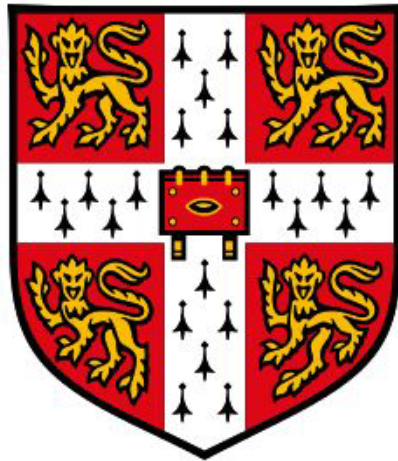


Faculty of History  
University of Cambridge

**Aspiring Writers and the  
Conditions of Authorship,  
1870–1914**



**Abigail Clare Sage**

Newnham College

This thesis is submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

September 2020

## **Declaration**

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

**Abigail Clare Sage**

**Aspiring Writers and the Conditions of Authorship, 1870–1914**

**Abstract**

This study examines the aspiring writer in Britain between 1870 and 1914. It shows how, in a new era of mass literacy, universal schooling, a burgeoning publishing industry, and a fledging literary advice industry, there was a large stratum of ordinary people who aspired and attempted to write. Most of these individuals were not writing for a living, so would not have been listed in the census as authors. Many would never have been published, and many others may have had no desire to see their work in print, but composed fiction or non-fiction simply for their own enjoyment.

Presenting a representative sample of real-life aspirants identified using publishers' archives, autobiography, print media, and census records, this study looks at who these individuals were, what they were writing, and why they wanted to express themselves and, in some cases, speak to a public. It also considers their wider literary environment, including prevailing attitudes towards aspirants and authorship expressed in novels and other literature, and literary advice channels, such as those offered through print media.

Placing aspiring writers at its centre, this study offers a new angle on authorship, publishing, and wider aspects of literary and social history in this period. Asking questions not fully probed by top-down accounts of the late nineteenth century, it makes use of limited evidence to demonstrate the importance of the aspirant community in the literary picture of this period; the immediacy of the impact of mass literacy and other changes on working- and lower-middle-class individuals; the place of literary imagination in the culture of this period; and the extent to which writing was already being democratised by the late nineteenth century.

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Peter Mandler, for his invaluable guidance and support over the last four years. His enthusiasm about my work, and his belief in both it and me, have been greatly appreciated. I am also grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding me through a Doctoral Training Partnership Studentship, and to Newnham College for their additional financial support. I am also indebted to David, whose generosity and companionship have helped more than he knows. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends, for their encouragement, and my Mum and Dad, for everything. This is for my grandfather, himself a bit of an autobiographer, who passed away shortly before this was finished.

## CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Part I</b>	1
Sources and Definitions	9
Structure	10
<b>Part II – The Literary Aspirant, 1870–1914: Historical Context</b>	11
Developments Before 1870	12
Developments After 1870	17
<b>CHAPTER 2 – THE ASPIRANT IN FICTION</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Part I</b>	36
<i>New Grub Street</i> (1891)	36
<b>Part II</b>	40
The Literary Profession	40
The Business Side of Literature	49
The Young Writer	55
<b>Part III</b>	57
The Right to Write	57
The Teachability of Writing	62
<b>CHAPTER 3 – THE ASPIRANT IN FACT</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Part I</b>	69
Submitters to Macmillan and Chatto and Windus Publishers	69
Other Aspiring Writers: Autobiography and Print Media	84
<b>Part II</b>	86
Intrinsic Motivations	88
Writing and Occupations	104
<b>CHAPTER 4 – ADVICE TO ASPIRANTS</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Part I</b>	123
Print Media	123
Literary Manuals	128
Other Printed Material	130
<b>Part II</b>	131
Correspondence Columns	131
Literary Competitions	144
<b>Part III</b>	152

Agents and Editors	154
Clubs and Schools	156
<b>CHAPTER 5 – THE WRITINGS OF ASPIRANTS</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Part I</b>	160
Macmillan/Chatto Writers	160
Joseph Keating	167
Literary Competitions	168
Correspondence Columns	171
<b>Part II</b>	174
Reading	174
Experience	181
Place	183
<b>Part III</b>	186
The Place of Writing	186
Writing Spaces	189
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>205</b>
Appendix 1: Macmillan/Chatto Writers – Archive Details	205
Appendix 2: Macmillan/Chatto Writers – Submission and Census Details	211
Appendix 3: Capsule Profiles of Second-Tier Figures in Late Victorian Studies	236
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>240</b>

## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

### PART I

In the first week of April 1911, just after the 1911 Census was taken, 36-year-old Sheffield resident Gladys Davidson, a typist at a steelworks, sent some fiction she had written to publishers Macmillan.<sup>1</sup> Days later, the firm Chatto and Windus received eight stories from a 32-year-old elementary school teacher, Agnes Holliday, living in Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire.<sup>2</sup> Another teacher, 33-year-old Marian Diamond from Plaistow, East London, sent her story ‘Dolly and the Teddy Bear’ to a publisher the following week.<sup>3</sup> Days later, self-employed egg and butter merchant, John Donnelly, from Dewsbury, submitted his 65,000-word manuscript, ‘The Perfect Lover’.<sup>4</sup> All these individuals had their efforts rejected.

The idea that everyone was trying to write in this period was a recurrent one. In 1902, the *Daily Mail* remarked that ‘every adult member of the British Empire hopes to publish at least one novel’.<sup>5</sup> Authorship as a profession skyrocketed in the half-century prior to the First World War. In 1861, the number of individuals calling themselves authors was 687; by 1881, it was 3434, and in 1911, was close to 14,000.<sup>6</sup> As the above individuals serve to illustrate, however, there was a much larger stratum of writers below this. These people were not writing for a living like the characters in George Gissing’s *New Grub Street* (1891), but often had other full-time occupations, so would not have been listed in the census as authors. They were usually not from privileged backgrounds, and many would never have been published. Many others may have had no desire to see their work in print, but composed fiction or non-fiction simply for their own enjoyment. There are few traces of these individuals’ existence, and their writings are almost entirely lost.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Macmillan Archive, British Library, London, Record of Manuscript (henceforth RoM) Volume 56020, entry 20854, and 1911 Census, household record for 78 Glen Road, Sheffield. Gladys Davidson was already a prolific published writer at this point – see Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> See Archives of Chatto and Windus Ltd, University of Reading, Manuscript Entry Book (henceforth MEB) CW E/9, entry 24286; 1911 Census, household record for Agnes Theresa Holliday, Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire (Croft Cottage); and 1939 Register, record for Agnes T. Holliday, Berkshire, b. 1878.

<sup>3</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20878; 1911 Census, household record for 50 Crofton Road, Plaistow, London; 1901 Census, household record for 63 Ravenscroft Road, West Ham, London; and 1939 Register, record for Marion E. Diamond, Wales, b. 1877.

<sup>4</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24305, and 1911 Census, household record for John Donnelly, Ravens Street, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury.

<sup>5</sup> ‘How to Succeed as a Novelist. Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant.’ *Daily Mail*, 26 March 1902, p.4.

<sup>6</sup> Mary Ann Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880–1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p.179, note 19. There is a slight lack of clarity over these figures. Gillies suggests that ‘author’ was ‘officially designated as a separate profession’ by the 1861 Census, with the category used prior to this being the more expansive ‘Authors, editors, journalists’. (See reference just cited.) Nigel Cross, however, says that ‘there were three decades from the 1860s when the census consistently listed authors, editors and journalists under the same heading: 2443 in 1871, 3434 in 1881 and 5771 in 1891’, suggesting, presumably, that the new category of ‘author’ continued to be used for editors and journalists, and that the 1881 figure given by Gillies may have included editors and journalists as well as authors. See Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.3.

This study will draw attention to the place of this aspirant community in the literary picture of this period. It will argue that its existence and the evidence relating to it demonstrates three key things: that mass literacy and other changes had an immediate impact on working- and lower-middle-class individuals; that writing was, to some extent, already being democratised by the late nineteenth century; and that literary imagination was an important part of the popular culture of this period.

The literary world and the changes it underwent in production and consumption between the mid-nineteenth century and the First World War have received considerable attention from historians. As Philip Waller has noted, it was between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that ‘a genuine mass market for literature arose’.<sup>7</sup> Literacy rates increased significantly, in part due to the 1870 Education Act, which extended primary-level education, and by the 1890s, as Nigel Cross notes, there was a ‘general belief’ that, due to the Act, the number of readers across the country had tripled.<sup>8</sup> Partly as a consequence, the publishing industry – book and newspaper publishing as well as the periodical press – expanded considerably. In 1880, there were 380 new novels, in 1891 nearly 900, and 1315 in 1895.<sup>9</sup> As well as producing thousands more readers, and considerably more material to read, these changes helped equip a significant new portion of the population with the ability, and potential desire – after enjoying literature themselves – to write.

Other developments in the literary landscape made a literary career suddenly seem more achievable. As Christopher Hilliard has written, not only did an expanded literary market offer new outlets for writing, but a host of intermediaries sprang up, appearing to offer ways into the industry.<sup>10</sup> The first literary agent emerged in London in the 1870s; publishers’ readers appeared; and the Society of Authors – largely concerned with improving and assisting writers with the business aspects of authorship – was established in 1884.<sup>11</sup> As Hilliard notes, the existence of these advisors and advisory bodies sent out a message, implying ‘that there were ways into writing, procedures for becoming a successful writer’.<sup>12</sup> In addition, publishing and authorship

---

<sup>7</sup> Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Preface.

<sup>8</sup> Cross, *Common Writer*, p.205.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.206.

<sup>10</sup> Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp.12 and 15. See also pp.7 and 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.12–13, and see also 15. See also Cross, *Common Writer*, p.212, and Walter Besant, *The Society of Authors. Record of its Action from its Foundation* (London: The Incorporated Society of Authors, 1893).

<sup>12</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.15. See also p.12.

were discussed in newspapers and magazines, whilst hosts of books, articles, and literary manuals emerged on the topics of writers, writing, and the literary life.<sup>13</sup>

Hilliard explains how these developments were the starting point of the aspiring writers' movement that began in the 1920s, itself part of the later, broader democratisation of writing that forms the subject of his 2006 book, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain*.<sup>14</sup> In that work, Hilliard focuses on three 'major movements and moments that drew ordinary people into imaginative writing' in the twentieth century – this largely middle-class aspiring/amateur writers' movement from the 1920s; working-class writing in the interwar period (particularly the encouragement of worker-writers in the 1930s); and popular writing during World War II.<sup>15</sup> He notes that all these moments were part of the 'democratisation of culture', what, he says, Karl Mannheim called the widening of 'the strata actively participating in cultural life, either as creators or as recipients'.<sup>16</sup> The aspiring writers' movement, for example, included writers' magazines, correspondence schools, and writers' circles, which sprang up around Britain, and where largely middle- and lower-middle-class men and women met to discuss literary topics, assess each other's work, learn about the literary profession, and socialise with like-minded individuals.<sup>17</sup>

This study, which purposely investigates the aspiring writer in the decades preceding those covered by Hilliard, will suggest that this democratisation started earlier. It will argue that several developments from the 1870s – particularly mass literacy, the burgeoning publishing industry, and the fledgling literary advice industry – had an immediate impact in terms of creating more writers, represented by the real-life and fictional figure of the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century aspirant. Already, in this period, ordinary readers were putting pen to paper and were able and ambitious to do so.

Certainly, not all these individuals were creating publicly available cultural goods. Most of the aspirants identified for this study had work rejected by publishers. Many more may not have wanted to write for a public. Some, however, *were* creating such products (short story competition entries printed in newspapers can be included here), whilst all were arguably 'participating in cultural life' as recipients – of print media, books, and literary advice. A sense of entitlement to be writing can also be inferred from all evidence of aspirants writing, as well as

---

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, pp.15 and 20, and Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.402. See also Chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis.

<sup>14</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.7 and 12.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.4–5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, see pp.4, 34–8, and 41.

available evidence of aspirants' ambitions, such as a letter to a correspondence column asking for advice on how to become an author. This fits with Hilliard's proposition that 'if anything makes the place of literature and the arts in a society "democratic", it is a shared sense of entitlement to participate in cultural activities'.<sup>18</sup>

This project has 1870 as its start date and will examine the period to 1914. Several developments occurred from the 1870s which had an immediate effect on working- and lower-middle-class populations and helped to grow the aspirant community. The 1870 Education Act, whilst 'not quite a watershed', as Hilliard writes – school attendance, for example, was not made compulsory until 1880, and in the early 1890s was still only 82 per cent – was still significant, prompting, as Jonathan Rose notes, 'the construction of hundreds of Board schools', and undoubtedly affecting the lives, education, and literacy levels of many children, both immediately and in subsequent years.<sup>19</sup>

David Vincent suggests that literacy amongst 20- to 24-year-old brides and grooms rose from around 67% in 1859–1874, to around 87% in 1879–1894, to almost 100% in 1899–1914.<sup>20</sup> The Registrar General, in 1879, notes Vincent, compared the 5.37% annual decrease in illiteracy for 1875 to 1879 with the rate of 1.34% for the years 1845 to 1850, 'conclud[ing] that "these figures bear indisputable testimony to the increasingly rapid spread of elementary education in comparatively recent years"'.<sup>21</sup> 'In the following three and a half decades', notes Vincent, 'the consolidation of a compulsory school system bore fruit in what appeared to be the final abolition of nominal illiteracy'.<sup>22</sup> There were generational, regional, and gender differences, though, as both Vincent and Rose remind us, with 'residual illiteracy' amongst older generations – Vincent estimates that, from 1899 to 1914, 'at least one adult in ten still lacked a minimum command over the basic skills of literacy' – and women generally (and increasingly) being more literate than

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>19</sup> See Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.15; Alexandra Lawrie, *The Beginnings of University English: Extramural Study, 1885–1910* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp.121–2; UK Parliament, 'The 1870 Education Act.' Undated. [parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact](http://parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact); and Jonathan Rose, 'Education, Literacy, and the Victorian Reader', in Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (eds.), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), p.34. Also see Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 2nd edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), p.156.

<sup>20</sup> David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.27. See also p.290, footnote 12. These figures are estimated from Vincent's graph.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.53.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

men in southern England, whilst men were more literate in northern regions (although decreasingly so).<sup>23</sup>

The 1870s could also be seen as a start point of both the literary advice industry and the expansion of the publishing industry. The decade saw, for example, the emergence of the first literary agent and the start of newspaper syndication.<sup>24</sup> It also witnessed the start of another democratising step in education – the University Extension Movement.<sup>25</sup> Other scholars have also identified the 1870s as a pivotal moment for reasons relevant to this study. In her work on children’s correspondence columns in northern provincial newspapers, Siân Pooley notes that it is ‘only from the 1870s’ that there is ‘much evidence of children growing up outside of elite nurseries and privileged schooling who were writing voluntarily’.<sup>26</sup>

Many of the ordinary individuals witnessing these changes were, as one scholar has noted regarding the book-published poets of the 1880s and 1890s uncovered by Catherine W. Reilly, ‘the first generation products of free education, newly provided with the expertise and the ambition to aspire to literature’.<sup>27</sup> What these people did with this education, what it did to them, and how this and other changes and developments impacted and amended their views of themselves and the world around them, are significant factors to consider.

