

# JOHN RAE: THE LOST LETTERS

BY

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Charles Whitney Mixer<sup>1</sup> started a minor controversy when he published an article, "A Forerunner of Böhm-Bawerk," in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* in 1897, in which he suggested that John Rae had anticipated some aspects of Böhm-Bawerk's theory of capital.<sup>2</sup> At this time, not much was known in academic circles about Rae's life in Canada except for the remark in the preface to his 1834 book, *Statement of Some New Principles on the Subject of Political Economy*. . . : "I exchanged the literary leisure of Europe for the solitude and labors of the Canadian backwoods."

Mixer became interested in Rae's life as well as in his economic ideas. He wrote to a number of people asking about Rae. He received valuable information from Sir Roderick Cameron, Rae's pupil and benefactor, at whose home on Staten Island Rae died in 1872. He also received a collection of Rae's manuscript writings, primarily of a scientific nature. The yield from his letters was meagre so he wrote to the editor of the "Notes and Queries" column of the *Montreal Daily Star* on February 25, 1899, asking for information about "this distinguished Canadian."

The *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* shows two categories of Rae papers in the archives of the University of Hawaii. The first consists of Rae's scientific papers provided by Cameron. Around 1905 they were sent for assessment by Mixer to Dr. T. A. Jaggard, a geologist at the university, who had known Mixer at Harvard. These papers were left to the university by Jaggard after he retired from a distinguished career as a volcanologist. He made microfilm copies of the Rae papers available in the 1950s. The second set of documents was the responses Mixer received to his initial enquiries and the replies to his advertisement in the *Montreal Daily Star*. These were described in the catalog in the following way: "43 letters about Rae written to Charles Whitney Mixer

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<sup>1</sup> Mixer was born in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1867 and graduated from Johns Hopkins University in 1892. He earned a master's degree at Harvard in 1893. After spending two years studying in Germany he was awarded a doctorate in economics at Harvard in 1897. He was an assistant in economics at Harvard under the renowned Frank W. Taussig and beginning in 1897 gave graduate courses in the history of economic theory and in economic literature. Mixer was also an assistant in economics at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, from 1897 to 1900. It is likely that he was acquainted with William Lyon Mackenzie King who was one of Taussig's graduate students in 1897-98.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. X, January, 1897, pp. 161-90.

during the period 1899–1904 by various persons.” This entry escaped attention until 1989 when immediate inquiries were addressed to the University of Hawaii. The reply was that the letters had been misplaced. At intervals over the next nine years the university was importuned by letter, telephone, and e-mail but the letters could not be found. Then, in February 1999 Nancy J. Morris, Head, Special Collections, Thomas Hale Hamilton Library, University of Hawaii at Manoa unearthed a number of letters from their “general letter file” and kindly provided copies. These throw new light on John Rae and his family and on human fallibility.

One of the replies to Mixter’s letter was from the Librarian of Parliament, Martin J. Griffin, dated April 18, 1899, in which he says, “My attempts at finding out anything about Rae have been in vain. The oldest inhabitants of Hamilton have been duly tapped, and as usual have forgotten anything useful they ever knew.”

Griffin was too severe. One of his correspondents, Adam Brown, a prominent Hamiltonian gave Mixter the names of George H. Mills and Duncan McNabb. Mills sent Mixter some useful information in a letter dated May 17, 1900. He had been a pupil of Rae at the Gore District Grammar School around 1840, studied law and became Mayor of Hamilton in 1858. He suggested in his letter to Mixter that Rae’s dismissal from his school in Hamilton in 1848 arose because “he was an undoubted & outspoken free thinker while the [School] Board was I think chiefly composed of Ecclesiastical gentlemen. . . .” Mills was a young man when Rae left Hamilton and probably was unaware of the circumstances. In other correspondence quoted by Mixter he was unsparing in his praise of Rae as a teacher and as a man.

There is some evidence that Rae had taken to drink in this period and may not have been able to carry out his schoolmasterly duties satisfactorily. Such a conclusion is based on this excerpt from a letter from Rae to Sir Allan N. McNab published in the *Hamilton Gazette* on December 19, 1850, with the title “Dr. Rae in California”. It said, “My health is gradually improving, and it seems to me not unlikely that it may become more robust than it has been for years. I very seldom taste anything stronger than tea, unless with a friend, but I am become a confirmed smoker.”

