistering” than any of Carlyle’s previous works. Carlyle himself noted that they had been “beautifully abused and extensively read.” Shown here in the original wrappered parts are number 3, “Downing Street” (April 1850), number 4, “The New Downing Street” (April 1850), and number 5, “Stump-orator” (May 1850); the collection includes the other numbers in bound sets. *Tarr A21.1.1-VIII.a.*


American response to the pamphlets was equally hostile, except in the South, where William Gilmore Simms’ *Southern Quarterly Review* hailed Carlyle, for obvious reason, as still “the stern, old, prophetic Carlyle whom we have known before,” “superior to cant and false philanthropy.” *Tarr A21.2.a.*


This squib from the radical comic magazine *Punch* indicates the ebb in Carlyle’s public influence in the 1850s, following the extremism of his *Latter-day pamphlets*, as “a very first-rate reputation” came to be condemned as “nothing... but barking and froth.” For *Punch’s* later admiration, compare its 1866 cartoon “Wisdom and windbag.”


One of the finest of “Ape”s caricatures, and one of the earliest literary figures in the long-running series of *Vanity Fair* cartoons. Carlyle adopted his well-known broad-brimmed straw hat in part to support the local hatmakers of his native Ecclefechan. The accompanying text, by “Jehu Junior” (Thomas Gibson Bowles), described Carlyle as a “Literary Prussian or Inspired Fanatic...the stoutest hearted Pagan, tempered by Christianity, that ever breathed.” Diogenes (fl. 4th century B.C.) was the original Cynic, who lived an ostentatiuously simple life, making his home according to legend in a tub, and wandering the streets by daylight with a lantern, in fruitless search for “an honest man.”

**Thomas Carlyle:** *Shooting Niagara: and after?* London: Chapman and Hall, 1867.

Carlyle’s apocalyptic response to the debate of the 1860s over further parliamentary reform, and to the Tory leader Benjamin Disraeli’s decision to “dish the Whigs” by backing what had previously been a liberal policy. Carlyle, predictably, foresaw from extended democracy nothing but accelerated disaster. Among his newer arguments for stronger government was environmental protection: “Is Free
Industry free," he asked prophetically, "to convert all of our rivers into Acherontic sewers!" The essay, originally published in Macmillan's Magazine for August 1867, had been commissioned by its editor David Mason, long a Carlyle champion. *Tarr* A27.1.a.

Elliot & Fry: Original photograph of Thomas Carlyle, ca. 1870.

This portrait photograph of Carlyle was taken some 10 years before his death. It is inscribed by Carlyle to Emily Venturi, Jan. 1, 1871.

"Wisdom and windbag," Punch, or the London Charivari, 50 (April 14 1866), 155.

This cartoon, occasioned by Carlyle's inaugural as Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, represents the writer's renewed public acceptance in his later years. In sharp contrast with Punch's earlier condemnation of Carlyle's "barking," the accompanying article hails him as "one calm voice" of wisdom, setting him against the "windbag" radical M.P. John Bright, who was agitating for parliamentary reform. By 1866, Punch concluded of Carlyle: "The Ages shall call him a great man."

A Chelsea Interior, ca. 1857.

The Scottish photographer and artist Robert Tait became friendly with the Carlyles, photographed them, and, in Mrs. Carlyle's words, "took the bright idea... that he would make a picture of our Sitting Room to be 'amazingly interesting to posterity a hundred years hence.'" The painting reproduced here, made for Lord Ashburton, shows the two Carlyles in the sitting or dining room, with the double doors open through to the breakfast room behind. The carpet was the same one the Carlyles had brought from Craigenputtock in 1834; because it did not fit the Chelsea house, Mrs. Carlyle had pieced it out around the walls with blankets dyed to match. Carlyle, sporting his recently-grown beard, and filling his clay churchwarden pipe, is wearing the old check dressing-gown his mother had made for him; Jane looks across at her dog Nero, on the chair to the right. She commented astringently that "the dog is the only member of the family who has reason to be pleased with his likeness" (and even he, she thought, looked more like a sheep), while she herself would be depicted for posterity in "wrong perspective" and with a "frightful table-cover."