The existence of the aspirant in this period as both a real-life and fictional figure, and the fact that the aspirant community appears to have continued growing, with individual aspirants clearly not being discouraged – either by their own failures, the limited odds of commercial success, or society’s attitudes to the figure of the aspiring writer and the working classes more broadly – suggests that the developments of the late nineteenth century were having a significant and immediate impact. This impact in this period is an important historical issue to probe, and one naturally not answered by Hilliard’s later work, which grew from discovery of the later phenomenon of writers’ circles. The aspirants of the earlier period, though, constitute the same rough strata of people who would have participated in writers’ circles in later decades. Hilliard notes that occupational sectors within the circles included librarianship, clerical work, and

---

<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Rose, ‘Education, Literacy, and the Victorian Reader’, in Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (eds.), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), p.33, and Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture*, pp.25 and 27–8.

<sup>24</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.13, and Cross, *Common Writer*, p.208.

<sup>25</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, pp.56–7.

<sup>26</sup> Siân Pooley, ‘Children’s Writing and the Popular Press in England, 1876–1914.’ *History Workshop Journal* 80.1 (2015), p.84.

<sup>27</sup> Dinah Birch, ‘Late Victorian Poetry, 1880–1899: An Annotated Biobibliography. By Catherine W. Reilly.’ *The Review of English Studies* 47:187 (1996), p.460.

teaching, all of which crop up in the sample of aspirants analysed in this study.<sup>28</sup> These earlier individuals, though, were born into a different literary environment and likely had different life experiences.

Evidence of these aspirants acts as a reminder, as do Reilly's nearly 3000 poets, 'of the limitations of the generally accepted picture of literary life in this period'.<sup>29</sup> Despite their significance, though, the aspirants of this earlier period have generally been treated as a minor adjunct to the nineteenth-century literary world and its changes. By placing them at its centre, this study aims to offer a new angle on authorship, publishing, and wider aspects of literary and social history in this period. Treating aspirants as the first piece of the puzzle requires us to study the changes in this period from the aspirant's viewpoint. It forces us to consider who these aspirants were, and the specific environment faced by those with literary ambitions, questions not fully probed by top-down accounts of the late nineteenth century. A focus on aspirants also foregrounds the 'aspiring' aspect of individuals' experience, prompting considerations such as the reasons behind composition, the links between reading and writing, and the interaction of new groups with the publishing world and other aspects of culture.

A focus on seemingly unimportant, unsuccessful or peripheral writers can even offer a corrective to existing accounts of a field, as Andrew Hobbs and Claire Januszewski have shown with respect to Victorian poetry. Through their work on poetry in local newspapers, Hobbs and Januszewski have shown how important these publications were as a site for the reading and publication of poetry, contradicting the beliefs of some that poetry 'became expensive and marginalised' and was 'neglected' by most Victorian readers.<sup>30</sup> Hobbs and Januszewski's approach of starting with the reader – with 'what was read, rather than what has survived' – mirrors the approach of this study, which will focus on what was written, rather than what was published or commercially successful.<sup>31</sup> In both cases, the quality of the work is of secondary importance – what matters is that it was written. A good proportion of the poetry uncovered by Hobbs and Januszewski could, they noted, 'be justifiably dismissed on aesthetic grounds, but that would leave unexplained why these millions of poems were written, published, read, and used'.<sup>32</sup> These poems – and the writers and writing analysed here – are worthy of study for a different reason. Just as local newspaper poetry, most of it exhibiting little talent, 'tells us how canonical

---

<sup>28</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.38–9.

<sup>29</sup> Birch, 'Late Victorian Poetry', p.460.

<sup>30</sup> Andrew Hobbs and Claire Januszewski, 'How Local Newspapers Came to Dominate Victorian Poetry Publishing,' *Victorian Poetry*, 52.1 (2014), pp.65–87, particularly pp.65–6.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.67.

poetry was received and imitated, and how poetry and poetic identity were viewed’, aspiring writers and their work help us understand how fiction and poetry were received and imitated, and how authorship was viewed.<sup>33</sup>

As Hilliard has pointed out with respect to his work on the twentieth century, ‘studying amateur writers helps us make sense of mass communication and commercial culture in a way that studying only cultural *products* ... cannot, because it shows us how the kinds of people who made up the *audience* of the culture industry worked through the challenges posed by creative activity and “mass culture” as they turned themselves into *producers* ...’.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, studying aspirants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gives us an important insight into how the new consumers of culture strove to become producers. As many of them would never have been published, and may not have intended to publish, these aspirants would not be visible if one only examined cultural products, such as published novels, or even some of the literature that catered to aspirants, such as literary handbooks.

In its conception, its concentration on ‘ordinary’ writers, and its ‘history from below’ approach, this project links, and owes most, to Hilliard’s *To Exercise Our Talents*. Building on Hilliard’s work, this study will highlight how ordinary working people were trying to write novels and short stories, and were being encouraged in their endeavours through correspondence columns and literary competitions, before the First World War and before the start of writers’ circles and other signs of democratisation that Hilliard observes later.<sup>35</sup> As this project will illustrate, not only were aspirants writing in this earlier period, but there is earlier evidence than writers’ circles of ordinary writers’ output, views, and ambitions.

This study will shed light on who aspirants in this earlier period were; what they were writing and why; what apparatus existed to help them; and what their literary environment looked like. Just as Mary Ann Gillies has drawn attention to the place and role of literary agents in the print culture of this period, when much greater attention has been devoted to authors, publishers, editors, and others, this study aims to emphasise the place of the aspirant in the literary picture of this period.<sup>36</sup> Whilst aspirants were not always visible, they were engaging with print culture and helping to shape it, through advice literature, correspondence columns, print media articles, and adverts.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.8.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp.4–7.

<sup>36</sup> Gillies, *Professional Literary Agent in Britain*, whole book and pp.9–10.

This project is the first to give sustained attention to the aspirant and the issues surrounding the aspirant in this period. Other studies which have looked at, or touched on, the non-elite writer either do not strictly deal with aspirants, do not consider the wider issues surrounding them, or do not focus in detail on the period from 1870 to 1914. Nigel Cross' important work, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (1985), argued over three decades ago for the 'common' writer as a significant subject of historical study. Cross offered a significant addition to the work of scholars such as Richard D. Altick, but his overarching approach deliberately excluded the writers – and therefore the issues – that this project is concerned with.

Whilst Cross' focus was not the highest echelons of the literary world, he nonetheless selected individuals who were 'relatively well-known at the time' and whose output was 'above the run of the mill', which, as he acknowledged, meant that his writers were 'not quite common ... in the sense of absolutely average'.<sup>37</sup> He also chose book writers, and those who wrote persistently over a number of years, aimed at publication, and, importantly, would not have considered themselves amateurs.<sup>38</sup> That established writers rather than aspirants were Cross' target is also borne out by his main source base, the archives of the Royal Literary Fund (applicants to which had to provide details of published work), and his description of the establishment of the Society of Authors – an organisation largely uninterested in aspirant writers – as the 'single most important event in the literary 1880s'.<sup>39</sup>

In *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers* (1995, 2006), John Sutherland devotes an important chapter to considering who the 'largely invisible masses' of Victorian novelists were, offering data he collected on a sample of 878 writers.<sup>40</sup> All these writers, however, appear to have been published. Sutherland notes that all wrote at least one novel (and by 'wrote' he implies published), whilst 63% of them wrote five novels or more, and nearly a quarter penned over 20.<sup>41</sup> Those rejected by publishers, or not interested in publishing, are not Sutherland's focus. Furthermore, whilst he notes that the body of novelists in this period 'is bewildering in its variety and diversity' with 'servants, errand-boys and criminals' as well as those further up the social scale, over half of his sample were men who had previous or concurrent careers in law, journalism, business, the church, the army, teaching, the navy, or medicine, and he does not

---

<sup>37</sup> Cross, *Common Writer*, pp.4–5.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.3–4 and 212.

<sup>40</sup> John Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), Chapter 8, especially pp.152–3.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p.161. See also pp.152–3.

reveal his findings about those lower down the ladder.<sup>42</sup> Several of the individual figures he devotes attention to, meanwhile, are either well-known or from prominent families, such as Amy Levy, Lord William Pitt Lennox, and Julia Wedgwood (i.e. Francis Julia Wedgwood, niece of Charles Darwin).<sup>43</sup> Whilst Sutherland does acknowledge that there is a ‘still invisible sub-stratum’ below his sample ‘composed ... of failures, rank amateurs, third-rate hacks and utter nonentities’ in their thousands, these are not his focus.<sup>44</sup>

Philip Waller’s, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (2006) deals directly with the period this project will focus on. It also devotes several pages to the topic of would-be writers and advice to them, mentioning, for example, guidebooks, organisations such as the Literary Correspondence College, and the early experiences of the young literary aspirants Thomas Burke and Cecil Roberts.<sup>45</sup> Waller notes that ‘a vast amount of aspiration was waiting to be satisfied’ in this period, acknowledges that ‘the first mass literate society was excited by newly acquired powers’ and that ‘reading inspired creative imagination and emulation’.<sup>46</sup> His discussion of aspirants, however, forms an extremely small fraction of his vast study, meaning he does not comprehensively consider who aspirants were or address their wider literary environment and experiences. Waller offers a top-down ‘literary’ approach, and is primarily concerned with highly successful canonical authors – such as Hall Caine, Oscar Wilde, and Marie Corelli – and their unrepresentative lives and experiences.<sup>47</sup>

## Sources and Definitions

This study will use publishers’ archives, census records, print media (including articles, correspondence columns, and literary competitions), autobiography, and other literature to explore the aspiring writer in this period. Chapter 2 will also draw on novels, using both fiction and non-fiction as an historical source to better understand attitudes towards writing and writers. The sources available for studying the aspirant in this period are limited, and vary from those that exist for the interwar period and after. Writers’ circles had not yet emerged, and whilst literary magazines existed, writing was not yet the ‘organised pursuit’ that it would become in the

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., pp.153 and 162.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp.153–6.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.164.

<sup>45</sup> Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, see pp.401–10.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.402.

<sup>47</sup> See Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*. The index also shows the extent to which such writers feature.

1920s.<sup>48</sup> The dearth of evidence for the late nineteenth century, however, makes the sources that do exist more significant.

The terms ‘aspirant’, ‘literary aspirant’, and ‘aspiring writer’ are used throughout this study. These terms were not uncommon in this period. They crop up in newspaper pieces about authorship, advice literature, and were even, occasionally, used by magazine correspondents as pen names.<sup>49</sup> This project will define the term ‘aspirant’ as anyone either attempting to write or aspiring to do so. It will also not necessarily exclude writers who were published. As the case of author and autobiographer Joseph Keating illustrates, aspiration did not necessarily cease once one’s work was published. Quite late on in his literary endeavours, after seeing a great deal of his work in print, and receiving reviews that the average aspirant could only dream of, Keating was still largely destitute and miserable, a financial and commercial failure.<sup>50</sup>

Those writing or wishing to write prose fiction will be the chief concern of this study. Aspiring poets and those involved in non-fiction writing, such as autobiography or essay writing, will not be excluded, however, where they arise in places such as publishers’ archives and magazine correspondence pages. For this study, the type of writing aspirants produced is less important than their impulse to write. Many aspiring writers, anyway, would have likely attempted both fiction and non-fiction, or both prose and poetry.

As already noted, this study will examine the period from 1870 to 1914. Its start point of 1870 has already been discussed; the beginning of the First World War, meanwhile, offers a natural end point. The year 1914 also saw the death of the first literary agent, A. P. Watt, and the increasing influence of non-literary cultural forms, such as the cinema.<sup>51</sup>

## Structure

This study will consist of four further chapters. Chapter 2, ‘The Aspirant in Fiction’, will explore how writers and writing were represented in this period in newspapers, novels, and other literature, and what those representations reveal. Chapter 3, ‘The Aspirant in Fact’, will examine

---

<sup>48</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, front cover flap.

<sup>49</sup> For a few of the many examples in print media, see, for example, “The Literary Aspirant.” *The Inverness Courier and General Advertiser for the Counties of Inverness, Ross, Moray, Nairn, Cromarty, Sutherland & Caithness*, from *The Globe*, 9 January 1891, p.3; “Hints to Literary Aspirants.” *The Woman’s Herald*, 24 August 1893, p.423; and “Advice to Literary Aspirants.” *The Woman’s Herald*, 7 September 1893, p.455. In terms of advice literature, see, for example, Arnold Bennett, *How to Become an Author: A Practical Guide* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd, 1903), for example p.29, p.37, p.38, p.39, p.43, p.45, and index, p.229. For a pen name example, see *Bookman*, January 1897 (Volume 11, No. 64), p.128.

<sup>50</sup> Joseph Keating, *My Struggle for Life* (London: Simpkin, Marshall Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd., 1916), see, for example, his situation at pp.271 and 273. For times he received significant reviews, see, for example, pp.195, 229, and 245.

<sup>51</sup> Gillies, *Professional Literary Agent in Britain*, p.28, and Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.3.

evidence of real-life aspirants and their motivations for writing. It will place a greater emphasis on cultural rather than socioeconomic questions, looking at why individuals wanted to express themselves through writing and, in some cases, speak to a public. Chapter 4, ‘Advice to Aspirants’, will look at the apparatus that existed to help the would-be writer in this period, whilst Chapter 5, ‘The Writings of Aspirants’, will consider what literary aspirants wrote, and what more this tells us about them. The remainder of this introductory chapter will consider the significance of this period and the lead up to it for the creation of the aspirant, and will offer some historical background to help explain how the aspirants of this study reached the point where they were able to put pen to paper.

## **PART II – THE LITERARY ASPIRANT, 1870–1914: HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

It could be argued that the aspirant was created in the period from the 1870s to the start of the First World War. This is not, of course, to say that working people did not write, or aspire to, before this point.<sup>52</sup> It was in the late nineteenth century, however, that the aspirant appears to have emerged as a figure, represented in fiction, apparently ubiquitous in real life, and discussed and catered to in books, newspapers, and magazines. Several of the reasons for this have already been mentioned, including the achievement of near-universal literacy, developments in publishing, and the emergence of a literary advice industry, all of which occurred partly, or wholly, during this period.

The exhibition and encouragement of aspiration, did not, however, occur in a vacuum, but was built on an earlier history of working-class learning, education, and cultural participation during the early to mid-nineteenth century and before. This part will touch on this earlier history, as well as considering further cultural developments during the period in question. It will examine the wider circumstances that helped foster literary aspiration and helped forge a climate in which the late-nineteenth-century aspirant could emerge and flourish.