If this supposition about Rae is correct, it may explain why the supervising trustees were reluctant to be more explicit about the real reason for his termination. When Mills died in 1901 there were flattering references to Rae in his obituary that said, among other tributes, “of his ability and literary attainments Mr Mills entertained a very high opinion.”<sup>3</sup> If Duncan McNabb ever wrote to Mixter, his letter is missing.

It appears that Mixter’s mother may have been helping her son with his inquiries concerning Rae. A letter in the collection datelined West Hartford, Connecticut, January 16, 1901, is from James Gammack to Mrs Mixter. Possibly Gammack was associated with Mixter at Trinity College in Hartford. He describes correspondence from the Registrar of McGill University about the honorary degree awarded to John Rae, the Arctic explorer, in 1853. One

<sup>3</sup> *Journals and Transactions of the Wentworth Historical Society*, III, 102.

paragraph in the letter is revealing: “The Registrar makes a note-worthy remark that ‘he had probably qualified by obtaining a license from a College of Physicians and Surgeons in Great Britain.’ That’s probably the very thing that our Dr. John Rae had done before he came to Canada: that would entitle him, in common parlance, to the title of doctor.”

The phrase “our Dr. John Rae” obviously refers to the Rae Mixer was concerned with. Only the last page and a postscript have been salvaged from a letter to Mixer from Sir Roderick W. Cameron, which begins in mid-sentence:

... seem to be the only survivors of those I knew and loved in my youth. Rae was a charming companion for young & old. He taught me cock fighting rabbit mink and muskrat trapping & other sports attractive to youth. He would give me a lesson it may have been in Cornelius Nepos, [a Roman historian] or other forgotten classic and say now Roderick you give me a satisfactory result and we will take a half holiday on Wednesday and a cock fight. The fights were harmless, but I was sure to have the lesson in time. He was young in thoughts and acts to the end. I will have a search for some of his letters.

There is a postscript: “My son will have told you that I have been ill and confined to my bed, but I yesterday dismissed my medics and escaped from my nurse for wh [sic] I am thankful.” Cameron died on October 19, 1900.

This letter reveals something about both Rae and Mixer. Rae’s willingness to take his pupil to cock fights showed that he took his role of schoolmaster lightly. Mixer, on the other hand, suppressed the reference to cock fighting when he quoted from this letter in the biographical sketch in the *Sociological Theory of Capital*, indicating perhaps that he had a puritanical streak or that he wanted to protect Rae’s reputation.

Two replies to Mixer’s letter were printed in the newspaper on March 4, 1899. One was from Henry J. Morgan of Ottawa, a well-known literary scholar and author of *Bibliotheca Canadensis* who gave an account of Rae’s life in Canada although he apparently knew nothing about the decade after 1821 that he spent teaching school in Williamstown, Glengarry County. The other letter was signed R. S. K., Lancaster, Ontario. This was Robert Skakel Knight, Rae’s grandnephew, the grandson of Ann Cuthbert Rae, John’s sister. R. S. Knight’s account of Rae was strangely impersonal. In referring to Ann Cuthbert’s son, Robert Knight, he wrote:

The boy, Robert Knight, became an Anglican minister, but being literary like his uncle went to England and took up theology. He was associated with Dr. Kitts in his *Journal of Sacred Literature*, and published a kind of magnum opus, “A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans”, but it has none of the vitality of his uncle’s book on “Political Economy.”

He omitted the fact that Robert Knight was his father. It is certain that both Henry J. Morgan and R. S. Knight also wrote directly to Mixer.

R. S. Knight is a blurred character and little is known about his life in Canada. In his obituary, papers in Halifax, Brockville, and Sherbrooke are asked to copy the notice but his association with these places is a mystery. What he did for a living when he was in Lancaster is obscure but he may have been a teacher. The

fact that he signed his letter to the *Montreal Daily Star* with his initials may indicate that he was known as a contributor to the “Notes and Queries” column.

The most valuable and revealing letter that has been recovered is from Dorothy W. Knight, Knight’s daughter. He died on May 16, 1900, and Dorothy took over her father’s interrupted correspondence with Mixer. She wrote to Mixer on November 5, 1904, and began her letter, “I have completed reading and taking notes on 181 old letters which my father’s cousin sent me, and I am giving you, though very late indeed, the result of my search.”

