PREFACE

ALTHOUGH Thomas Carlyle was acclaimed throughout the nineteenth century in both England and the United States as the "undoubted head of English letters," 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. 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, 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."⁴

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.

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⁴ Sartor, 1.4.21

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- Murray Baumgarten Editor-in-Chief