Thomas Carlyle was introduced to the American artist Whistler by a friend and shown the famous portrait of Whistler's mother, *Arrangement in Gray and Black*. He admired the painting's simplicity and, although he hated sitting for portraits, agreed to be painted in similar style. When he arrived at Whistler's studio for the first sitting, Carlyle sat down and declared, "And now, mon, fire away!"
continuing, as perhaps he sensed Whistler's displeasure, "If you're fighting battles or painting pictures, the only thing to do is to fire away!" Any undertaking involving two such strong-willed characters as Whistler and Carlyle would seem unlikely to succeed. The artist demanded numerous sittings rather than the two or three initially requested and screamed in anguish each time his sitter changed his position. The resulting work is one of the finest of modern portraits. Carlyle himself held no great opinion of it. In a letter to Charles Eliot Norton, he called it "a fatuity...unfinished after many weary sittings...a portrait not of my features but of my clothes, which seemed to occupy the strenuous attention and vigorous activity of my singular artist." Shown here is an engraving of Whistler's painting, in a proof before letters signed both by Whistler himself and by Richard Josey, the engraver, and dated September 23, 1878. Seven such proof copies would have been pulled and signed, but the locations of the other six are unknown.

Thomas Carlyle: *Inaugural address at Edinburgh, April 2nd, 1866; by Thomas Carlyle, on being installed as Rector of the university there. (Authorized report).* Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1866.

Carlyle's near-unanimous election by the Edinburgh students as their rector (the largely-ceremonial chair of a Scottish university's governing body), in succession to Gladstone; his dread of the necessary public installation; his triumphant visit and extempore lecture in Edinburgh; the telegram back to Jane in London—"A perfect triumph"—all these are the stuff of legend, signs of Carlyle's vindication after the criticism of the 1850s and a final rebuttal to Jane's rather snobbish Scots kinsfolk. Its tragic aftermath, Jane's sudden death from a heart-attack during his absence, would haunt Carlyle for the remainder of his days. The partly-autobiographical lecture of over an hour, exhorting the students to "faith, obedience, modesty, humility, and correct moral conduct," later bore the title *On the choice of books.* Tarl A26.1.


Carlyle was co-executor for John Sterling (1806-1844), a Cambridge-educated radical broad churchman who abandoned a clerical career for literature, under Carlyle's mentorship. In 1848, the other executor, Augustus Hare, published a biography of Sterling emphasizing orthodoxy. Drawing on autobiographical letters Sterling had written to him, Carlyle wrote this corrective biography very rapidly, between March and July 1851. Reviewers noticed the book's gentleness and humanity, in sharp contrast to the recent *Latter-day pamphlets*, but were disturbed to discover how far Sterling (and Carlyle) had travelled from orthodox beliefs. *Tarl A22.1.a.*


In reviewing this book, the novelist George Eliot asserted that "there is hardly
a superior or active mind of this generation that has not been modified by Carlyle's writings," and welcomed the selection as "surely a benefit to the public, for alas! Carlyle's works are still dear." Thomas Ballantyne, the editor, originally a poor weaver from Paisley but now a newspaper editor in Manchester, had earlier in the year published extracts from *Latter-day pamphlets* to prove Carlyle's prophecies were coming true. *Tarr E.3.1.a.*


These autobiographical essays show Carlyle at his most human and attractive. In portraying his father the stonemason, his friend the preacher Edward Irving, the editor Francis Jeffrey, and Jane Welsh Carlyle, he portrayed himself also. But the cathartic, remorse-stricken portrayal of Jane was written under the shock of sudden bereavement, and Froude's decision as executor to publish it so soon after Carlyle's death stirred violent controversy and cast a still-recurring shadow over Carlyle's own reputation. Froude's justification for his action is given in his *My Relations with Carlyle* (1903). *Tarr A32.1.1-II.a.*


Although she never published a book, Jane Welsh Carlyle remains, in G.B. Tennyson's words, "one of the rare Victorian literary wives who are of literary interest in their own right." Her fame as one of the greatest of letter-writers (over 3,500 of her letters survive) came because Thomas, in bereavement and remorse, preserved and prepared her writings for publication after his death, allowing subsequent generations an insight into the parallel lives of one of the most controversial of Victorian marriages. *Tarr G1.1.I-III.a.*


"How delicate, decent is English biography, bless its mealy mouth" Carlyle himself had written of Lockhart's *Scott;* "a Damocles sword of Respectability hangs forever over the poor English Life-writer ... and reduces him to the verge of paralysis." In his essay on Richter, he asserted that "a well-written Life is almost as rare as a well-spent one." The monumental official biography by his disciple and friend, the historian James Anthony Froude was both well-written and unmealymouthed about its subject's faults. Four volumes in all (the first two on the early life had appeared in 1882), Froude's portrait of the brooding Sage and his martyred wife are, with all faults, one of the greatest of English biographies. Froude, a former Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, was a professional historian and essayist, best known for his work on Elizabethan sea-power. *Tarr B15.*
Exhibit Catalogues from the Department of Special Collections
Series editor: Roger Mortimer


Thomas Carlyle


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