To make clear the provenance of these letters and the identity of the correspondents, it is necessary to describe John Rae’s family connections. His sister Ann Cuthbert<sup>4</sup> married James Innes Knight of Portsoy, Banffshire in 1810. The couple and their six-week-old son, Robert, emigrated to Montreal in 1811. The first child of the couple, Jessie, remained in Scotland and was brought up by Knight’s family. Jessie married William Thurburn of Keith, Banffshire. It was their son Alexander who supplied Dorothy, his second cousin, with the family letters. Ann Cuthbert’s husband, James Innes Knight, died on June 18, 1816, aged 27. In 1820 she married James Fleming, a Montreal merchant and brother to John Fleming, a prominent businessman and author of *Political Annals of Lower Canada* (1828). He was an early president of the Bank of Montreal and in addition to his commercial interests he had a library of 11,000 volumes—probably the largest in Canada in private hands at the time. Although John Fleming and Rae had interests in common, it is not known whether there were any dealings between the two men.

To judge from Dorothy’s letter to Mixer, she was literate and came from a cultivated home. On the basis of information provided by her relatives in Scotland she was able to trace the Rae family connection as far back as the Rebellion of 1745. This gave Mixer the material included in his biographical sketch about Rae’s background. Dorothy was slow in sending Mixer the results of her examination of the letters and again apologized: “I fear my services are too late to be of much use. I can offer no excuse for past negligence, but can only say that I tried to do my work with care when I did begin, and for the last two months I have had a great siege of toothache which has hindered me from going forward as fast as I desired.”

It is likely that it took her several years to complete her project. One of her comments indicates that she may have censored the correspondence. “The old letters were of so personal and private a nature that it pained even me to read them. Nothing wonderful, but one shrinks from overhauling another’s sorrows or mistakes even if they be of a very trivial everyday kind.”

Dorothy claimed that she had included in her summary practically everything relating to Rae, unimportant as some of it was. She said she would have quoted also from Rae’s letters to his nephew Robert but they were simply personal or related to indifferent matters. There is no way of assessing Dorothy’s judgement.

There are some indications that Dorothy may have been mentally unstable. For one thing, she did not explain satisfactorily the delay of several years in

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<sup>4</sup> For details about Ann Cuthbert Rae, see Susan Mann’s article in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. IX.

writing to Mixer. Her toothache hardly accounts for her procrastination. More revealing is this wildly irrelevant excerpt from her letter:

The Uncle of mine who was minister of Strachan and then of Royne was the father of John Cushing minister of Huntley. I feel sure it was he who gave those two portraits to your mother. In my youth I asked Aunt Anne what like the Cuthbert family were. She finished up by saying "Your uncle gave two portraits to Mrs Thurburn" I *think* she said "Mrs Cuthbert and her son the young guardsman" She *certainly* said "He thought she had a better claim to them". "Better claim" points to them being Mrs *Peter* Cuthbert and her son (Dr John Rae's grandmother and uncle) That same uncle of mine had a snuff-box which Arthur Cuthbert had presented to his mother (I mean the Arthur Cuthbert who made the fortune) I am told there is a portrait of himself on top of it. He left it to his grandson Arthur Cushing (son of John Cushing's Huntley). It was in 15. [*sic*] that the Cuthberts were at war and on the losing side. I do not know the christian name of the Cuthbert who was in the neighbourhood of Auchterless and who married Ann Ramsay.

The Census of 1901 gave Dorothy's age as twenty and her occupation as "gentelady." Like many young women from middle class Edwardian families she was not accustomed to complicated clerical tasks. The work involved in sorting and appraising 181 letters was both unfamiliar and formidable. On the whole she did a conscientious job but had few literary or clerical skills, and she had a little trouble with roman numerals. She numbered the 181 letters in chronological sequence and then numbered the letters she summarized in roman numerals. In the following list prepared by Dorothy, the first arabic number refers to all the letters and the second is the roman numeral assigned by Dorothy to the letters she condensed. Some inconsequential spelling errors have been corrected.

It may be helpful to describe briefly the locations in Ontario and Quebec mentioned in the letters: Williamstown is a village in Glengarry County, Ontario, about fifty miles west of Montreal. Chambly is located on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River about twenty miles east of Montreal. Frampton (sometimes St. Edouard de Frampton) is about twenty miles SSE of Quebec City, roughly halfway to the Vermont border. Cap Rouge is on the St. Lawrence River, a suburb of Quebec City.