This part is divided into two sections. The first picks out three relevant cultural developments which occurred or began before 1870: mutual improvement initiatives and mechanics’ institutes, and Samuel Smiles’ influential *Self-Help* (1859). The second focuses on the post-1870 period, and is divided into three parts. The first will consider people’s experiences and enjoyment of reading, the second will look briefly at the extension of that experience to writing,

---

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, writers in Emma Griffin’s *Liberty’s Dawn: A People’s History of the Industrial Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); John Burnett (ed.), *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1994); and John Burnett (ed.), *Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education and Family from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London: Routledge, 1994).

whilst the third will examine the inducements to read and write in this period offered by print media and adult education.

## Developments Before 1870

### MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT AND MECHANICS' INSTITUTES

Mutual improvement societies were 'ubiquitous in Victorian and Edwardian Britain', as Jonathan Rose has noted, and were built on a tradition stretching back to the 1700s.<sup>53</sup> Traditionally composed of a small or larger group of working- and lower-middle-class men, a society would typically meet regularly to hear a paper by one of its members, before participating in a discussion afterwards.<sup>54</sup> Sometimes a society consisted of a few friends getting together in a rented room to talk, or to teach each other what they knew.<sup>55</sup>

Literature would have been only one of many possible subjects discussed at mutual improvement societies and other similar gatherings.<sup>56</sup> Reading and printed material were also, though, key elements of many mutual improvement gatherings and activities.<sup>57</sup> As, sometimes was writing.<sup>58</sup> Rose notes how one society, established in Hebden Bridge in the 1850s, had a reading room with several newspaper subscriptions, 'a library of 230 volumes', and gave tuition in writing, grammar, maths, and drawing.<sup>59</sup>

Rose notes how mutual improvement societies were just one type of educational and cultural gathering organised and run at the grassroots level, with working-class individuals also establishing 'innumerable adult schools, libraries, reading circles, dramatic societies, and musical groups ... all 'belong[ing] to the mutual improvement tradition'.<sup>60</sup> Working-class libraries, reading rooms, and reading groups, founded as far back as the mid- to late eighteenth century in Scotland, enabled many working people to enjoy literature well before the later expansion of public libraries.<sup>61</sup> Rose notes how, in Carlisle, 'at least twenty-four reading rooms were founded between 1836 and 1854, with a combined total of almost 1400 members'.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, pp.58–9.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.66–7.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p.58.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, see, for example, pp.64–7.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.65–6.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.58.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.59, 65, and 73.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p.65.

In turn, these spaces and gatherings came under an even wider umbrella of ‘voluntary collectivism’, comprising friendly societies unrelated to education, where male workers grouped together ‘to offer basic health and unemployment benefits, savings banks, job referral services, and burial plans’.<sup>63</sup> As Emma Griffin reminds us, the phenomenon of working-class voluntary organisation and leadership was seen within a broad range of spheres in this period, including the religious (such as with Nonconformist churches) and the political.<sup>64</sup>

An active, two-way relationship with publications, and the use of print media as a tool to improve one’s writing – both features of the late nineteenth century – were also a part of the earlier mutual improvement tradition. Mutual improvement, Rose notes, was a fundamental part of ‘reader-written periodicals’, such as the *Dundee, Perth, and Forfar People’s Journal*, established in 1858, and boasting a readership of 250,000 by 1914.<sup>65</sup> The working-class readers of this ‘remarkably interactive’ publication ‘contributed letters, reports of meetings’ and other material, ‘as well as thousands of entries to fiction and poetry competitions’ for small monetary prizes.<sup>66</sup> Like later publications that will be touched on as part of this study, such as *The Bookman*, *The Young Man*, and *The Young Woman*, it also had a correspondence section, which ‘advised contributors on the weaknesses and strengths of rejected articles’.<sup>67</sup> Greater success in writing could also come out of mutual improvement. Rose notes how Chartist Robert Lowery ‘claimed that in his mutual improvement society of 20 men, mostly workers, half went on to become authors or public speakers’.<sup>68</sup>

Mechanics’ institutes began to be established in the early nineteenth century, and unlike the worker-run mutual improvement initiatives, were ‘founded and governed by paternalistic middle-class reformers’, although some, as Rose notes, were formed out of mutual improvement societies.<sup>69</sup> There were over 700 in existence by 1863.<sup>70</sup> ‘Initially ... designed to offer scientific instruction to workers’, institutes, like mutual improvement initiatives, could offer education in, and access to, literature.<sup>71</sup> As Alexandra Lawrie notes, ‘arts subjects were by no means overlooked’, with one contemporary noting that 572 lectures out of 1000 recently given at 43 different institutes ‘were on literary subjects’.<sup>72</sup> The same individual claimed that ‘works of fiction

---

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.58.

<sup>64</sup> Griffin, *Liberty’s Dawn*, see chapters 8 and 9.

<sup>65</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p.61.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p.64.

<sup>69</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, p.57, and Rose, *Intellectual Life*, pp.65 and 67.

<sup>70</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, p.21.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

comprised a “strikingly large” section of mechanics’ institute libraries’, with fiction and periodical literature constituting well over half the circulation of the Leeds branch in 1852.<sup>73</sup> Significantly, given the original technical focus of these institutes, this emphasis suggests that audiences had acquired a strong interest in imaginative material, but also felt a need for literary instruction and guidance.

As Griffin has noted, mutual improvement societies and mechanics’ institutes, as well as other educational initiatives such as Sunday schools, night schools, and reading groups, ‘all played their part in improving the literacy of the working man’.<sup>74</sup> From 1840, as David Mitch has observed, the literacy rate started to climb, after having been relatively stagnant for much of the previous century.<sup>75</sup> Whilst ‘one third of all grooms and half of all brides could not sign their names at marriage’ in 1840, ‘virtually all brides and grooms were able to sign the marriage register’ by the end of the century.<sup>76</sup>

Literacy skills and literary knowledge were being learnt and used in different ways and for different ends, but literacy was still being used for advancement, even if most of these individuals probably did not aspire to become authors. (Although, as shown with the *Forfar People’s Journal* above, some were indeed writing fiction.) These various educational and cultural initiatives would also have increased participants’ cultural literacy, and given them greater knowledge of the world outside their own experiences, important stages on the road to imaginative thinking and literary aspiration.

These types of initiatives are also evidence of workers taking a self-directed approach to their learning. Whether or not they read or discussed literature, these people were seeking to learn and improve themselves, and felt entitled to acquire knowledge – characteristics seen at the turn of the century with aspiring writers. It is easy to see how such individuals would also have gained a greater sense of their own value, self-worth and power. The cultivation of these qualities can be seen as part of the wider pattern that Griffin identifies in the nineteenth century, of working-class men and women starting to ‘exercise a new independence from their social superiors’, standing up for themselves in defence of their own interests, and learning the skills required to organise and lead in their communities.<sup>77</sup> Not only in terms of literacy, but in

---

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Griffin, *Liberty’s Dawn*, p.168.

<sup>75</sup> David F. Mitch, *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England: The Influence of Private Choice and Public Policy* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), p.1.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Griffin, *Liberty’s Dawn*, p.188. Also see pp.213–4.

multiple contexts, working-class people were finding their voice.<sup>78</sup> The inclusive and participatory gatherings of many Nonconformist churches, for example, involved discussion and dialogue, creating spaces where ‘working-class voices counted’.<sup>79</sup> Griffin explains:

The prayer groups, class meetings and Bible-study classes of the evangelical revival provided a place where the poor were encouraged to speak. They offered not only the opportunity of learning and practising the art of speaking in public but ... the experience of having one’s voice heard. As such they are a small yet significant step towards the creation of a working class with the confidence and ability to articulate its views.<sup>80</sup>

Voluntary organisations of all sorts were giving working-class people a sense of importance, status, and entitlement.<sup>81</sup> The general atmosphere of mutual improvement also remained strong after 1870. ‘Especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries’, Rose argues, ‘working-class culture was saturated by the spirit of mutual education’, with individuals in all types of workplaces and social spaces coming together to talk, learn, and exchange ideas and resources.<sup>82</sup>

### *SELF-HELP* (1859)

Jonathan Rose notes how the ‘chief ideologist of mutual improvement’ was Samuel Smiles.<sup>83</sup> Smiles’ hugely influential *Self-Help* appeared eleven years before the start of this period and was a continual presence over the succeeding decades, selling 250,000 copies by the end of the century.<sup>84</sup> A paean to industry and perseverance, Smiles’ comprehensive tome weaves in the life stories of hundreds of individuals to illustrate the heights that could be achieved with relentless hard work, persistence, patience, and diligence. *Self-Help* also – crucially – demonstrates the importance of humble beginnings. Not only, Smiles shows, did many of the greatest figures in history come from humble backgrounds, but their lack of luck in early life was often a fundamental ingredient in their later success. Adversity was, in many ways, an advantage, whilst wealth could be a handicap. Repeated failure, meanwhile, was not necessarily an end to success but often a necessary stage on the journey toward it. Readers were sold the message that ordinary

---

<sup>78</sup> Griffin says precisely this about the religious context, see *ibid.*, p.195.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.193–6. Also see, for example, p.190.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p.195.

<sup>81</sup> Griffin notes that involvement in educational groups and institutions gave people status and importance. See *ibid.*, p.183.

<sup>82</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, pp.83–4.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* See also Peter W. Sinnema, ‘Introduction’, in Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.vii.

people could become extraordinary, and that they, too, could achieve great things if they cultivated the correct habits.

It is easy to understand how *Self-Help* could inspire, and help individuals to realise (in both senses of the word) their capabilities. It offered role models, and showed readers that they need not settle for their lot in life, and that intellectual, social, and financial mobility was possible. Jonathan Rose writes how George Gregory (b. 1888) discovered Smiles' book as an adolescent, and went on to take evening classes, achieve a diploma, and become a trade union organiser (amongst other activities), as well as accumulating a library of over a thousand volumes.<sup>85</sup>

Authors, or at least fiction writers, are not a big part of *Self-Help*. Inventors, scientists, and others dominate. It is also a book almost entirely about the lives and achievements of men. As Peter W. Sinnema notes, only nine of the more than 750 individuals discussed are women.<sup>86</sup> These factors, however, are far less significant than the messages and qualities the book as a whole promoted. As Sinnema writes, *Self-Help* 'unambiguously celebrates individuality, autonomy, and civility, virtues central to the projects of other nineteenth-century institutions that actively encouraged cultivation of the intellectual and moral working-class self: the mechanics' institutes, public libraries, people's colleges, and lyceums'.<sup>87</sup> As will be seen below and in Chapter 4, the ethos of *Self-Help* is seen throughout the correspondence columns of *The Young Man* (founded in 1887). The magazine even featured an interview with Samuel Smiles in 1893, whilst *Self-Help* was recommended to a correspondent on at least one occasion.<sup>88</sup>

Neither was Smiles' book alone in trying to promote perseverance and inspire the reading population. Helen Corke notes how her father Alfred (b. 1851), on leaving his private school in Southgate, was given a volume titled *The Steady Aim*, 'containing biographies of successful and famous men, all of whom had begun life at the bottom of Fortune's ladder'.<sup>89</sup> Subtitled 'A Book of Examples and Encouragements from Modern Biography', and published in 1863 – presumably on the back of Smiles' success – this book was 'read and re-read' by Alfred, who 'kept it to the end of his life'.<sup>90</sup> Corke believed that it 'fixed upon his mind' the message he had got at school – that 'the road might be hard and the journey long, but integrity and

---

<sup>85</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, pp.69–70.

<sup>86</sup> Sinnema, 'Introduction', p.xxi.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p.vii.

<sup>88</sup> See *The Young Man*, March 1893, Volume 7 (1893), pp.83–5, and July 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.251.

<sup>89</sup> Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy. An Autobiography, Part I: 1882–1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp.1–2.

<sup>90</sup> See W. H. Davenport Adams, *The Steady Aim: A Book of Examples and Encouragements from Modern Biography* (London: James Hogg and Sons, 1863), and Corke, *In Our Infancy*, p.2.

determination led ultimately to fame and competence'.<sup>91</sup> There are unsurprising overlaps between the two books.<sup>92</sup> Unlike its famous counterpart, though, *The Steady Aim* devotes a chapter of 30 pages to 'Examples and Encouragements from the Lives of Eminent Authors', even if two of the four main authors featured are linguists and academics, rather than fiction writers.<sup>93</sup>

## Developments After 1870

### THE EXPERIENCE OF READING

Readers in this period benefitted from an explosion of reading material, and increasingly had the means and ability to purchase and borrow books, periodicals, and newspapers. The significant increase in the number of novels published has already been noted; there were also almost 200 daily newspapers in Britain by 1890 (more than half published outside London), up from just 14 (all in London) in 1846.<sup>94</sup> There was also a considerable increase in journals and magazines. Over 500 children's periodicals, for example, were started between the mid-1860s and 1914.<sup>95</sup>

Jonathan Rose highlights that due to an increase in incomes and a decrease in working hours, the working classes had the leisure and money to buy 'an ever expanding array of cheap newspapers and magazines' in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>96</sup> He notes that farm workers in Devon in the 1880s 'had access to few books or periodicals, beyond a weekly paper that was handed from house to house', but that by the turn of the century, 'urban workers were reading evening, Sunday and sporting papers as well as local weeklies'.<sup>97</sup> David Mitch notes the belief of several historians that newspaper reading was 'habitual' for much of the urban and rural working class by the early twentieth century.<sup>98</sup> Autobiographer Daisy Cowper (b. 1890) recalled how 'books and papers were very cheap', with 'weeklies a penny only', 'cheap paper-backs ... growing in popularity', and 'Stead's "Books for the Bairns" ... a ... delight at two-pence each'.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> Corke, *In Our Infancy*, p.2.

<sup>92</sup> The chapters and contents of *The Steady Aim*, whilst not identical, are clearly inspired by *Self-Help*; for a specific example of overlap, see the sections in both books on potter Bernard Palissy (Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.70–9 and Davenport Adams, *The Steady Aim*, pp.43–9).

<sup>93</sup> See Davenport Adams, *The Steady Aim*, pp.208–38. The linguists/academics are Dr Alexander Murray and Dr Samuel Lee.

<sup>94</sup> Joel H. Wiener, *The Americanization of the British Press, 1830s–1914: Speed in the Age of Transatlantic Journalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.102.

<sup>95</sup> Pooley, 'Children's Writing and the Popular Press', p.77.

<sup>96</sup> Rose, 'Education, Literacy, and the Victorian Reader', p.33.

<sup>97</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p.344.

<sup>98</sup> David F. Mitch, *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England: The Influence of Private Choice and Public Policy* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), p.50.

<sup>99</sup> Daisy Cowper, 'De Nobis', Burnett Archive of Working-Class Autobiographies, Brunel University, 43<sup>rd</sup> page (pages are not numbered).

