PREFACE

ALTHOUGH Thomas Carlyle was acclaimed throughout the nineteenth century in both England and the United States as the "undoubted head of English letters,"\(^1\) reliable editions of his work, providing both an accurate text based on modern bibliographical principles and full explanatory annotation, have not been readily available. Even the standard edition, the Centenary, originally published 1896–99, is unsatisfactory: it is without annotation and textually inaccurate.\(^2\) This injustice, both to Carlyle and his readers, the editors of the Strouse Carlyle Edition seek to redress.

To establish an accurate text the editors have devised an integrated system for the computer-assisted production of the edition, based on the CASE (Computer Assistance to Scholarly Editing) programs.\(^3\) The application of electronic technology in every stage of the editorial process, from the collection of evidence through the final typesetting of the text and apparatus, allows a high level of accuracy, while leaving all decisions requiring editorial judgment in the control of scholars. (A valuable byproduct of the use of computer technology throughout the project has been the creation of a machine-readable archive of Carlylean texts, textual apparatus, and annotation.) The text is preceded by a discussion of the evidence and editorial principles used to establish it, and a full textual apparatus is appended, including a list of all emendations of the copy-text and a complete collation of authoritative versions, keyed to the present text by page and line number. To facilitate reading, we present Carlyle's work as clear text, without added editorial or reference symbols.

The historical introduction is intended to elaborate the significance of the work for Carlyle's era and to suggest its importance for our own, as well as explaining its origin and biographical context. The works cited in the introductory essay may be taken as a selected bibliography of Carlylean commentary and criticism, a starting point for the student of Carlyle and his influence. By providing a full critical and explanatory annotation, the editors hope to assist the contemporary reader in negotiating Carlyle's densely referential prose. A tissue of quotation from varied and disparate sources intertwined with the

\(^1\) "Literary Work of Thomas Carlyle," 92. (For complete citations, see the list of works cited, pp. 393–417.)

\(^2\) See "Note on the Text," pp. c–ci below.

\(^3\) For a description of the CASE programs, see Shillingsburg, \textit{Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age}, 128–46.

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historic events of Victorian life, Carlyle’s art weaves together multifarious references and allusions, which we have sought, wherever possible, to identify, gloss, and translate. The editors hope that the explanatory annotation, like the critical text, will be a starting point for the work of reading and interpretation, a foundation on which readers of the present and future may build the often-changing structures of cultural analysis. We have resisted the temptation to impose our own readings, offering instead the essential materials for interpretation, hoping thereby to approximate Carlyle’s own ideal book, in which the reader is “excited . . . to self-activity.”

The materials of the edition, both on paper and in electronic form, have been added to the Norman and Charlotte Strouse Collection of Thomas Carlyle, housed in Special Collections, University Library, at the University of California, Santa Cruz. In recovering the impact of the original Carlyle and making his work accessible to readers of the present and the future, the edition fulfills the central purposes of the Strouse Collection, which has been our inspiration, base of operations, and invaluable resource. In recognition of their inestimable service to Carlyle studies, the edition is dedicated to Norman and Charlotte Strouse.

This work would not have been possible without the assistance of many people and institutions. Their contributions can only imperfectly be acknowledged by a brief mention here.

Funding for the edition was provided by research grants from the University of California, Santa Cruz, for which we must thank Chancellors Robert Sinzheimer, Robert B. Stevens, and Karl S. Pister; Academic Vice Chancellors Kivie Moldave, Isebill V. Gruhn, and Michael Tanner; Deans Michael Cowan, Gary Lease, and Geoffrey Pullum; and the Committee on Research of the Academic Senate. Other University officers who have aided the project, providing facilities and administrative support, include Assistant Vice Chancellor Daniel G. Aldrich III; University Librarian Alan Dyson; Janice Crooks and Richard W. Jensen of the Academic Vice Chancellor’s office; Robert E. Jorgensen, Cindi Smith, and Kathie Kenyon of the office of the Dean of Humanities; and Peggy M. Hathcock and Joan A. Houston of the Humanities Business Office.

Our funding was supplemented by generous contributions from private patrons including Lou and Isabell Bartfield, Donald and Emily Clark, Wendell B. Coon, Donald D. Cummins, Mrs. Fred C. Foy, Dr.

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James D. Hart, Frederick B. Henderson, Stephen G. Herrick, Alan
and Judy Levin, Dean and Jane McHenry, Charles M. Merrill, Gurden
Mooser, and of course Norman Strouse.

Michael Goldberg wishes to express his gratitude to the Social
Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding his
research on this volume. In 1984–85 the Council awarded him a
Leave Fellowship, and in 1988 further funding was provided under
the Council’s International Collaborative Research Programme. He
also wishes to thank the Humanities and Social Sciences Grants
Committee of the University of British Columbia for a research grant
award in 1986, and the Work Study Programme of the Provincial
Government.