Dorothy begins her summary:

*Notes on letters from or relating to Dr John Rae*

- 4 (I) James Innes Knight, Portsoy, Sept 22nd 1814 sends John (presumably Dr Rae) "a cut cairngorm stone for Rae and a present to your mother." Dr Rae in Scotland at this period probably at Footdee, Aberdeen.
- 5 (II) Ann Cuthbert Knight (formerly Rae, Dr Raes only sister) Portsoy, Nov. 1814 to her father at Footdee, Aberdeen Mentions John.
- 7 Ann C. Knight, Montreal, Jan 30th 1816 to her father in Footdee, Aberdeen.
- II (III) Little Robert Knight (son of James Innes Knight and Ann Cuthbert Rae) Montreal, September 1818 to an uncle. No

- address or specification but uncle evidently in Scotland.
- 13 (IV) Little Robert Knight, June 5th 1819 to his grandfather in Aberdeen Wants “a big dog such as Uncle John’s.”
- 17 (V) Little Robert Knight, Nov. 3 1819 in Latin to “Meus Charus Avunculus.” addressed John Rae Esq. Aberdeen. [Dorothy did not reproduce anything except the greeting.]
- 23 (VI) Letter from little Robert, Jan 6th 1821 to Rae enclosing “a list of articles that may be purchased for the Canada market next spring with the prospect of making a little profit” for his grandfather. The letter is to his uncle John Rae, and a short letter on the same sheet from his mother (now signed Mrs Fleming) mentions that she expects John Rae to leave Scotland for Canada shortly— “I hope we shall all meet in June—I shall pray for a safe and pleasant passage for you.” [Rae landed in Canada in the spring of 1821 as Mixter claimed. It has been suggested elsewhere that Rae did not arrive until 1822.<sup>5</sup>]
- 25 (VII) Robert, Montreal Feb 6th 1825 to his uncle in Latin. [The text was not given by Dorothy]
- 26 Letter on the other page to his aunt. Addressed Dr Rae, Williamstown, Glengarry.
- 34 (VIII) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, Oct 4th 1830 to Robert, (now at Chambly) saying that his uncle hopes to hear from him. [Robert had become an assistant teacher at a school in Chambly.]
- 42 (IX) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, Dec 16th 1830 to Robert. Mentions that his uncle may come to see them for a few days and take Ramsay and James (Robert’s young half-brothers) back with him for a while. [James Fleming jr. died while still a child].
- 43 (X) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, Feb. 2nd 1831 to Robert. Mentions that his uncle has come and taken Ramsay back with him to Williamstown. He also praised an essay which Robert had written.
- 49 (XI) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, Feb. 26th 1831 to Robert. Quotes from a letter of Dr Rae’s:

I have had a business with a Mr McFarlane (?) which has plagued me, and I am satisfied was the cause of a gross insult offered to me by a Mr McDonald McNeil (?) of this place who behaved in such a manner that I was obliged to challenge him—he however declined fighting with anything but cudgels so I had him posted and that matter is therefore settled. These things must account for my not answering Robert which I wished to have done immediately. [The significance of the question marks is not known.]

- 45 (XII) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal March 10th 1831 to Robert. No further news from Williamstown but has heard from another source that the man Dr Rae challenged was beneath his notice.

<sup>5</sup> R. Warren James, *John Rae, Political Economist . . .*, I, p. 14.

[This extraordinary challenge to a duel throws new light on Rae's personality. He appears to have been very fierce in defence of his honour. There is no hint of Rae's weapons of choice but presumably they would have been more sophisticated than cudgels. It is difficult now to appreciate the etiquette of duelling in Canada at that time. Rae seems to have been satisfied by having his opponent "posted." This may be related to Rae's experience in Aberdeen where notices of a quasi-legal nature could be displayed in the town square. Possibly they used the post office in Glengarry. This whole episode does not reflect well on Rae's judgement.]