In addition to cheap novels, stories in magazines were also available for those keen on fiction, whilst from the 1870s, syndication brought fiction to newspapers.<sup>100</sup> Local newspapers also carried a significant amount of poetry overall, as Hobbs and Januszewski have noted.<sup>101</sup> Those unable or unwilling to purchase their own literature could benefit from a significant growth in public libraries.<sup>102</sup> As Michelle Johansen notes, the late nineteenth century was a ‘boom period’ for libraries in Britain, particularly in London.<sup>103</sup> Over 100 were opened in London between 1887 and 1906, and these new free institutions were hugely popular, with the main libraries ‘issuing more than a quarter of a million books’ every year.<sup>104</sup> Newspapers were also sought after, with readers ‘compet[ing] for space at the stands’ where they were laid out.<sup>105</sup> Most libraries stayed open until 9:30pm or 10pm during the week and many appear to have been very well used – Croydon library in the 1890s was ‘jam-packed every evening of the week and all day on Saturdays’.<sup>106</sup>

Catherine W. Reilly has spoken of the ‘new-found pride’ that the working classes had ‘in the ability to read and write’.<sup>107</sup> There was also a clear joy in literature and the acquisition of information for many new readers. This pride and joy was perhaps even more pronounced in girls and women, who, as Rose notes, ‘were mostly excluded from mutual improvement activities before the late nineteenth century’ and, as we have seen, were not part of Samuel Smiles’ *Self-Help*, even if they, likely, formed a big part of its audience and were inspired by its message.<sup>108</sup>

Alice Maud Chase (b. 1880) learnt to read at five and said she went on to devour ‘all I could lay my hands on’, including fairy tales, reference books, school textbooks, and – more surprisingly – *The Family Herald*, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, and *The Review of Reviews*.<sup>109</sup> Daisy Cowper (b. 1890) remembered being fascinated by news of the Boer War, taking herself off to the newsagent’s for 8am ‘every fine morning’ in order to memorise the newspaper placard.<sup>110</sup> She

---

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, Cross, *Common Writer*, p.208, and Christopher Hilliard, ‘The Provincial Press and the Imperial Traffic in Fiction, 1870s–1930s.’ *Journal of British Studies* 48.3 (2009), pp.653–73.

<sup>101</sup> Hobbs and Januszewski, ‘How Local Newspapers Came to Dominate Victorian Poetry Publishing’, see, for example, pp.65, 67, and 72–4.

<sup>102</sup> Michelle Johansen, ‘The Supposed Paradise of Pen and Ink?: Self-Education and Social Mobility in the London Public Library (1880–1930).’ *Cultural and Social History*, 16:1 (2019), pp.47 and 51.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p.47.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.47 and 51.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Catherine W. Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry, 1880–1899: An Annotated Bibliography* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1994), p.x.

<sup>108</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p.73.

<sup>109</sup> Alice Maud Chase, ‘The Memoirs of Alice Maud Chase’, Burnett Archive of Working-Class Autobiographies, Brunel University, pp.15 and 20–1.

<sup>110</sup> Cowper, ‘De Nobis’, 39<sup>th</sup> page.

would then race home to tell everyone.<sup>111</sup> The news, she noted, ‘might be exhilarating or devastating, but we craved it’.<sup>112</sup> As a child, Edward Brown (b. 1880) had a ‘voracious appetite’ for books and magazines, which, he remembered, ‘gave me enjoyment and stimulated my mind’.<sup>113</sup> He had vivid memories of ‘hours’ spent ‘engrossed’ in the ‘thrilling tales’ of authors such as Jules Verne and Gordon Stables in the *Boy’s Own Paper*.<sup>114</sup> Before he was 12, he was tackling books including *Jane Eyre*, *Jude the Obscure*, two history books, and an English translation of the Qur’an, which he enjoyed comparing with the Bible.<sup>115</sup> (He decided he preferred the Bible.)<sup>116</sup>

The bookish Helen Corke (b. 1882) also experienced joy from reading, and even from choosing a book at the library – ‘what exciting chance lies in a title!’.<sup>117</sup> For Corke, whose childhood was characterised by her family’s multiple moves and her parents’ declining fortunes, reading was not only a natural passion, but also was, at times, a welcome escape from an increasingly poverty-stricken existence. After relocating from Horley to gloomy, suburban Norwood – a move prompted by the decline of her father’s shop business, and immediately followed by a visit from the bailiffs – a fascinated Corke buried herself in *The Last Days of Pompeii*, ‘tak[ing] the curtain of romance and draw[ing] it deliberately across the window of my mind to shut out undesirable reality’.<sup>118</sup> The books she read supplied ‘magic, music and mystery’ when ‘daily life’ offered ‘none of these qualities’.<sup>119</sup> Fiction had a particular attraction and power. Instructed by her father to pick, alternately, fiction and a different category of book at South Norwood public library, the young Corke is not best pleased; ‘the reading of fiction projects me into a world of romance which provides an easy escape from the dullness and limitation of daily life’.<sup>120</sup>

The imaginative impact of her reading is clear. Writing of her childhood in later life, Corke remembered how ‘the images evoked by my reading accompany me to bed’.<sup>121</sup> As a young teenager, the world of the imagination became addictive, and seemingly offered chances that real life did not. Looking back at this time, she writes, ‘what do I want? Freedom, opportunity, education, varied experience. These I can only get, it appears, vicariously, through the prompting

---

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Edward Brown, ‘Untitled’, Burnett Archive of Working-Class Autobiographies, Brunel University, page marked as p.14.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., page marked as p.13.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Corke, *In Our Infancy*, p.73.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., p.65. Also see pp.63–4 and 69.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p.73.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p.72.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p.49.

of books and my own imagination’, adding ‘reading is becoming a drug. I touch life sightlessly, observation and intelligence turned inward to imaginary scenes and people’.<sup>122</sup>

Indeed, Romantic notions not only of imagination and escapism, but of nature and beauty, crop up several times in her account.<sup>123</sup> (When leaving school, she yearns for ‘freedom from the suburban life I have grown to hate’, wanting ‘wide spaces, fresh wind blowing over green country, an idealised village life, the Downs, the sea!’.)<sup>124</sup> Whilst memoirs written decades after the time they describe can, of course, be subject to skewed impressions and misremembrances, it does appear that Corke offers an example of how Romantic culture influenced new generations. Romantic literature would have been discovered by new readers (Corke recalls her father reciting Gray’s *Elegy*, for example), whilst the *reading* of literature – the opening up of other worlds – effectively prompted Romantic thoughts and actions.<sup>125</sup>

For some youngsters a joy of literature and reading was encouraged or ignited by the external influences of family and school. Daisy Cowper had a poor upbringing, but was surrounded by reading material and by family members who enjoyed literature. Her father, who died when she was five, loved poetry; her mother was an ‘omnivorous reader’ with a ‘wide vocabulary’ who never discouraged her children from reading.<sup>126</sup> Despite their financial situation, there was always a good amount of reading material available – their house had a ‘well-filled bookshelf’ (Cowper mentions works such as *Jane Eyre* and *Les Misérables*), while her brothers brought home volumes from the lending library as well a plethora of magazines.<sup>127</sup>

Words were also an ever-present part of Helen Corke’s early life. Before she was five, she was ‘habitually read to’; from that age, she read herself.<sup>128</sup> Biblical texts and nursery rhymes ‘were memorised very early’, and ‘a measure of authority invested everything in print’.<sup>129</sup> Whilst the Bible was the central text of her childhood – ‘it was there all the time’ – a variety of books and magazines were available at home and through other channels, such as the Sunday school library and the public library.<sup>130</sup> From her father, she inherited ‘a love of poetry and literature of marked rhythm’; from her father and grandfather ‘veneration for the printed page’.<sup>131</sup> Her father had ‘a

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., pp.96–7. (NB: ‘Do’ and ‘life’ here are italicised by Corke in the original.)

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., see, for example, pp.49, 65, 72, 75, 85, and 87.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p.87.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p.58.

<sup>126</sup> Cowper, ‘De Nobis’, 2<sup>nd</sup> page, 43<sup>rd</sup> page and 44<sup>th</sup> page. Also see 7<sup>th</sup> page.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 14<sup>th</sup> page and 43<sup>rd</sup> page, and also see 45<sup>th</sup> page.

<sup>128</sup> Corke, *In Our Infancy*, p.137.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., see, for example, pp.137–8 and 52, and also 59–60 and 72–5.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., pp.viii and 137.

good memory, stored with poems’, and knew by heart the entirety of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*.<sup>132</sup> They would ‘listen on winter evenings, sitting round the fire, and learnt to chant much of its rhythm ourselves’.<sup>133</sup> Her mother – much less into books, and a believer than her young daughter would ‘sleep better’ if she ‘read less’ – nonetheless knew ‘two long pieces’ and also ‘innumerable proverbs’, which she would quote ‘on every possible opportunity’.<sup>134</sup> Books were also gifted to Corke by her father: at five – as a reward for good reading – he gave her a copy of the New Testament; for her 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, Dickens’ *Nicholas Nickleby*.<sup>135</sup>

Parental knowledge and encouragement of literature was clearly not universal in this period, however. Daisy Cowper remembers that ‘the idea ... reading was a waste of time’ was ‘rather common at the time’.<sup>136</sup> Future miner George Gregory (b. 1888), whose mother only read the Bible and whose father was illiterate, remembered ‘a feeling in the home that books were not intended for people like us’.<sup>137</sup> Nevertheless, for children brought up in homes where literature was enjoyed, parental influence could inspire a love of words and accelerate cultural literacy, encouraging the liberating belief that the world of literature was one in which they had the ability and right to participate.

School could also have the same effect. Jonathan Rose notes the joy English literature brought to several schoolchildren in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the joy of words and knowledge often forming part of a general enjoyment of school.<sup>138</sup> Rose notes how ‘even schools that did nothing else well usually managed to instil a passion for literature’, with English literature ‘the subject most often singled out for praise’.<sup>139</sup> He writes how one child was ‘so profoundly inspired’ by his headmaster’s readings of *Macbeth*, *The Pickwick Papers*, and *The Water Babies*, ‘that he spent the next forty-seven years studying with the WEA “to try to catch up”’.<sup>140</sup> Edgar Wallace (b. 1875) ‘learnt whole scenes’ from Shakespeare, repeating them ‘with gusto on every and any excuse’, and his imagination was ignited by his teacher’s reading of *The Arabian Nights*.<sup>141</sup> He remembered how ‘the colour and beauty of the East stole through the foggy windows’ of the school.<sup>142</sup> ‘Here was a magic carpet ... that transported forty ... little boys

---

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p.61.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, and also see, for example, pp.59 and 139.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., pp.71 and 137.

<sup>136</sup> Cowper, ‘De Nobis’, 43<sup>rd</sup> page.

<sup>137</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p.69.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., see for example pp.149 and 156–8.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., pp.157–8.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., p.157.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., pp.158–9.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p.158.

into the palace of the Caliphs, through the spicy bazaars of Bagdad, hand in hand with the king of kings'.<sup>143</sup> Wallace later became a novelist.<sup>144</sup>

Children could also transmit the joy of words between each other. Another author-to-be, H. M. Tomlinson (b. 1872/3) recalled how sometimes other youngsters 'could be so excited by the printed page that they passed on the fun they had found'.<sup>145</sup> It was in this way he became acquainted with Thomas Mayne Reid, and reacquainted with William Harrison Ainsworth.<sup>146</sup> Crucially, notes Rose, schools gave people the tools they needed to acquire further education – both literary and general – for themselves. 'Many alumni felt that the Board schools ... provided a solid foundation for lifetime education'.<sup>147</sup> They 'introduced the best in English literature, then set their pupils free at adolescence to read on their own'.<sup>148</sup> As well as the WEA student mentioned above, Rose cites the example of Frank Argent (b. 1899), who went on to read not only English literature, but political history, psychology, industrial administration, and other subjects by 'taking advantage of the public library and early Penguins'.<sup>149</sup>

The link between religious education and literacy should also be noted. Sunday school and visits to chapel were a regular feature of Helen Corke's childhood, and so, as a consequence, were religious books and texts. Amongst her earliest literary experiences were 'Sunday books' – read to her by her mother, until, at the age of six, she could read them herself.<sup>150</sup> They consisted of 'three story books, described on their title pages as *The Earliest Religious Teaching the Infant Mind is Capable of Receiving*'.<sup>151</sup> Later, she and her younger brothers were 'encouraged to learn texts, hymns and verses'.<sup>152</sup> The former two were 'Sunday school preparation', whilst poems formed part of 'chapel recitation contests'.<sup>153</sup>

## THE EXPERIENCE OF WRITING

For many in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, reading turned to writing. Motivations for writing will be explored further in Chapter 3, but we might briefly consider here why the new generation of readers in this period may have made the transition from reading to writing. There are several elements at play here, including Romantic ideas about creativity and

---

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p.159.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p.158.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p.162.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Corke, *In Our Infancy*, p.12.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.61.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

self-expression, but much of the answer is also tied up in what literature gave these new readers. At a basic level, it gave them opportunities for joy, entertainment, and escapism, as we have seen. It also would have encouraged imaginative thinking, and would have given them an awareness of a wider written and imaginative world – one that would have seemed to offer a great deal of further possibility, primarily in terms of knowledge, but also in terms of potential employment. The process of reading and understanding books, meanwhile, would have given young readers the confidence and self-belief to engage further with this written world and create stories for themselves.

For the young Helen Corke, writing was apparently both an immediate, natural, and enjoyable extension of reading and learning, as well as part of an imagining of a different future. She ‘began to write stories for children’ in her ‘ninth year’, and by around ten, according to her autobiography, was writing poems in a notebook and believed she was ‘going to be an author’.<sup>154</sup> ‘Poverty govern[ed] life’, but she had ‘sensed another plane of existence, one in which there is no poverty, but an ample sufficiency of desirable things’, including ‘happy people who spend their lives in writing books’.<sup>155</sup>

She remembers being determined – ‘I can and will write’ – and had a clear self-confidence.<sup>156</sup> At school, where ‘the written word is the key to appraisal’, her natural literary ability is strengthened and rewarded.<sup>157</sup> Composition classes ‘may be sheer enjoyment’, with ‘complete silence in the room but for the scratching of pens, and this I soon forget, in the pleasure of my own writing. The story or essay grows quickly ...’.<sup>158</sup> By the 7<sup>th</sup> Standard, she has ‘acquired a facility in the use of the written word’ that has won her ‘easy prizes, and an easy and undue sense of superiority’.<sup>159</sup>

When, much later, Corke eventually puts the idea of writing to one side, it is because her stories ‘fail to win acceptance’, because she is forced by financial necessity to work, and because her eventual commitments (teaching training and music-related hobbies) are too time-consuming – it is not because she thinks she shouldn’t be writing.<sup>160</sup> ‘Dreams of freedom to learn and to write’ may have been ‘illusions’ but they were not unreasonable.<sup>161</sup> (Indeed, she goes on to

---

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., pp.viii, 48 and 61.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p.73.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p.86.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p.74.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., p.86.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., pp.96 and 98.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., p.98.

publish multiple books in later life, and, in her 20s, is writing snippets, including poetry, and some prose in reaction to the suicide of her friend Herbert Macartney.)<sup>162</sup>

## INDUCEMENTS TO READ AND WRITE: PRINT MEDIA AND ADULT EDUCATION

Into the 1870s and beyond, there were additional educational elements that brought working- and lower-middle-class individuals into contact with learning, and which played a role in encouraging intellectual endeavour and in inducing people to write. Alexandra Lawrie's work on the emergence of English as an academic subject in universities examines 'non-institutional educational organisations' in this period, such as the University Extension Movement and advice articles in Edwardian print media, 'all of which', she says, 'created an extraordinarily effective ... apparatus for studying literary texts in the provinces'.<sup>163</sup> In the late nineteenth century, we can also see the general growth of a print culture that promoted and encouraged reading, correspondence, learning, and self-culture.

