

messenger leaving for Boston early the next day, Emily spent an uninterrupted morning writing to her brother'. There is no reason to doubt the account—for Dickinson herself mentions in the letter that Ebenezer 'Burgess called on Friday evening and offered to carry anything which we would like to send—he says he shall see you often.'<sup>6</sup> But there are two problems with the date assigned by successive editors: Lavinia Dickinson's diary makes no reference to Burgess visiting the Dickinson family on Friday 3 October, and (less seriously) nor does she record poor weather on that Sunday (as she sometimes does when it rains).<sup>7</sup> More importantly, Snell's meteorological journal entry for Sunday 5 October describes it as 'mostly clouded' with no precipitation—which does not tally with Dickinson's description: she regrets the constant showers, but enjoys the freedom of being allowed to stay at home because of them.

A different set of coordinates is needed here—one that includes a date that is subsequent to the Boston trip that ended on 21 September, a Communion Sunday when it rained persistently, and a Friday visit by Ebenezer Burgess in 1851. Crucially, Lavinia mentions that 'Both Burgesses' called at the Dickinson's Main Street home in Amherst on Friday 31 October, which is the only time she notes a Friday visit from Burgess for the entire year. Next, Lavinia's note for Sunday 2 November reads: 'Communion Sabbath. Rainy day. Went in morning only. Burgess called.' Snell's record for 2 November confirms the weather: 'Overcast. Rainy from 9 A.M. to 3 P.M.' Thanks to a common reference to Burgess in separate documents by the Dickinson sisters, and a remarkably detailed daily record of the Amherst weather by a college professor, we can now be reasonably

certain that L54 was composed on the morning of Sunday 2 November 1851.

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### ALFRED TENNYSON AND FREDERICK GODDARD TUCKERMAN: AN OMITTED PAGE OF CORRESPONDENCE

IN early July 1855, Alfred Tennyson wrote to Frederick Goddard Tuckerman, the Bostonian poet, to thank him for sending three volumes of the works of Edgar Allan Poe.<sup>1</sup> Aside from its significance for Tennyson's encounters with American literature, the letter offers a glimpse into Tennyson's motives for revising 'The Charge of the Light Brigade': 'You will find in my little volume "the Charge of the Light Brigade" with the "blunder'd" that offended you & others, omitted. It is not a poem on which I pique myself but I cannot help fancying that, such as it is, I have improved it.'<sup>2</sup> The omission of that word, 'blunder'd', would turn out to be a considerable authorial blunder in its own right, for as John Ruskin wrote to Tennyson, in one of his occasional educating letters to the poet, 'I am very sorry you put the "Some one had blundered" out of the "Light Brigade."' It was precisely the most tragic line in the poem. It is as true to its history as essential to its tragedy.<sup>3</sup> Tennyson's letter to Tuckerman is one of many that demonstrates his susceptibility to the opinions of acquaintances and critics alike in the revision of his verse.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Letters of Alfred Lord Tennyson*, ed. Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon (Oxford, 1987), II, 113–4, 107. For the volumes of Poe, inscribed by 'T.G. Tuckerman', see Lincoln, Tennyson Research Centre, TRC/AT/1805.

<sup>2</sup> Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS Am 1349.1<sup>6</sup>. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

<sup>3</sup> John Ruskin to Alfred Tennyson, 12 November 1855, in Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir* (London, 1897), I, 411.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters of Emily Dickinson*, 141.

<sup>7</sup> Dickinson's letter mentions that 'Wm Kellogg is going [to Boston] tomorrow'—and Lavinia Dickinson's Diary refers to an 'E. Kellogg' visiting on Friday 3 October, but not Burgess. Lavinia's Diary includes references to rain on Sunday 19 September ('Rainy day. Church closed, at home all day...Attended evening meeting') and Sunday 28 September ('Rainy + dismal!'). Of the nineteen references to 'rainy' days, five are to Sundays.

A page of this correspondence with Tuckerman has been excluded in the standard edition of Tennyson's letters.<sup>4</sup> While Cecil Y. Lang and Edgar F. Shannon reproduced the main part of the letter, their omission of its final page was most likely on account of Tennyson's unusual layout for this particular message. As with most nineteenth-century letters, a single leaf has been folded in half, creating a bifolium of four sides ('pages') for writing. Usually, the writing would proceed sequentially, beginning on the first, outside 'page', continuing on the two inside second and third 'pages', and finishing on the back, fourth 'page'. In this instance, Tennyson appears to have written in this order: 'first page', 'third page', and then 'second page' (having rotated the paper so that the writing is at right angles to that on the third page). He then signed the letter, which would have seemed complete. The unseen 'fourth page' would, therefore, be expected to be blank, and the letter finishes here in the printed edition. The page is not, however, blank; it continues with a postscript, also written with the paper rotated ninety degrees, which has been left out of Lang and Shannon's edition of the letters. The full letter reads:

[First page]

Dear Mr Tuckerman

I have just returned home (i.e. to Farringford) from a visit to London during which I called on Moxon & found your kind present of books waiting for me. I fear that you must have thought me ungrateful in not immediately acknowledging them: & so I should have done had I not been waiting to send along with my thanks a small volume of my own, containing some of the things which I repeated to you in my little smoking-attic here.

[Second page]

& these poems when printed I found<...> needed considerable elision, & so the book has hung on hand. It will now be ready I suppose in a week or so & I have ordered Moxon to send you a copy.