- 47 (XIII) Dr Rae, Williamstown, March 22nd 1831 to Robert encouraging him to write and commends his essay. [Although Dorothy suppressed many of the exchanges between Rae and his nephew Robert on the grounds that they related to "indifferent matters," those that were recorded indicate a close loving relationship between the two. Rae had no children and perhaps Robert filled some gap in his life. There is considerable evidence, especially from Rae's pupils, that he was fond of children and Dorothy's letters cite a number of examples where Rae invited his young relatives to stay with him in Williamstown and Hamilton.]
- 51 (XIV) James Fleming Senior May 3rd 1831 to Robert saying that they had been "surprised by a visit from your uncle from Williamstown."
- 67 (XV) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, April 3rd 1832 to Robert now at Quebec in company with Dr Rae. Mrs Rae with them in Montreal. [Rae's wife remains an amorphous individual in all the letters. She is always referred to in the letters as Mrs Rae by her sister-in-law but perhaps this was Dorothy's usage. Mrs Rae was Robert's Aunt Eliza but this language was not used.]
- 68 (XVI) Dr Rae Quebec April 6th [1832] to Robert at Frampton regarding a box of books belonging to Rae. [There is no clue to Robert's activities in Frampton but perhaps he was teaching school.]
- 69 (XVII) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, April 27th 1832 to Robert at Frampton. Mentions that Dr Rae is going to Frampton.
- 70 (XVIII) Robert, Frampton, April 30th 1832 to his uncle John at Quebec making arrangements about the box of books.
- 72 (XIX) Dr Rae, Cap Rouge, May 7th 1832 to Robert. Is coming to Frampton as soon as the roads permit and wants lodging where he can write quietly. "As for eating, drinking or sleeping I may say that the what or how is a matter of indifference."
- 73 (XX) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, June 2nd 1832 to Robert. His uncle still in the vicinity of Quebec.
- 74 (XXI) Ann Cuthbert, Statehouse Cottage, Montreal, June 15th 1832 to Robert. Speaks of the scourge of Cholera which has fallen on the city. Has told Mrs Rae not to expect Dr Rae under these conditions.

- 75 (XXII) Ann Cuthbert, July 1st 1832 to Robert. Further account of the ravages of Cholera. Says she supposes Dr Rae will return home by way of the [Eastern] townships. [Her brother-in-law John Fleming died in the cholera epidemic in Montreal on July 30 1832, aged 46.]
- 76 (XXIII) Ann Cuthbert, July 12th 1832 to Robert. Dr Rae with him in Frampton. Page to Dr Rae asking him to return soon.
- 78 (XXIV) Ann Cuthbert, Aug. 2nd 1832 to Robert. Mrs Rae expecting her husband.
- 79 (XXV) Ann Cuthbert, Oct. 23rd 1832 to Robert. His uncle has given Mr Fleming Horace in ten volumes, Lee on Botany and Ferguson's Republic [Presumably Adam Ferguson, *History of the Roman Republic*] to send him.
- 80 (XXVI) Dr Rae, Cote St. Antoine, Montreal Nov. 15th 1832 to Robert, asking the latter to answer, as he has written before for some articles of clothing and some papers which he left with him two months ago. Also mentions the present of books.
- 81 (XXVII) Ann Cuthbert, St. Antoine's Cottage Aug. 23rd 1832 to Robert, telling of the birth and subsequent death of an infant daughter. Four days after the former event Dr Rae arrived and was taken ill with Cholera. It was not severe, however, and he recovered.
- 82 (XXVIII) Dr Rae Montreal Dec. 3rd 1832 to Robert. Is surprised to find in a letter to Mrs Fleming that Robert did not receive letters from him. Asks once more for his papers, cloak, etc.
- 84 (XXIX) Dr Rae Cote St. Antoine Dec. 18th 1832 to Robert. Has received the latter's letter and will be glad to get his things.
- 88 (XXX) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal Jan. 8th 1833 to Robert. His uncle's belongings have arrived.
- 92 (XXXI) Ann Cuthbert, May 23rd 1833 to Robert. Says "Your uncle has received encouraging letters from Boston in reply to a sketch and plan of his work in which he means to mention the theory of Adam Smith." [She was very supportive of her brother at the time Rae was arranging for the printing of his book. Her son Robert, who would have been twenty-three when Rae's book was published, seems to have been intimately involved in the excitement just before publication.]
- 94 (XXXII) James Fleming Senior, Montreal June 17th 1833 to Robert. Mentions that Dr Rae has been employed in making a catalogue of the books in the Library of his late brother Mr John Fleming. Says also:

Your uncle says that he is to publish a prospectus immediately, that Gentleman has of late been corresponding with some eminent literary men in the U.S. with a view of becoming the champion of the Tariff System which has made so much noise in that part of the world, in short he has undertaken to overthrow the whole fabric of that most difficult of all sciences, Political Economy, from Adam Smith downwards.



P.S. by Mrs Fleming: “Your uncle’s silence is owing to his being so occupied getting forward his works, but I suppose the prospectus will be out early next week. I mentioned that he had got encouraging letters from the States from Everett, the author of the *North American Review*, a writer who stands high and whose opinion will carry weight there.” [Ann Cuthbert’s sympathetic interest was not shown by James Fleming in the letter to his stepson. His reference to Rae as “that Gentleman” has an unfriendly ring and his assessment of Rae’s venture into political economy indicated disdain. Fleming was a dry goods merchant and could hardly be expected to appreciate Rae’s work.]