The first part of this section will discuss the work and arguments of two scholars, interspersed with original findings, to highlight how print media could offer an 'external' type of literary education – extramural for adults, and extracurricular for children – which both fulfilled the educational needs of readers and was conducive to the ignition of literary ambition.<sup>164</sup> The second part will then consider the University Extension Movement.

In her book, *The Beginnings of University English: Extramural Study, 1885–1910*, Lawrie devotes a chapter to the reading advice given by Arnold Bennett in popular newspaper *T. P.'s Weekly* and his 1909 book *Literary Taste: How to Form It*.<sup>165</sup> For a year between 1902 and 1903, Bennett had an anonymous column in *T. P.'s Weekly* – 'Savoir-Faire Papers' – which thereafter continued under another name.<sup>166</sup> His book, meanwhile, consisted of articles that had been published in *T. P.'s Weekly* between 1908 and 1909.<sup>167</sup> Whilst not exclusively devoted to literature, Bennett's column often included advice on reading.<sup>168</sup> Reading advice was also periodically given

---

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., see pp.172, 176, 178, 203, and 222, footnote 1.

<sup>163</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, whole book and p.1.

<sup>164</sup> The idea that print media provided an extramural education is not original, here – Lawrie talks about Bennett (in his column and book) as a 'figure in the field of extramural education' – see *ibid.*, p.115. It is also implied by Pooley's article, for example where she mentions how these columns 'prompted children to practice ... penmanship' – see Pooley, 'Children's Writing and the Popular Press', p.87.

<sup>165</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, see Chapter 5, and pp.115–6.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., pp.116 and 124.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., p.116.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., see pp.115, 118–21, 125–37, and 142–8.

by the Rev. W. J. Dawson in the 'Echoes from the Study' section of magazine *The Young Man* (1887–1915) in the early 1890s.<sup>169</sup>

As Lawrie explains, Bennett emphasised the enjoyment that reading could and should provoke.<sup>170</sup> He also recommended some texts, such as essential reference books; told readers how to acquire books cheaply; and offered advice on book choice, such as to read a spectrum of authors, rather than sticking to a favourite.<sup>171</sup> Dawson saw advice on literature as an important part of his 'Echoes' column, stating in 1891, 'we live in a reading age, and *The Young Man* would very imperfectly fulfil its mission if it afforded no guidance in this matter'.<sup>172</sup> He often made book recommendations, and discussed or aired queries about the best books to own and read, noting on one occasion that the question of the best fiction for young men 'is one of wide interest, and really merits something more than casual treatment'.<sup>173</sup> *The Young Man* also started a Reading Circle in 1893 in order to help readers choose books and navigate through the sea of reading matter being printed.<sup>174</sup> Texts selected as 'book of the month' in the first year included John Richard Green's *A Short History of the English People*, George Eliot's *Romola*, Alfred Marshall's *The Economics of Industry*, and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.<sup>175</sup> Dawson, a huge advocate of reading, self-culture, and intellectual study, urged his readers to read voraciously, noting that there was 'no excuse these days for a youth not to know the great literary masterpieces', and reminding them how lucky they were to be living in a time when books were cheap and public libraries 'common'.<sup>176</sup>

Correspondence was also an important part of both Bennett's and Dawson's columns. Lawrie notes how Bennett's Savoir-Faire Papers prompted a 'prodigious amount of correspondence' suggesting they 'had a strong impact' on *T. P.'s Weekly's* readers.<sup>177</sup> Bennett 'entered into ... convivial dialogue with his readers', and Lawrie adds that part of the reason she chose to focus on him – out of a sea of fin de siècle literary advice-givers – was 'his ability to forge a connection with his readership'.<sup>178</sup> Correspondence with readers was virtually the raison

---

<sup>169</sup> See, for example, *Young Man*, January 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.30; March 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.96; and December 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.419.

<sup>170</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, p.115.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.126–8 and 130–1.

<sup>172</sup> *Young Man*, January 1891, (Volume 5, 1891), p.18.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* See, for example, June 1891 (Volume 5, 1891), p.203; August 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.277; October 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.354; January 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.24; May 1891 (Volume 5, 1891), p.167; June 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.210; and September 1894 (Volume 8, 1894), p.321.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, December 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.428.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, February 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.65, and July 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.249; March 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), pp.101–2; April 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.142; and June 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), pp.212–4.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, December 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.419, and January 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.30.

<sup>177</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, p.117.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.115–6 and 143.

d'être of Rev. Dawson's 'Echoes' column, and something he considered 'another form of ministry'.<sup>179</sup> He wished to help his correspondents, and be of service, and noted with gratification how 'the bond between the readers of this journal and its editors has from the first been more friendly and intimate than is usually found in such relations'.<sup>180</sup> As with all correspondence columns of this period, Bennett's and Dawson's would also have encouraged people to write, even if they were only composing letters. Lawrie points out that *T. P.'s Weekly* correspondents also wrote in to share experiences and information with each other, not just with Bennett's alias 'Man Who Does'.<sup>181</sup> Dawson's correspondents also sent him fiction and poetry to critique, as will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. The widespread nature of correspondence columns generally, and the vast range of topics discussed within them, also suggests the wellspring in demand that existed for them amongst a readership that clearly desired to be active, not passive.

Bennett's reading advice was extramural both in its nature and in its approach, as Lawrie states and implies.<sup>182</sup> Bennett was a journalist and author – he was 'not ... an English literature teacher in any formal sense' and 'stood beyond institutional structures'.<sup>183</sup> Furthermore, he was critical of University Extension, and took an 'informal' approach to instruction, declining to give a 'reading list or study questions', or even, it seems (in his *T. P.'s Weekly* column, at least) specific book recommendations beyond reference texts.<sup>184</sup> Bennett wanted 'individuals to set off on their own path of reading', encouraging an independent approach of pleasure and self-discovery.<sup>185</sup>

Dawson's advice and encouragement can also be considered 'extramural', if we take Lawrie's suggestion that a non-teacher advising and corresponding with readers through print media is extramural. Dawson was, though, a clergyman, and, unlike Bennett, was strongly in favour of formal education. The subject of BA degrees came up on several occasions in the 'Echoes' column in 1892 and 1893, and Dawson was hugely supportive of readers who expressed a desire to follow a degree course.<sup>186</sup> London correspondence degrees, particularly the

---

<sup>179</sup> *Young Man*, January 1891 (Volume 5, 1891), p.16.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, January 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.29.

<sup>181</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, pp.129 and 145. See also p.116.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.115 and 118–9.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p.115.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.117–9 and 126–30 (especially 129–30). Lawrie (p.132) does mention that in his book, *Literary Taste*, Bennett gave a 335-strong list of books for 'a reasonably complete English library' (Bennett's words).

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.119, 128–30 and 137.

<sup>186</sup> See, for example, *Young Man*: March 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.98; February 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.64; April 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.140; May 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.176; and July 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), pp.244–5.

London BA, were generally the programmes mentioned, such courses presumably being both realistic and attractive to readers in many locations.<sup>187</sup>

In 1893, Dawson reported that a correspondent from Stockport ‘has got an idea in his head “all through reading *The Young Man*” ... that it would be a good thing for him to go in for his BA degree’.<sup>188</sup> Dawson was ‘glad that *The Young Man* is responsible for so excellent an idea’, adding that this man’s endeavour would undoubtedly be ‘of inestimable benefit, and may possibly fit [him] for a much more congenial position than that which he now occupies’.<sup>189</sup>

A few months later, he expressed his great admiration for a reader who was studying for a BA at the age of 50, whilst working and supporting a family, and having had health problems and other family issues.<sup>190</sup> To anyone who might ask why this man was bothering, Dawson replied that the ‘good’ of his endeavour lay ‘in the intellectual effort and training, the discipline of the mind ... involved, and the consequent broadening of the intellectual horizon’.<sup>191</sup> He held the man up as an example, stating that ‘this instance of resolve and aspiration’ in a man of this age should be ‘a stimulus’ to those younger.<sup>192</sup> Dawson noted, two months later, that this man’s story had ‘set a chord vibrating through the kingdom’.<sup>193</sup> In front of him were ‘a mass of letters ... all witnessing to the same vehement desire for self-culture’, which ‘repeatedly asked ... “If a man at fifty can contemplate this mental discipline, why cannot I?”’.<sup>194</sup> For those in London, Dawson advised, there were opportunities such as evening classes; those in more remote locations could apply to the University Correspondence College and study for London University’s exams ‘by correspondence’.<sup>195</sup> He even gave the UCC’s address in Holborn.<sup>196</sup>

Lawrie suggests that working-class and lower-middle-class individuals needed reading advice, such as that in *T. P.’s Weekly*, due to gaps in their schooling.<sup>197</sup> She notes how most students in the late nineteenth century received ‘very little in terms of literary education’, with Board school pupils usually taught from ‘Readers’ consisting of a jumbled mix of literary

---

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., see: March 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.98; April 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.140; and July 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), pp.244–5.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., February 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.64.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., May 1893, (Volume 7, 1893), p.176.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., July 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.244.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, pp.121–3.

extracts, although Rose's evidence above seems to contradict this slightly.<sup>198</sup> This generation, she suggests, were given a glimpse of literature but no more, and so were attracted to a publication such as the one penny *T. P.'s Weekly*, which covered literary topics in a 'chatty, informal manner', and offered entertainment whilst also providing 'a point of entry to the less accessible literature that had featured only very vaguely on their school curriculum'.<sup>199</sup> She also notes a need for advice amongst clerical workers – a significant part of Bennett's (and *T. P.'s Weekly's*) readership – who were keen to acquire a degree of literary taste and knowledge and 'present themselves as learned, scholarly readers', partly to refute 'the apparently common perception of clerks as "uncultured"', and partly to make themselves stand out professionally in a flooded sector.<sup>200</sup>

Dawson's 'Echoes' column in *The Young Man* had been started, he said, as 'an attempt to reply publicly, or with semi-publicity, to many questions that came to me from young men, touching upon their temptations, their aspirations and [their] culture', and these questions clearly kept coming to him in the mailbag throughout the early 1890s.<sup>201</sup> Some of the correspondence he received is also suggestive of a readership in need of literary guidance. In 1894, he noted a 'growing interest in literature' amongst his correspondents, and had commented the year before that there was 'rapidly growing into predominance a great class of young men who are eager for culture'.<sup>202</sup> Again, this suggests that readers had been introduced to literature but needed help and direction in building on that basic knowledge, but, more significantly, it indicates that new generations of young readers were yearning to learn, grow, and advance themselves, and recognised the benefits that the literary and cultural worlds had to offer them – benefits they felt entitled to.

A further point about Bennett and Dawson is worth making. Both men gave advice about fitting reading and learning into a working day. Lawrie quotes from a letter to Bennett from a City man who, after a hard day's work, felt he lacked time to devote to reading.<sup>203</sup> Bennett's somewhat unsympathetic response (he noted that 'the average City man ... does *not*

---

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., pp.122–3. For more on the general dominance of 'Readers' over subject-specific books and textbooks in schools during and before this period, see Stephen Heathorn, *For Home, Country, and Race: Constructing Gender, Class, and Englishness in the Elementary School, 1880–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), Introduction, p.8 onwards, especially pp.13–16.

<sup>199</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, p.123.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., pp.120–1, 123, and 126–7.

<sup>201</sup> *Young Man*, December 1895 (Volume 9, 1895), p.417. For instances of Dawson mentioning receiving letters to do with self-culture and literature see *ibid.*, January 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.24; July 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.244; February 1894 (Volume 8, 1894), p.66; July 1894 (Volume 8, 1894), p.250; and October 1894 (Volume 8, 1894), p.357.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., October 1894 (Volume 8, 1894), p.357, and January 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.24.

<sup>203</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, p.135.

work really hard’) advised readers to cobble together all their spare moments.<sup>204</sup> Combined, they would provide one with sufficient time to read a significant amount.<sup>205</sup> Dawson gave the same advice, on one occasion noting ‘it is astounding how much can be done with one hour’s thorough reading every day ... I believe there are few men who could not read at least three books every week, by the use of spare moments, if they tried’.<sup>206</sup> Time management also seems to have been a concern of correspondents wishing to study for degrees. ‘Ambitious’, in 1893, appears to have asked whether studying for a BSc or MA in the evenings was feasible, as well as whether such a qualification would get him a particular job.<sup>207</sup> Dawson replied that with ‘diligence and resolution’ it would be ‘quite possible’ for him to work for a degree in the evening, although it was not possible to say whether a degree would get him the post he desired.<sup>208</sup> The readers of *T. P.’s Weekly* and *The Young Man* clearly wanted advice, not just about what to read, but about *how* to read – how (and whether) to fit reading and study into a working day. Extending Lawrie’s point about readers needing literary direction, it appears that these working- and lower-middle-class individuals were also seeking advice about how to incorporate books into their lives, and how to develop their intellectual selves alongside a full-time job.

Siân Pooley’s work on children’s correspondence columns from 1876 to 1914 also shows how children’s writing became a feature of several publications in the north of England, encouraging and prompting creativity in youngsters who, as she notes, ‘belonged to a generation that created a new written culture of young working-class articulacy’.<sup>209</sup> Pooley notes the prevalence of children’s columns in the newspapers of this period, and the consequent place children had as ‘implied readers’.<sup>210</sup> She acknowledges that ‘many newspapers and periodicals published occasional texts by children in these decades’.<sup>211</sup> Her focus, though, is on publications that routinely printed material from the children themselves, such as ‘letters, poems, stories, puzzles and drawings’.<sup>212</sup>

Pooley examines six of 14 newspaper columns ‘identified that sustained a focus on publishing children’s writing and drawings for at least a decade’, including publications from Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, and Burnley – part of the provincial, weekly side of ‘new journalism’, which was the ‘most successful in attracting the expanding regular readership of an

---

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., pp.135–6.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p.136.