When I arrived here I found that my small smoking room did not smell of smoke at all, nay was even fragrant. I could not at first make it out: at last I perceived it was owing to the Russian leather on your Webster which you made mine: even so (as some one says)

The actions of the just  
Smell sweet & blossom in the dust

& there was dust enough on the table almost to justify the application.

[Third page]

You will find in my little volume 'the Charge of the Light Brigade' with the 'blunder'd' that offended you & others, omitted. It is not a poem on which I pique myself but I cannot help fancying that, such as it is, I have improved it.

Farewell & forgive my silence hitherto. I shall always remember with pleasure your coming to see me in the frost & our pleasant talks together. Did you see in your papers that the Oxf.<sup>d</sup> University would make me a Doctor the other day, & how the young ones shouted?

I am, dear Mr Tuckerman  
ever yours  
A Tennyson

[Fourth page]

I have not my volume here with me & so cannot inscribe it to you but I enclose a piece of paper inscribed w<sup>b</sup> you can if you will paste on the blank leaf. My wife desires her kindest remembrances  
So does he little Hallam  
as well as he can.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, II, 113–4. The page has also been omitted in an altered printing of the letter in Hallam Tennyson's *Memoir*, I, 409–10.

<sup>5</sup> Houghton Library, Harvard University, MS Am 1349.1<sup>6</sup>. By permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

The above record corrects some additional transcription errors in the printed edition of Tennyson's letters.<sup>6</sup>

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6 I am grateful to the AHRC for their support in funding this research, and to the Houghton Library, Harvard, for the award of a Rodney G. Dennis Visiting Fellowship. With thanks also to Nora Crook, for her advice regarding the description of bifolia.

### ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND AND WILLIAM PALEY'S NATURAL THEOLOGY

Charles Dodgson could well have had Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* on his mind when, in 1862, he conceived of *Alice's Adventures under Ground*, the prototype of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.<sup>1</sup> Samuel Wilberforce, who had spoken against the theory of evolution in the notorious Oxford 'debate' of 1860, was the Bishop of Oxford. His diocesan seat, Christ Church Cathedral, was the chapel of the College of Christ Church, of which Dodgson was a Fellow. Furthermore, the father of the real Alice, Henry Liddell, was Dean of Christ Church, and thus directly responsible to Wilberforce. That *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is to some extent a response to Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was first suggested by William Empson in 1935, and the Darwinian dimension of *Wonderland* (in the versions of both 1862 and 1865) has been elaborated by several recent critics.<sup>2</sup> As Judith Murphy has observed, Alice operates in

1 Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures under Ground* (London, 1985) is a facsimile of British Library Add MS 46.700, Carroll's hand-written text with his own illustrations. It is unpaginated. Quotations from the 1865 version, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, are from *The Annotated Alice*, ed. Martin Gardner, rev. edn (Harmondsworth, 1970). I refer to this version by its commonly-used abbreviated title *Alice in Wonderland*. Where there is no need to distinguish it from Carroll's 1860 version I refer to it (and, by implication, both versions) simply as *Alice*.

relation to the diverse and largely animal population of *Wonderland* as, potentially, both predator and prey. She thus participates in a quasi-Darwinian struggle for survival, her unnerving bodily transformations projecting the advantageous adaptations responsible for the evolution of new species.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, however, certain details in *Alice* seem to betray the influence of William Paley's *Natural Theology* of 1802—a work that, while it anticipated Darwin in its attention to the structure of organisms, was doomed to become the Darwinians' whipping boy thanks to its argument from design for the existence of God. Dodgson had a copy of Paley's *Works* in his personal library, quite possibly the copy he had won as a prize at Rugby School.<sup>4</sup> While Paley dwells on a number of creatures of interest to Dodgson (as Lewis Carroll)—bats, for instance, and lobsters—there are three more particular points in his *Natural Theology* that are suggestive of direct influence on *Alice*.<sup>5</sup>

Paley greatly admired the flexibility of the human neck. He begins his elaboration of it by challenging 'any man to produce in the presence of the joints or pivots of the most complicated or the most flexible machine that was ever contrived, a construction more artificial, or more evidently artificial, than that which is seen in the vertebrae of the *human neck*'.<sup>6</sup> Carroll's fascination with the neck is evident from the pigeon episode (Chapter III in *Alice's Adventures under Ground*, Chapter V in *Alice in Wonderland*), in which Alice, having eaten from the left-hand side of the mushroom, finds that her head is higher than the trees, and is 'delighted to find that her neck would bend about easily in any direction, like a serpent'.<sup>7</sup>

2 For Empson's suggestion, see *Some Versions of Pastoral* (New York, 1938), 243–5. Ruth Murphy summarizes and extends upon the relevant criticism to date in 'Darwin and 1860s Children's Literature: Belief, Myth or Detritus', *Journal of Literature and Science*, v.2 (2016), 5–21, 14–17.

3 Murphy, 'Darwin and 1860s Children's Literature', 15.

4 Charlie Lovett, *Lewis Carroll Among His Books: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Private Library of Charles L. Dodgson* (Jefferson, NC, 2005), item 1483, 230.

5 Quotations are from William Paley, *Natural Theology* (New York, [1881]). For Paley on bats, see 185; on lobsters, 159. For the bats and lobster in *Alice in Wonderland*, see (for the bats) 28, 98 (and for the lobster), 139.

6 *Natural Theology* (italics original), 68.

7 *Alice in Wonderland*, 74.