- 96 (XXXIII) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, July 3rd 1833 to Robert. Says, “Now that your uncle is encountering the celebrated Adam Smith and is like to come off the field with laurels—at least is expected by most people here to do so—he bids me to tell you to send to the Newsroom (to Mr Thompson’s) for a prospectus of his work which is to be sent there for you.”
- 97 (XXXIV) Ann Cuthbert, July 22nd 1833 to Robert. His uncle is sending him his gun “to keep the bears from your dwelling till the clearing (as I suppose) gets a little wider. Along with the gun are two copies of the prospectus of your uncle’s work, one for yourself and one for Mr [initials indecipherable].” [This gives the impression that Robert Knight was living in the bush in Frampton.]
- 98 (XXXV) Ann Cuthbert, Aug. 12 1833 to Robert. “Your uncle and Mrs Rae have returned from the N. Country. They found Glengarry much changed for the worse—they say it is miserably poor.” [The only observation in the letters about the economy of Upper Canada is this remark attributed to Rae that conditions in Glengarry had deteriorated. This is not surprising for there was an agricultural depression in Upper Canada during much of the 1830s, something that contributed to the discontent underlying the Rebellion of 1837.]
- 101 (XXXVI) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, March 12th 1834 to Robert: “Your uncle is well and has met with great attention from some literary and distinguished characters at Boston. His work was when he wrote in the press and must I suppose be now ready to come out of it.”
- 102 (XXXVII) Ann Cuthbert, April 22nd 1834, to Robert: “We have only heard once from your uncle and that was after his arrival in Boston. I think I have already told you that he had met with very great attentions there. Mr Fleming says he will not write until the work is completed and has perhaps met with some delays. I cannot, however feel at rest with respect to his prospects till I hear from him.”
- 105 (XXXIX) Ann Cuthbert, Montreal, Oct. 9th 1834 [to Robert]. Has heard lately from Dr Rae. Thinks he may return to Canada soon.

- 122 (XL) Ann Cuthbert, June 13 1836 to Robert. Speaks of Mr Fleming's nephew [identity unknown] being sent up to Dr Rae (presumably at Williamstown.) [In fact, Rae was in Hamilton at this time.]
- 139 (XLI) Ann Cuthbert, Feb. 22nd 1837 to Robert. Has shown a profile of Dr Rae to a phrenologist and the latter declined to give any decided opinion upon it. Cautions Robert to be careful of fever which is raging at Quebec and remarked, "Your uncle says medicine is but a groping in the dark." [Ann Cuthbert's comment reflects Rae's view of the medical establishment. His iconoclastic attitude had led to the interruption of his medical studies when he was a youth in Edinburgh.]
- 160 (XLII) James Fleming to Robert, October 14 1837. "I have not heard from [at this point Dorothy's handwriting stops and the quotation is completed in Mixer's hand] your uncle for a long while. For some time he has been financially embarrassed."

For unknown reasons, Mixer must have separated the balance of Dorothy's summaries beginning part way through 160 (XLII). It is certain that there were additional letters because letter number XLII is dated October 13 1837 and she says in the body of her letter to Mixer "his [Rae's] account of his part in the defence of Toronto may amuse you." The reference here is to the Rebellion of 1837, which occurred early in December 1837 when there was a small armed insurrection north of Toronto. Rae belonged to the Men of Gore, a militia regiment which hastened from Hamilton to put down the rebels. It is disappointing that Rae's assessment of the uprising is not available.

It may have been noticed that letter no. 7 was not assigned a roman numeral by Dorothy. Her listing included the letters running from I to XLII so that with the missing number there was a total of forty-three letters. This, of course, was the number of letters acquired by the University of Hawaii in 1959 according to the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*. The conclusion is inescapable that some archivist years ago was referring to the forty-three letters enumerated by Dorothy in the entry for the catalog. This was not an error but the brevity concealed the facts. The repeated statements by the University of Hawaii that the forty-three letters had been misplaced was a result of a misunderstanding.

Two considerations support this conclusion. It is not believable that Mixer would have received forty-three letters in response to his inquiry in the *Montreal Daily Star*. Almost all of Rae's contemporaries would have been long dead and few of his pupils would have survived until the turn of the century. In addition, it is conceivable that an archive staffed by professionals could mislay a collection of forty-three letters temporarily, but it is hard to believe that they would be lost for a period of years. There are almost certain to be fail-safe procedures in effect for the safekeeping of documents.