<sup>206</sup> *Young Man*, January 1892 (Volume 6, 1892), p.30.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., April 1893 (Volume 7, 1893), p.140.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Pooley, ‘Children’s Writing and the Popular Press’, p.83.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p.78.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., p.94.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p.78.

increasingly literate, leisured and financially secure working-class population'.<sup>213</sup> Some of these titles were 'supplements', added to Saturday newspapers from the 1870s, containing 'participatory, illustrated and lifestyle columns', which, coupled with news, made such publications attractive to those who could afford just one paper a week.<sup>214</sup> She notes both the enthusiasm for this receptive print culture in industrial working-class areas, and links this to mutual improvement in those locations:

There was a distinctive geography of the columns that became most participatory. They were most long-lasting, sophisticated and popular in industrial districts in northern England. These regions were dominated by working-class populations who earned relatively reliable and adequate weekly wages and it was to these readers that the increasingly commercialised publishing culture responded. In Lancashire and Yorkshire, working-class mutual organisation and self-improvement, often with radical political and nonconformist heritages, nurtured these columns.<sup>215</sup>

Letters – rather than fiction – are the main type of contribution Pooley discusses. Through letters, children introduced themselves and their siblings to the editor; expressed their enjoyment of the column and its contents; and contributed to 'friendly, but intense, discussions ... on points of "useful knowledge" ... such as how to grow a hyacinth'.<sup>216</sup> They also wrote for many other reasons. One boy described his day trip to Liverpool.<sup>217</sup> Another sent a 'political letter' during a general election.<sup>218</sup> Pooley notes how correspondents 'were encouraged to write not only when they had an unusual event to report, but also to describe experiences that were mundane to them'.<sup>219</sup>

Regardless of whether they were composing or reading fiction or non-fiction, however, these columns would have allowed youngsters to practise the craft of writing, and help turn it into a more routine activity, as Pooley points out, with 'the ability to write', beginning 'to be conceptualised by children as a normative but prized part of growing up'.<sup>220</sup> They also pushed children to improve their writing; Pooley mentions children striving to write well enough to be allowed (by family members) to send in a letter.<sup>221</sup> She also remarks upon children's desire to see themselves in print, as well as their parents' pride when this was achieved, suggesting the extent to which these youngsters may have identified themselves as writers, however small their

---

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.77–8, and p.96, footnote 11.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p.77, and p.96, footnote 11.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p.78, and see also 82 and 94.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.80, 83, 85, 88, and 90. See also pp.81, 86, and 92.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p.93.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.81–2.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p.93.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.87 and 89. See also p.95.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p.86.

contribution may have been.<sup>222</sup> The reach of these columns was significant. Pooley notes that ‘column societies frequently recruited more than 10,000 child members per decade’, with ‘the most sophisticated column’, in Middlesbrough, containing ‘up to six pages’ of children’s material by the 1910s, with the editor being sent ‘several hundred contributions from children each week’.<sup>223</sup>

Similar to Bennett’s and Dawson’s columns, these children’s columns, Pooley suggests, formed part of an extracurricular writing culture amongst these youngsters.<sup>224</sup> Schools were not where children were learning and practising creative writing in this period, she argues. Although, in their education, children were being exposed to words, ‘composition of all types – including letter-writing – was neglected by the curriculum before 1918’.<sup>225</sup> In the 1880s, she notes, ‘fewer than two per cent of examined children ... passed qualifications that showed that they could write a letter’.<sup>226</sup> Even in the most senior school years ‘there was no attempt to teach imaginative writing’.<sup>227</sup> It was only after the end of the First World War that all children ‘were ... taught basic composition’.<sup>228</sup> (Accounts such as Corke’s, though, show that some children were taught composition before this.)<sup>229</sup> Pooley notes:

A puzzle remains therefore as to how children acquired the capacity to pen such proficient letters, why they expressed such excitement in writing and what made them so hungry for competitions that allowed them to display these abilities. Children’s accounts of composition suggest that writing was an activity learned at home. Throughout these decades, children recorded siblings as the most important influences on their writing: they shared in practising this culture of correspondence, often inspired and competed against each other, and collaborated in crafting sentences.<sup>230</sup>

Just as publications such as *T. P.’s Weekly* and *The Young Man* were giving their readers much-needed reading and educational advice, then, the children’s columns identified by Pooley were aiding many young people’s reading and writing, and likely fostering an enjoyment of these skills. In both cases, these print media publications were, it appears, compensating for a partial exposure to reading and writing, continuing their learning and cultural awareness from where their introduction to literary education at school had left off. Later on in this study, Chapter 4

---

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p.80. Pooley does touch on this question of identity with her mentions of children’s ‘authorial selves’ – see pp.75, 85, and 90.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p.79.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., see for example, p.77.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid., p.84.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Corke, *In Our Infancy*, p.74.

<sup>230</sup> Pooley, ‘Children’s Writing and the Popular Press’, p.84.

will show how print media in this period also provided help with writing fiction, offering advice and feedback on written work that readers had submitted.

The latest in a series of developments in adult education during the nineteenth century, the University Extension Movement began in the 1870s ‘with the aim of providing tertiary teaching for those unable to go to university’.<sup>231</sup> ‘Aim[ing] to attract members of the working- and lower-middle class who were eager for self improvement’, the scheme offered ‘an extraordinarily broad palette of courses’, taught through lectures, and – for those wishing to participate – classes (usually straight after the lectures), weekly written assignments, and exams.<sup>232</sup> As Lawrie notes, Cambridge became associated with University Extension in 1873, followed by Oxford in 1878, and the Movement played a part in education going forward – several university colleges, such as Sheffield and Bristol, ‘many of which began as Extension centres, and which would later become universities proper’ were established in the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>233</sup>

The reach of the Extension Movement is clear. Lawrie writes that in the year 1891–1892, ‘the very highest point for the Movement in terms of attendance figures’, Cambridge and Oxford combined offered a total of 722 courses, teaching nearly 47,000 students.<sup>234</sup> The London Society for the Extension of University Teaching taught a further 10,512 individuals over 110 courses, while the Victoria Commission ran 102 courses reaching 5000 people.<sup>235</sup> As with mechanics’ institutes, literature featured often. Lawrie mentions the ‘sheer prevalence of Extension courses on English literature’, noting that in 1889, ‘almost a quarter of all courses conducted by the London Society were on this subject’.<sup>236</sup> She also records how lecturers in English literature, such as John Churton Collins and Richard G. Moulton, ‘were among the most prolific and well-known figures in the entire Movement’.<sup>237</sup>

Naturally, not all people would have taken Extension courses, or literature courses, and it does not appear that courses were offered in creative writing. Furthermore, many students did not participate beyond the lectures, and therefore, it appears, would not have written at all as part of their course.<sup>238</sup> (Lawrie notes how the Lent 1892 ‘Great Novelists of the Nineteenth Century’ course in Lewisham, for example, attracted 100 people for the lecture and 50 of those for the

---

<sup>231</sup> Lawrie, *Beginnings of University English*, p.56.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.56–60.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p.57.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.6–7.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p.57.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.57–8.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, p.61. Also see pp.59–60.

class afterwards, with an average of just 12 completing the written work each week.)<sup>239</sup> As with the educational initiatives already mentioned, however, the Extension Movement was another way in which working- and lower-middle-class individuals would have been exposed to literature and learning, things that may well have prompted their own creative writing.

We can see, then, how a variety of developments from the 1870s, following on from earlier changes, created an environment in the late nineteenth century that was uniquely conducive to the emergence of the aspirant writer. Mass literacy, occurring on the back of a tradition of mutual improvement and working-class cultural participation, immediately created new readers who had not only the tools and opportunities to read and write, but the knowledge and ambition to aspire to literature. There were also inducements for them to read and write in the wider culture. The next chapter will begin to explore, in greater depth, the literary environment these aspirants faced. It will consider the images of writers and writing that were presented in newspapers, novels, and other literature during this period, and the extent to which these representations actually reflected the lives and experiences of this new literate population.

---

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p.61.

## CHAPTER 2 – THE ASPIRANT IN FICTION

‘We all write; we all want to write.’  
*The Pen and the Book* (1899)<sup>1</sup>

Reviewing Walter Besant’s autobiography on the day of its publication in 1902, the *Daily Mail* noted how one couldn’t find a more ‘entrancing’ subject than the career of a successful novelist ‘in these days, when every adult member of the British Empire hopes to publish at least one novel’.<sup>2</sup> Another piece referred to ‘these times ... when every mortal is diving daily into the inkpot’.<sup>3</sup> Yet another talked about ‘the many who are every year seeking a royal road to literature’, describing the ‘number of people who threaten to go into authorship’ as ‘legion’.<sup>4</sup> Contrasting mid-century with the 1880s present, Charlotte Riddell’s novel, *A Struggle for Fame* (1883), meanwhile, lamented the ‘days that seem gone so long! ... when all the world had not begun to write’.<sup>5</sup>

In this period, which had seen huge expansion of both the reading public and the publishing industry, there was a sense that there were countless people trying to write. In newspaper pieces about authorship, the term ‘literary aspirant’ was not uncommon.<sup>6</sup> An 1891 article entitled ‘The Literary Aspirant’ even described the physical traits and behaviours of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Walter Besant, *The Pen and the Book* (London: Thomas Burleigh, 1899), p.5.

<sup>2</sup> ‘How to Succeed as a Novelist. Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant.’ *Daily Mail*, 26 March 1902, p.4. The *Dundee Advertiser* also noted that ‘the longing to write fiction seems to be well-nigh universal’. See ‘Hamlet, on being asked ‘What do you read?’ answered...’ *The Dundee Advertiser*, 3 April 1893, p.5.

<sup>3</sup> ‘What a wonderful age we live in...’ [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 5 July 1907, p.3.

<sup>4</sup> ‘A Guide to Authorship.’ *The Daily News* [London], 17 September 1890, p.5.

<sup>5</sup> Charlotte Riddell, *A Struggle for Fame* (Dublin: Tramp Press, 2014), p.163. See also Linda H. Peterson, ‘Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*: Myths of Authorship, Facts of the Market.’ *Women’s Writing*, 11.1 (2004), pp.101–2.

<sup>6</sup> For examples of the phrase being used (either in the title or content of pieces), see: ‘The Literary Aspirant.’ *The Inverness Courier and General Advertiser for the Counties of Inverness, Ross, Moray, Nairn, Cromarty, Sutherland & Caithness* from *The Globe*, 9 January 1891, p.3; ‘Hints to Literary Aspirants.’ *The Woman’s Herald*, 24 August 1893, p.423; ‘Advice to Literary Aspirants.’ *The Woman’s Herald*, 7 September 1893, p.455; ‘Mark Twain to Literary Aspirants.’ *Young Folks Paper. For Old and Young Boys and Girls*, 17 April 1886, pp.246–7; ‘Mr Besant and Literary Aspirants.’ *The Lancashire Evening Post*, 23 January 1888, p.2; ‘Experiences of a Literary Aspirant.’ *The Falkirk Herald and Linlithgow Journal* from *Chambers’s Journal*, 23 July 1874, p.8; ‘The Literary Aspirant.’ *The Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, 30 October 1894, p.8; ‘How Literary Aspirants are Swindled.’ *The Illustrated Police News, Law Courts and Weekly Record*, 7 April 1894, p.4; ‘Literary Aspirant and Her Tutor. Serious Allegations of Fraud.’ *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 22 April 1894, p.3; ‘The Literary Aspirant and his Publishers. A Swindle Exposed.’ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 1892, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; ‘A very useful book to literary aspirants...’ *The Framlingham Weekly News. Railway Gazette and East Suffolk Advertiser*, 11 January 1908, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; ‘The Education of Novelists.’ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 March 1894, p.3; ‘The writer who enlivens the pages of the ‘National Review’ with the confessions of a ‘Minor Novelist’...’ [Under ‘Books and Bookmen’], *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 September 1912, p.6; ‘Nursery for Novelists. Miss Florence Marryatt’s [sic] Scheme.’ *Daily Mail*, 11 January 1897, p.3; ‘The woes of the minor novelist have been forcibly illustrated...’ [Under ‘Literary Notes’], *The Observer* [London], 6 June 1909, p.5; ‘Furnishing Fictionists.’ *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 24 December 1887, p.292; ‘How to Succeed as a Novelist. Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant.’ *Daily Mail*, 26 March 1902, p.4; ‘The Market in Fiction. A Guide for Would-Be Novelists.’ *The Northern Whig*, 31 May 1899, p.8; and ‘It may seem hardly necessary to encourage people to become novelists...’ *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 November 1903, p.6.

would-be writer.<sup>7</sup> An ‘often ... mild-mannered person, with a stoop, pale cheeks, and a pair of spectacles’, it paints the aspirant as an irritating and inconsiderate ‘terror’ who accosts his friends and keeps them stood in the middle of the road ‘to hear the plot of a prospective novel’.<sup>8</sup>

The apparent ubiquity of the aspirant can also be seen in the services and literature seemingly directed at him. From the 1870s, a literary advice industry began to emerge, consisting of literary agents, writing handbooks, and publications such as the *Writers’ and Artists’ Year-Book*, offering addresses and submission details for large lists of publishers and publications. Newspapers’ and magazines’ general coverage of the topic of authorship, meanwhile – from pieces on novel-writing to discussions about earnings – clearly catered to existing aspirants and, in assuming their audience’s interest in such content, treated all their readers as potential writers. This period also saw an increase in novels about writers, as John Goode and Christopher Hilliard have noted.<sup>9</sup> Some of these, such as Walter Besant’s *All in a Garden Fair* and Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*, both published in 1883, featured aspirants.

Explanations as to why there were thought to be so many aspirants include the expansion of the reading public (readers demanded sub-standard work which new writers then sought to supply) and the wealth and fame of successful authors (the earnings of a select few inspired people to try and write).<sup>10</sup> As to why the phenomenon of the aspirant was discussed and is so visible in this period, answers may be found in wider beliefs, debates, and fears to do with mass literacy, the state of the market, and fiction writing itself.

This chapter will explore how writers and writing were represented in this period, and what those representations reveal. It will unpack the ideas, assumptions, and tropes attached to these representations in newspapers, novels, and other literature. Untangling these representations forces us to think about how the experiences of *aspirant* writers differed from those of more established writers, and to consider to what extent representations of writing and writers actually reflected aspirants.

Starting with the most well-known fictional representation of writing in this period, George Gissing’s *New Grub Street* (1891), Part I will illustrate how this ‘classic study of poverty-

---

<sup>7</sup> “The Literary Aspirant.” *Inverness Courier*, 9 January 1891, p.3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> John Goode, ‘Introduction’, in George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.xv, and Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p.15.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, “Hamlet, on being asked ‘What do you read?’ answered...” *Dundee Advertiser*, 3 April 1893, p.5, and Leopold Wagner, *How to Publish a Book or Article, and How to Produce a Play; Advice to Young Authors* (London: Redway, 1898), p.4.

stricken authorship' does not, importantly, represent *aspiring* writers or their literary environment.<sup>11</sup> Part II will then show how three common themes within the wider literary representation of writing were all also somewhat limited or short-sighted in their understandings of what fiction writing was, and who it was for. Extending this further, Part III will examine two more complex interlinked debates relating to the representation of writing and writers.

