



## CARLYLE AND RUSKIN.

(TWO LETTERS.)



THE following letter from Carlyle to the greatest of his disciples relates to one of the sections of *Unto this Last*, of which four appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* soon after it came into existence under Thackeray's editorship. Other parts were to have followed, but the outcry against them was so great that the circulation of the magazine began to suffer, and Mr. Ruskin was compelled to bring the series to an abrupt conclusion in November 1860. Eighteen months later he republished the essays in book form, asserting in the preface that they were "the best, that is to say, the truest, rightest-worded, and most serviceable things" he had ever written. This opinion he still holds, and he declared to a

friend three years ago that if all his works were to be burnt save one, he would choose *Unto this Last* for preservation. The price was 3s. 6d., a very moderate one in those days for a book of Ruskin's, but it was fifteen years before a second edition was called for. In the meantime *Munera Pulveris* and the greater part of *Fors Clavigera* had appeared, and there were signs of faltering even among the most orthodox economists. It is now selling at the rate of a thousand copies a year.

DEAR RUSKIN,

CHELSEA, 29th Oct., 1860.

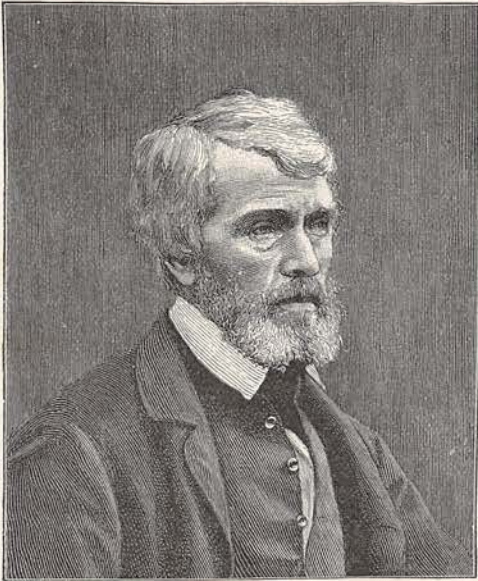
You go down through those unfortunate dismal-science people like a treble-X of Senna, Glauber, and Aloes; like a fit of British cholera, threatening to be fatal! I have read your paper with exhilaration, exultation, often with laughter, with bravissimo! Such a thing flung suddenly into half a million dull British heads on the same day, will do a great deal of good. I marvel in parts at the lynx-eyed sharpness of your logic, at the pincer-grip (red-hot pincers) you take of certain bloated cheeks and blown-up bellies. More power to your elbow (though it is cruel in the extreme). If you dispose, stand to that kind of work for the next seven years, and work out there a result like what you have done in painting. Yes, there were "a something to do"—not easily measurable in importance to these sunk ages. Meantime my joy is great to find myself henceforth in a minority of two, at any rate. The Dismal-Science people will object that their science expressly abstracts itself from moralities, from &c., &c.; but what you say and show is incontrovertibly true; that no "science," worthy of men (and not worthier of dogs or of devils), has a right to call itself "political economy," or can exist at all, except mainly as a fetid nuisance and a public poison, on other terms than those you shadow out to it for the first time. On third last page and never till then, I pause slightly, not too sorrowfully, and appeal to the times coming, (Noble is the spirit there, too, my friend; but alas, it is not Philanthropism that will do these; it is Rhadamanthismus I sorrowfully see) which are yet at a very great distance! Go on and prosper.

I am yours always (sleeping a little better and hoping an evening soon),

T. CARLYLE.

"Mrs. Carlyle said, 'No one managed Carlyle so well as Ruskin; it was quite beautiful to see him. Carlyle would say outrageous things, running counter to all Ruskin valued or cared for. Ruskin would treat Mr. Carlyle like a naughty child, lay his arms round him and say, "Now this is too bad!"'" So wrote Mrs. Gilchrist in her diary, after a visit to the Carlyles, on June 17th, 1860. It is to be hoped that Ruskin's letters to Carlyle may some day be published, among them perhaps the answer to the above. As it is not now available, a letter from Mr. Ruskin to a young student is here given. It was written in 1871, when the author was re-casting *Munera Pulveris* with its dedication "to the friend and guide who has urged me to all chief work, Thomas Carlyle." *The Eagle's Nest*, afterwards Carlyle's favourite among

Ruskin's works, was then in contemplation, and the early numbers of *Fors Clavigera* were being issued monthly to a small but enthusiastic circle of readers.



THOMAS CARLYLE. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN ABOUT 1860 BY WILLIAM JEFFREY.

*Arbroath.*

MY DEAR GERARD,

The thing that I had chiefly to say to you in reply to your interesting and for the most part right letter, was that you must be on your guard against trying to cultivate yourself too conscientiously. The intellectual and religious element in which you have been brought up necessarily makes you thoughtful, but will be dangerous to you if it make you thoughtful beyond the need of your day. So far as there are necessary duties to be done which are painful to us—we must be very grave about them; but I should like you, for the most part to do what you enjoy most, in a resolute manner, and to be sure that what you most enjoy doing or learning, Heaven means you to do and learn. Do not try to be great or wise. We none of us can

be either—in any degree worth calling so. But try to be happy first, and useful afterwards—(no man *can* be useful who is not first happy)—we can be both of those all our lives, if we will.

For the visit to Denmark Hill. Count the available hours in the year, then reckon over the various work I have at present on hand. You know—or ought to know—some measure of it; remember that I am fifty-two, and that I am not well, and judge for yourself if in saying that I am forced to receive no visits, I wholly deprive myself of the claim to say that I am still affectionately your sister's and yours,

J. RUSKIN.

(All that you say of modern and ancient art is in great measure true—but you are scarcely yet at an age when it should be interesting to you. I would rather have you interested in living lions than in Greek ones—always providing you didn't want to hunt them.)

My best regards to your Father and Mother.

Mr. Ruskin has stated more than once that any letter of his may be read by all the world, and surely no apology is needed for printing this gentle admonition—intended originally for one person, but applicable to so many.