Our work has been assisted by the genuine collaboration of the
members of the Editorial Board and the Advisory Board, who are
listed facing the title page of this volume. These scholars travelled to
Santa Cruz for a series of organizational meetings, participated in the
formulation of policies for the edition, and read and commented on
various stages of the manuscript. We must mention in particular the
assistance of K. J. Fielding of the University of Edinburgh, whose
detailed comments on the introduction and annotation were most
helpful, and who, together with his colleagues Ian M. Campbell of
Edinburgh and Clyde de L. Ryals of Duke University, made available
to us the essential resources of their ongoing project to publish the
Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle. Carlyle biographer
Fred Kaplan of the City University of New York prepared the Chron-
ology of Carlyle’s Life that appears on pp. xv–xix, and Carlyle bib-
liographer Rodger L. Tarr of Illinois State University guided us in
our collection of materials. Jerry D. James, UC Santa Cruz librarian
and bibliographer, was a heroic detective in the underworld of foot-
note sources. Our textual advisor, David Nordloh of Indiana Univer-
sity, shared his experience and expertise and helped us to understand
the range of issues involved in establishing the text.

We must also thank Robert Hirst, the general editor of the Mark
Twain Project, who was appointed our inspector by the Committee
for Scholarly Editions of the Modern Language Association, and who
functioned in that capacity as our advisor as well as our judge. Other
scholars who have assisted our work include Michael J. Warren, pro-
fessor of English, UC Santa Cruz; Professor I. B. Cowan of the De-
partment of Scottish History, University of Glasgow; Professor Scott
Cook of the Department of Philosophy, San Jose State University;
Professor Catherine Kerrigan of the University of Guelph; Michael
Wolfe of Santa Cruz, California; and at the University of British Columbia Professors James Russell and Elizabeth Bongie of the Department of Classics, Edward Mornin of the Department of Germanic Studies, Hanna E. Kassis of the Department of Religious Studies, and J. A. Lavin of the Department of English.

We have needed and received the help of many libraries and librarians, above all University Archivist Rita B. Bottoms and her staff, Carol Champion, Paul S. Stubb, Irene Crawley Berry, and Paul Machlis of Special Collections, University Library, UC Santa Cruz, the worthy keepers of the Strouse Carlyle Collection, as well as the staff of Interlibrary Loan headed by Betty Rentz and Judith A. Steen, and the Reference staff including Margaret N. Gordon, Alan Ritch, and Deborah Murphy. In addition, grateful use has been made of the rich resources of institutions including the University Library of the University of British Columbia, the University of Michigan Libraries, the Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec, the National Trust, Carlyle House, the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the University Library Cambridge, and the Trinity College Cambridge Library. Permission to quote from unpublished correspondence or to use illustrations from their collections was graciously granted by Paul C. Allen of the Beinecke Library, Yale University; Michael Komaneczy of the Yale University Art Gallery; Don C. Skemer of the Princeton University Libraries; R. C. Andrew of Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge; and Lorna MacEchern, private secretary to the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry. For the loan of their Hinman Collator, we must thank Donald Kunitz and John Skarstad of Special Collections, Shields Library, University of California, Davis.

Our use of computer technology in all stages of the project has of course required the assistance of many programmers and consultants who are to us as heroes in their arcane skills and technical competence. Professor Peter L. Shillingsburg of Mississippi State University generously shared with us the CASE collation programs that were developed under his supervision for the Thackeray Edition of which he is the general editor. Rob Strand of the UC Santa Cruz Computer Center modified the CASE programs so that they could be run on a CMS-based IBM mainframe. Much of the pre- and post-collation processing of the text and collation lists was done on the UC Santa Cruz campuswide unix-based mainframe system, while typesetting and layout was done on Macintosh personal computers in the edition office. James Ganong, programmer extraordinaire, currently Unix Systems Administrator for the College of Environmental Design at
UC Berkeley, designed our system and wrote magical filter programs that make it possible for us to move our complex text files freely among the CMS, unix, and Macintosh platforms. Noah Kaplan, besides assisting James Ganong with the unix programming, showed endless patience in carrying out the tedious experimentation needed to make everything work. In addition we must thank Jeff Berryman, Bruce Joliffe, and Mike Patterson of the University of British Columbia Computing Centre, and at UC Santa Cruz Daniel Wenger, computing director of the Division of Humanities, and the staff of Computer and Telecommunications Services, especially Assistant Vice Chancellor Alan Schleenger, User Services Manager Dennie Van Tassel, and Senior Data Analysis Consultant James P. Mulherin.

We have had the support throughout of our publishers, the University of California Press, and must mention in particular our sponsoring editors, Dr. Jack R. Miles and William J. McClung, design assistance from Czeslaw Jan Grycz, Jeane Sugiyama, and Steve Renick, and editorial assistance from Marilyn Schwartz, Douglas Abrams, and our acute copy editor Nancy Evans. The index was prepared by Shirley J. Manley.

Among the many who have labored valiantly on this book are the typists of the UCSC Services to Academic Staff office, supervised by Happy H. Hunter and Cheryl Van De Veer, and Betsy G. Wootten of the Kresge College Services to Academic Staff office. Our own yeoman staff of clerical and research assistants has included Pam Dunn, Elizabeth Jones, Rosemarie Milazzo, Marc Moskowitz, Mary Kate St. Clair, Leslie Sweeney, Erik Trump, and Hesper Wilson.

The Strouse Carlyle Edition is administered by the Dickens Project, a multicampus research group of the University of California. Our special thanks go to its past and present staff including Dorene Blake, Tom Graves, and T. Lark Letchworth—and notably Linda M. Hooper, who gave us indispensable assistance with production and layout—and its director, Professor John O. Jordan, without whom our list of heroes would not be complete.

All of those mentioned here have made this volume better than it would have been without their help; none are responsible for any errors that may remain in it.

— Murray Baumgarten
Editor-in-Chief