## PART I

### *New Grub Street* (1891)

The most famous fictional representation of the writer in this period comes from George Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891). The novel features protagonist Edwin Reardon, a struggling writer who suffers a painful downward spiral, ending in his own death. This is contrasted sharply with the upward trajectory of his enthusiastic and egotistical journalist friend, Jasper Milvain. With its focus on one character's artistic struggle, the novel can be considered a *Künstlerroman* (or artist novel), one of a number of categories within the wider *Bildungsroman* genre.<sup>12</sup>

Both the genre and the term 'Bildungsroman' have been debated, as Sarah Graham has noted, although the word is broadly used to describe novels depicting a 'journey from youth to maturity', or a process of formation, growth, or development.<sup>13</sup> Richard Salmon has described *New Grub Street* as a *Bildungsroman* and has also briefly linked it to earlier Victorian accounts of literary apprenticeship.<sup>14</sup> The novel's identity as a *Bildungsroman*, however, does perhaps encourage misconceptions of its characters. For whilst Reardon, Biffen, and others struggle to survive, experience poverty, and aspire to success, they are *not* literary beginners.<sup>15</sup> Demonstrating this is crucial to understanding the ways in which the novel does not represent

---

<sup>11</sup> Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875–1914* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd, 1989), p.18.

<sup>12</sup> Sarah Graham, 'Introduction', in Sarah Graham (ed.), *A History of the Bildungsroman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p.2. See also p.283, notes 5 and 6. Gerald Jay Goldberg sees the *Bildungsroman* and *Künstlerroman* more as adjacent types of fiction. See Gerald Jay Goldberg, 'The Artist-Novel in Transition'. *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 4.3 (1961), p.12. Richard Salmon briefly refers to *New Grub Street* as a *Bildungsroman*. See Richard Salmon, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp.219–20.

<sup>13</sup> Sarah Graham, 'Introduction', pp.1–2. Gerald Jay Goldberg stated that the *Künstlerroman* does not necessarily have a young hero, though, just an artist hero. See Goldberg, 'The Artist-Novel in Transition', p.12.

<sup>14</sup> Salmon, *Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, pp.219–20.

<sup>15</sup> A minor exception here is Jasper Milvain's two sisters, Maud and Dora, although as they benefit from Jasper's literary knowledge and advice, they arguably start their writing careers from a higher rung of the ladder.

aspirant writers, and how it is therefore not as representative of the late-nineteenth-century literary world as it has traditionally been seen to be.<sup>16</sup>

Firstly, Reardon has already published at least two books before the novel even opens.<sup>17</sup> Crucially, he and other key characters, such as Milvain, Whelpdale, and Alfred Yule, are professionals writing or editing for a living, however precarious that living may be.<sup>18</sup> (Reardon and Biffen spend much of the novel destitute.) Indeed, the gulf between these characters and ordinary aspirants is evident at several points throughout the novel. Whelpdale earns money *advising* literary aspirants, pens a writing manual, and later becomes a literary agent; Alfred Yule hopes to establish a periodical; whilst Milvain and Reardon's brief discussion of Whelpdale's dubious new scheme as a literary adviser mentions how the latter is at least capable of correcting the grammar of 'literary aspirants' (Milvain's quote marks), clearly not for a moment seeing themselves as part of that group.<sup>19</sup>

When Whelpdale speaks of establishing a *Tit-Bits*-like paper, meanwhile, he says he would pitch it to 'the quarter-educated ... the great new generation that is being turned out by the Board schools, the young men and women who can just read, but are incapable of sustained attention'.<sup>20</sup> Whelpdale clearly sees himself as miles away from that stratum of the population, as do Milvain and Dora, to whom Whelpdale is speaking. Such a remark even shows a hint of the negativity toward lower-middle-class aspiration and "'upstart" intellectuals' that Michelle Johansen identifies in early-twentieth-century novels such as Forster's *Howards End* (1910) and Orwell's *Keep the Aspidochelone Flying* (1936).<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Gissing is known for having had, as John Halperin notes, an 'undiluted hatred of the lower classes' and an 'intellectual antipathy' towards them.<sup>22</sup>

While the novel depicts (some) struggling and unsuccessful writers, then, it does not depict beginners. Not only does it not depict beginners, it also, as a consequence, does not reflect the literary experiences of real-life aspirants or the aspects of the literary world that

---

<sup>16</sup> Robert A. Colby notes, for example, how Walter Besant saw *New Grub Street* as a truthful representation. See Robert A. Colby, 'Harnessing Pegasus: Walter Besant, 'The Author' and the Profession of Authorship.' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 23.3 (1990), p.116.

<sup>17</sup> Milvain refers to Reardon's having authored *On Neutral Ground* and *The Optimist*. See George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.6–7.

<sup>18</sup> When Reardon does take a job as a clerk, he has effectively given up with writing.

<sup>19</sup> Gissing, *New Grub Street*, pp.165, 216, 313–9, and 457.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.460.

<sup>21</sup> Michelle Johansen, "'The Supposed Paradise of Pen and Ink': Self-Education and Social Mobility in the London Public Library (1880–1930)." *Cultural and Social History*, 16:1 (2019), p.54.

<sup>22</sup> John Halperin, *Gissing: A Life in Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp.10 and 29. Also quoted in Abigail Sage, 'The Estrangement of the Artist: The Künstlerroman, the Writer and the Painter in England, 1880–1903.' (Unpublished master's thesis), Birkbeck, University of London, 2014, p.39.

literary beginners would have engaged with. Gissing's characters are educationally, intellectually, and practically past the point where they would be asking for help about how to write and enter the literary profession. They already know how to write, and are already part of the literary world in terms of their experience, knowledge, and connections. The literary environment they inhabit, meanwhile, is linked to the whole thrust of the novel.

Gissing depicts a Darwinian world in which literature has become a trade, and those unable or unwilling to write on demand for all markets face personal and professional ruin. The novel is chiefly concerned with the dichotomy between trade writing and 'proper' literature, and Gissing's negative interpretation of this. Milvain is concerned with winning money and success from the trade of writing; Reardon with surviving in a marketplace run on a type of work he cannot deliver. Milvain, willing and able to write as the market requires, is the optimistic, modern 'literary man of 1882'; Reardon is of an earlier age, unable and unwilling to work for the market and make the market work for him.<sup>23</sup> *What* the characters write, rather than the *fact* that they are writing, is key; Reardon is doomed to failure not because he cannot write, but because he cannot write the popular material that the commercialised literary world requires of him.

While Gissing's pessimistic vision of the literary world is based in fact, its focus – on the Reardons and the Milvains and the difference between them – naturally excludes aspects of the wider late-nineteenth-century literary picture, as well as opportunities and possibilities within it. If we look at the novel from the aspirant's viewpoint, the 'possibilities' ignored might include the huge growth in the number of outlets for written work, or the opportunities – perceived or real – within the emerging literary advice industry.<sup>24</sup> For those just starting to write, for those writing for the joy of it, and for those writing alongside another occupation, the literary world and the changes going on within it may have looked very different to how they appeared to Gissing or the fictional Reardon. Aspirants' experience of it, too, would have been different. At least some aspirants in this period were sending their work to magazines to get feedback, or were using correspondence columns to gain advice. Others may have bought a literary handbook or attended a lecture on fiction writing. This is not the literary environment represented in *New Grub Street*.

Supporting this line of thinking, Adrian Poole has argued that while Gissing is correct in the general changes he identifies as having happened – such as shifts in the 'status of "quality" art and the minority artist' – his vision of a world split between Art and Trade, good and bad,

---

<sup>23</sup> Gissing, *New Grub Street*, pp.8–9.

<sup>24</sup> See Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.12 and 15.

and winners and losers, is a simplistic one that ignores the complexity of the changes going on in the late nineteenth century, and creates an overall picture that is historically inaccurate.<sup>25</sup>

Poole emphasises that, contrary to the impression given by Gissing, the innovations of the 1890s were not just geared towards taking advantage of a new mass readership. New publishers, such as Heinemann, were, in fact, ‘willing to recognise the existence of different levels and types of market’, and were therefore more beneficial to minority writers than some of the existing firms.<sup>26</sup> They also gave support to new writers.<sup>27</sup> Poole argues that the ‘image of a unified, homogeneous Reading Public, tied to the centralising institution of the circulating library was disintegrating into more encouraging fragments than Gissing’s version of anarchic competition for the pockets of the “new generation” suggests’.<sup>28</sup> He adds that the ‘major limitation’ of *New Grub Street* is that Gissing’s steadfast belief in the immorality of ‘new men’ such as Heinemann blinds him to the ‘possibilities’ and ‘energies’ contained within the changes they have helped bring about, possibilities ‘not necessarily related to the virtues and vices of the individuals apparently “in control”’.<sup>29</sup> While Gissing’s image of ‘an absolute dichotomy between Art and Trade, “culture” and “progress”’ is what gives the novel its power, it results in ‘an evasion of the complexity of historical change’.<sup>30</sup>

Part II will suggest how the wider literary representation of writing also involved limited ideas about what fiction writing was, why it was done, and who the ‘literary aspirant’ was. It will show how a commercially oriented model of fiction writing as a profession dominates representations of writing and aspirants in this period. It will consider three linked aspects of these representations: the dominance of the notion of the literary profession; an emphasis on the commercial aspects of writing; and the trope of the young writer. All of these themes represent ways in which Poole’s argument about Gissing’s ‘evasion of the complexity of historical change’ might be extended, with respect to the aspirant, in other novels and literature from this period.

---

<sup>25</sup> Adrian Poole, *Gissing in Context* (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp.144–7 and 155.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.144–5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p.144.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.145–6.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.146.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

## PART II

### The Literary Profession

‘I heard Mr Massey explaining to Gertrude the folly and wickedness of Allen in giving up his place and prospects in the City for the penniless and despised profession of letters.’  
Claire Philipon, *All in a Garden Fair* (1883)<sup>31</sup>

One of the key features of the representation of writing in this period is the dominance of discussion of the ‘literary profession’. Fiction writing is largely discussed and understood within this discourse, rather than as a standalone activity that might be pursued for pleasure rather than commercial gain. The profession is also often depicted as a vocation or full-time pursuit. Writing is generally equated with making a living from literature. It is presented, largely, as part of a professional identity, rather than simply as an activity, even when aspirants are being discussed.

Newspaper articles about authorship repeatedly treat writing as a profession rather than an activity. Whilst this is most apparent from headings such as ‘Writing as a Profession’ and ‘Annie S. Swan on Fiction Writing as a Profession’, the content of pieces, including pieces discussing or directed at aspirants, also referred to writing in this way.<sup>32</sup> Prompted by Anthony Trollope’s comment that one only needs paper and ink to take up literature, a piece in the *Illustrated London News* makes numerous references to the ‘profession’.<sup>33</sup> It compares these modest start-up requirements to those of other professions (like the architect who needs an office), calls literature ‘as exacting a profession as medicine or the law’, and notes how a wise man would encourage a youth to choose anything else as a profession, whether work at the loom or a life with a musket over his shoulder.<sup>34</sup>

Another piece refers to the ‘literary aspirant who sets out to make fiction his profession’; yet another, directed at aspirants, uses the word ‘profession’ several times; whilst a further piece advised that unless an ‘aspiring amateur’ was exceptionally talented, ‘the career of letters’ was ‘about the last which he ought to adopt’.<sup>35</sup> A report of a lecture on fiction writing by novelist Annie S. Swan, meanwhile, noted how she gave advice to youngsters ‘desirous of entering the

---

<sup>31</sup> Walter Besant, *All in a Garden Fair* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1883), Volume III, p.166.

<sup>32</sup> “Writing as a Profession.” *The Shields Daily News*, 11 August 1893, 2<sup>nd</sup> page, and “Annie S. Swan on Fiction Writing as a Profession.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 17 January 1891, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

<sup>33</sup> “Paper and Ink.” *The Illustrated London News*, 6 September 1884, p.226.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> “The woes of the minor novelist have been forcibly illustrated...”, *Observer*, 6 June 1909, p.5; “Hints to Literary Aspirants.” *Woman’s Herald*, 24 August 1893, p.423; and “The Gains of Authorship.” *The Gloucestershire Echo* from *The Spectator*, 21 August 1886, 4<sup>th</sup> page. See also “Mr Besant and Literary Aspirants.” *Lancashire Evening Post*, 23 January 1888, p.2.

profession of literature'.<sup>36</sup> Even though Swan touched on the idea of writing as the 'recreation of leisure hours', the news article still gives an overriding sense of writing as a profession.<sup>37</sup> Other example pieces refer to the 'novel writing profession' and the 'vocation of fiction-writing'.<sup>38</sup>

The notion of writing as a profession or vocation also appears in novels about aspirants and writing. Gissing's *New Grub Street*, as established, is about characters trying to make a living out of literature, even though they are not strictly aspirants. In other novels from this period, aspirants are depicted joining the literary profession full-time, often drawing a significant line under their previous existence in the process. Aspirant Allen Engledew, in Walter Besant's novel *All in a Garden Fair* (1883), begins his working life as a clerk at London silk firm Brimage and Waring. After working there for some time, he is offered a promotion as the company's representative in China. He not only turns down the role, but walks out of his job entirely, declaring to his horrified and incredulous mother, 'I am going to give up my post ... and shall try another line of life altogether. I shall try to live by literature'.<sup>39</sup>

Engledew moves to London, even though, as a clerk, he had simply travelled there daily from his home near Hainault Forest. In London, he spends time at a tavern, meets the knowledgeable Ouvry and, through him, Ouvry's cousins, elderly writer Gertrude and the young Isabel, all literary people who become Engledew's friends and mentors.<sup>40</sup> The pursuit of literature here, it is implied, involves not only the activity of writing, but a move to a different place, and association with different people. For Glenarva (Glen) Westley, aspirant heroine of Charlotte Riddell's, *A Struggle for Fame* (1883), the physical move is even greater.<sup>41</sup> The well-born but poor Glen moves to London from Northern Ireland in an effort to become an author to support her ailing father. London is seen to offer greater opportunities, even if the city proves

---

<sup>36</sup> "Annie S. Swan on Fiction Writing as a Profession." *Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 17 January 1891, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> See "Novel writing is not, after all, such a gloriously profitable business..." [Under 'Notes on News'], *The Sportsman*, 12 November 1892, p.4, and "The writer who enlivens the pages of the 'National Review' with the confessions of a 'Minor Novelist'..." *Manchester Guardian*, 21 September 1912, p.6. For other pieces that discuss or mention fiction writing as a profession, see, for example: "Nursery for Novelists. Miss Florence Marryatt's [sic] Scheme." *Daily Mail*, 11 January 1897, p.3; "The Education of Novelists." *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 March 1894, p.3; "Can the 'Average Author' Live?" [Under 'Gossip about Books'], *Daily Mail*, 22 September 1899, p.3; and "Novel Writing Not Remunerative." *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 14 November 1892, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

<sup>39</sup> Besant, *All in a Garden Fair*, Volume I, p.303.

<sup>40</sup> By the novel's end, the reader is led to believe that Engledew and Isabel are shortly to admit their love for one another and to marry.

<sup>41</sup> Glenarva Westley will henceforth be referred to as 'Glen', rather than by her surname, as her surname changes part-way through Riddell's novel (to Logan-Lacere, her married name).

detrimental to her creativity, as Helena Ifill observes, and ultimately becomes so linked to toil and suffering that she longs ‘to get away’ from it ‘for ever’.<sup>42</sup>

*A Struggle* also depicts writing as a profession. As Ifill has noted, Glen ‘works tirelessly to become a professional novelist’, whilst the book ‘concerns the worldly themes of business and professionalism for which Riddell was famous’.<sup>43</sup> The novel explicitly describes Glen’s adoption of the profession (referring to the ‘blessed blissful summer days when she took to writing as a profession’), and spends significant time showing us the literary profession through the majority of its scenes and characters.<sup>44</sup> We see Glen’s visits to publishers, her rejections, and her sadness and self-doubt, as well as her successes.<sup>45</sup> Riddell’s book is peopled with publishers (such as Vassett, Pedland, Felton, and Laplash); those who work for publishers (such as Vassett’s assistant, Pierson); writers or would-be writers (such as Lady Hilda Hicks and Miss Yarlow, as well as Glen); and several other figures connected with literature (including the Dawtons; fellow Irish immigrant Bernard Kelly, who becomes a writer, then an editor; and failed aspirant Mat Donagh, who lets his family believe he is a writer, but in fact works as a literary advertising canvasser).<sup>46</sup> Even if it is the mid- (rather than late) Victorian publishing scene that is represented by Riddell, literature as a professional endeavour is what we are shown, and there is little sense of the intrinsic joy and value of creativity, or of Glen’s writing being much more than a money-making exercise.<sup>47</sup>

In *A Struggle* there is also a sense of writing as a vocation. As Linda H. Peterson points out, Glen ‘dedicates herself to authorship in a “scene of vocation” that echoes several Romantic auto/biographies’.<sup>48</sup> One night, whilst looking out to sea, bathed in moonlight, she suddenly resolves to become an author as a way of fixing her impoverished family’s situation, and immediately opens her desk to start writing.<sup>49</sup> Peterson views this as part of the book’s ‘engage[ment] with the symbolic myth-making about authorship that occurred during the Victorian period’.<sup>50</sup> She argues that ‘Riddell reinscribes myths of female authorship made famous in Gaskell’s *Life [of Charlotte Brontë]* and other early Victorian memoirs of women authors: myths

---

<sup>42</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, pp.120–1 and 398, and Helena Ifill, ‘The Female Professional as Orphan in Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*.’ *Victoriographies*, 9.2 (2019), p.134.

<sup>43</sup> Ifill, ‘The Female Professional as Orphan’, pp.129–30.

<sup>44</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, p.90. See also p.329.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, see, for example, pp.46–50, 94–5, 119, 122, 184, 191–2, 200–4, 239, 242, 254–5, 285–6, 323, 335–42, 346, and 391–6.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, see, for example, pp.18–19, 44–56, 69–70, 139, 141–2, 154–64, 191–3, 297, 299, 308, 310–2, 314–5, 319, 321, 340–1, and 385–9, and Peterson, ‘Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*’, pp.106–7.

<sup>47</sup> See Peterson, ‘Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*’, p.106. Also see pp.100–1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.102–3.

<sup>49</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, pp.88–9. See also Peterson, ‘Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*’, p.103.

<sup>50</sup> Peterson, ‘Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*’, p.100.

of genius and vocation, of solitude and loneliness, of domesticity and inspiration'.<sup>51</sup> Peterson suggests that Riddell's use of 'earlier, Romantic accounts' in a novel of the 1880s, after moves towards professionalisation in writing, may 'seem historically out of sync, even nostalgic', but was, in fact, an effort 'to lay claim to the symbolic capital those myths accrued, as well as to test the validity of the myths'.<sup>52</sup>

Peterson also notes how Riddell 'establishes a contrast between an amateur "then"' (the 1850s, when *A Struggle* is set) 'and a professional "now"' (the 1880s).<sup>53</sup> In the present era, writers are 'market-conscious', and – as the book's narrator notes – even 'the smallest child has some idea of "how books are made"'.<sup>54</sup> In the 1850s, however:

'the ordinary details of the literary profession' ... were unknown, unwritten about, and thus unavailable to aspiring writers like Glenarva Westley ... When young Glen asks the publisher, Mr Vassett, 'If you only tell me what I ought to do I will try to set about it at once', he claims that he cannot give such advice: 'If I could publish a key to the problem you want to solve[,] it would sell so well, I should never need to bring out another book. The land you want to enter has no itinerary – no finger posts – no guides.' ... Authorship is *terra incognita* – or so Vassett claims.<sup>55</sup>

Peterson notes that by the 1880s and 1890s, 'as Riddell well knew', there were books, pamphlets and print media articles on authorship, from Emily Faithfull's *Choice of a Business for Girls: Artistic and Intellectual Employments* (1864) to Emily Crawford's 'Journalism as a Profession for Women' (1893) in the *Contemporary Review*.<sup>56</sup> Even in the 1850s, there were some available models for aspiring female authors, says Peterson, in the form of autobiographies, memoirs, and anthologies of writers, and articles about them.<sup>57</sup>

As we have already seen, and will see further, however, the idea of authorship as a vocation still very much existed at the end of the nineteenth century, nor did aspirants cease to ask what they 'ought to do' in the era of literary manuals when publishing had been somewhat demystified. Ideas of genius and naivety – touched on by Peterson with respect to the Brontës and the fictional Glen – are also evident in the representation of aspirants and writing in this

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., pp.100–1.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.101.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.101.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p.102.

period, as will briefly be seen later in this chapter.<sup>58</sup> (Silvana Colella also comments on Glen's 'literary genius' and the novel's 'cast[ing]' of her 'as the inheritor of Romantic subjectivity'.)<sup>59</sup>

It is also worth mentioning here that the Romantic idea of moving to London seems to have persisted well into the twentieth century. Hilliard notes that one of the draws of local writers' circles and writing magazines later, particularly for women with family commitments, was the engagement with writing they offered without the need to move to the capital. He writes that 'the advice industry and circle speakers held out the promise that those who could not relocate to Fleet Street could still become published writers by studying at home or with like-minded local enthusiasts. Less able to make the classic artistic move of packing up and heading to London to try their fortune, women had all the more reason to embrace potential surrogates like writers' magazines and writers' circles'.<sup>60</sup>

Emma Jocelyn, protagonist of Rhoda Broughton's *A Beginner* (1894), is different from Engledew, Westley, and Reardon. She is wealthy, and enjoys a comfortable life in the country involving large houses and dinner parties.<sup>61</sup> Whilst Jocelyn only spends time in London, rather than upping sticks there completely, and does not apparently need to earn a living – literary or otherwise – Broughton's book still treats fiction writing in a professional sense. *A Beginner* opens with Jocelyn receiving from her publishers the first copies of her newly published three-volume novel, *Miching Mallecho*.<sup>62</sup> The rest of the story revolves around the novel's largely critical reception amongst Jocelyn's friends and family, and reviewers.<sup>63</sup> We do not see Jocelyn writing the novel, nor is there any indication that this activity was worthwhile in itself or brought her much in the way of personal reward or benefit. All we see is the book's brief life and death, with its worth bound up in its fate post-publication.

The writing manuals and handbooks of the late Victorian period also, unsurprisingly, discussed writing in professional terms. It is also evident that the term 'professional' was sometimes understood in very clear terms to be someone earning a *living* – not just money – from writing, and writing full-time. Lamenting what they saw as the nonsensical definitions of 'professional' and 'amateur', writing magazine *The Scribbler* explained:

---

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp.100, 102, 104–5, and 108.

<sup>59</sup> Silvana Colella, *Charlotte Riddell's City Novels and Victorian Business: Narrating Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2016), see Epilogue, paragraph following footnote 26 (accessed via electronic legal deposit).

<sup>60</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.45.

<sup>61</sup> See Rhoda Broughton, *A Beginner* (Gloucester: Dodo Press, 2008), for example p.151 for mention of her well-off status, and p.129 for mention of her living in the country. (She does spend time in London, though, as p.129 shows.)

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., pp.3–4.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., see, for example, pp.41–3, 55–7, 65–8, 84–5, 89–90, 115–6, and 129.

... the vast bulk of professionals systematically sneer at amateurs' attempts at writing ... for no other reason than that they are not paid for their efforts ... Scarcely one of our leading amateur writers but has, at one time or the other, had his or her pieces in a London magazine ... But because they have sent some of their sketches or verses up to a London magazine, and the editor ... has forwarded a cheque for one, two, or more guineas, are they then professionals? Decidedly not, for to be a professional writer a man or woman must give up his or her whole time to writing, and adopt literature as a vocation ... If one man is forced by circumstances ... to earn his cheese and bread by writing for the press, he is denominated a professional; while another, in a good position in life, ardently loving literature for its own sake, writes during his spare hours, often far into the small hours of the night, and is dubbed an amateur. Herein lies the difference – in one case lucre is the active power, in the other, love.<sup>64</sup>

Another piece referred to the same distinction:

... the real difference between amateur and professional is this: the former writes for love, the latter for money – the former for fame, popularity, or pleasure; the latter for a living ... An amateur need not necessarily be either young, inexperienced, or a beginner; on the contrary, he may be an old, well-known, and popular writer; but if literature be his amusement, not his livelihood, he is still an amateur.<sup>65</sup>

Not only was writing depicted as a profession, then, but what this meant was adopting writing as a full-time occupation – as one's sole source of income. As a consequence of these understandings, one can detect clear dividing lines in some literature – both between literary work and non-literary work; between literary and non-literary people; and between different *types* of literary people (as between professionals and amateurs, above).

In *All in a Garden Fair*, there is a clear sense of separation between literary and non-literary work. In his money-obsessed village, Allen Engledew is considered a 'fool' for throwing away his City prospects to follow 'mad' literary ambitions.<sup>66</sup> Now a 'writing person' rather than a respectable young businessman like his friend Will Massey, Engledew is pitied, given a 'condescending salute' by Massey's father, and written off as a 'literary scrub' by another village elder.<sup>67</sup> Engledew's mother, meanwhile, is hostile, unsupportive, and dismisses a copy of her

---

<sup>64</sup> *The Scribbler*, Volume 2, July 1877, pp.21–2.

<sup>65</sup> *The Scribbler*, Volume 2, March 1878, pp.336–9. This professional/amateur distinction also comes up in Leopold Wagner's literary manual. Wagner says: '... considering the number of men of first-rate ability ... who have done their best work as "amateurs", the young author will hardly fail to see how reluctant he ought to be ... to relinquish that secure position for the precarious "profession" of literature'. See Wagner, *How to Publish a Book or Article*, p.6.

<sup>66</sup> Besant, *All in a Garden Fair*, Volume III, p.185, and Volume I, pp.308–9.

<sup>67</sup> Besant, *All in a Garden Fair*, Volume I, pp.308–9, and Volume III, pp.243, 113, and 57.

son's first book – which he has lovingly inscribed to her – as ‘only a proof and visible sign of degradation’.<sup>68</sup>

*New Grub Street* exhibits a similar sense of separation between literary and non-literary work. Reardon's wife Amy expresses horror when her writer husband, in desperation, takes an ordinary salaried position as a hospital clerk. Refusing to live as a clerk's wife, she moves in with her mother and brother. Although in *Garden Fair* it is *literature* that is seen as disreputable – whereas in *New Grub Street* it is waged work – there is a sense in both cases that literature is not just a profession but an identity.<sup>69</sup> In both novels, literary work and non-literary work cannot really coexist. Another manifestation of this is Engledew's increasing intolerance of his day job before he quits. When he leaves, it is more out of necessity than choice; as an aspirant with literary visions occupying his mind, he can no longer bear his regular job.<sup>70</sup>

In *A Beginner*, literature and identity are also interwoven. Jocelyn's opinions of herself, and others' opinions of her, seem bound up in the content of her novel, its critical reception, and the fact that she has put pen to paper at all. Mrs Chantry considers herself ‘aunt to Vesuvius’ after imbibing *Miching Mallecho's* treatment of ‘the relation of the sexes’ and ‘hereditary vice’, and believes the book will bring ‘moral deterioration’ to her niece.<sup>71</sup> She later ‘reflects ... that the production of a second novel’ would ‘bring Emma down to the level of the other girls of the neighbourhood’, whilst a third would ‘render her absolutely plain’.<sup>72</sup>

Jocelyn herself, meanwhile, is crestfallen at the negative opinions and misunderstandings of her novel.<sup>73</sup> After comments from relatives on the book's impropriety, and a scathing review in the journal *Porch*, she questions not only whether she *has* written a ‘vulgarly improper novel’ that is, as the *Porch* review claims, ‘vicious trash’, but whether there has ‘lain all these years a stain of impurity’ on her soul that she hadn't realised was there.<sup>74</sup>

On discovering, later, that her friend Edgar Hatcheson penned the *Porch* review, she informs him that she ‘can never, *never* speak to’ him again; having ‘put the whole of myself – all

---

<sup>68</sup> Besant, *All in a Garden Fair*, Volume III, p.192. Engledew's mother does not actually say these words – they are the description of her reaction by narrator Claire, who was present in the room. See also Volume III, pp.46–7. His mother also cannot understand the Philipons' literary hopes for Engledew (see Volume III, p.11), and expresses uneasiness at her son's love of books (and lack of obsession with the City) when he is younger (see Volume I, pp.206–7).

<sup>69</sup> It is also significant that by the time Reardon takes a job as a clerk, he has effectively given up writing. (Reardon also used to be a clerk before becoming a writer, but we do not see him at that point.)

<sup>70</sup> Besant, *All in a Garden Fair*, Volume I, pp.201–2 and 235.

<sup>71</sup> Broughton, *A Beginner*, pp.42–3.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p.106.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, see, for example, pp.12, 44, 56–8, 90–1, 93–4, and 115–6.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, see pp.10–12, 28–9, 39–40, 41–3, 56, 84–5, 89–91, and 94.

that was best and highest of me' into her book, his rejection of it is – as she sees it – a rejection of her.<sup>75</sup> *A Beginner* ends with Jocelyn burning almost all of the 250 existing copies of her novel on a bonfire, along with her original manuscript.<sup>76</sup> This drastic action – all the more extreme given that her book was published anonymously – suggests the extent to which she sees her identity as bound up with the book, with its failings as her failings. So damaging has this episode been for her, that just moving on is not enough – she has to destroy her creation entirely.

In *All in a Garden Fair*, there is a clear distinction presented between literary and non-literary people. When Engledew's childhood friend Claire shows his London friend Gertrude round their wealth-obsessed village, she is keen to point out to Gertrude that the village's residents 'did not help to make [Engledew] a poet', and that within their 'talk of money and of the City there was no place for the lofty thoughts and splendid verse on which [his] soul had been nourished', indeed no place 'where such things could be encouraged or comprehended' – save for the house of her and her father, Hector (Engledew's old mentor).<sup>77</sup>

In *The Scribbler*, meanwhile, we get a sense of how a restricted definition of the literary professional put a clear dividing line *between* literary people – or between professionals and amateurs. Blaming the 'professional jealousy' of some individuals, the editor of the magazine fumes about the 'constant sneering' directed at amateur work, 'condemned' before it is read, simply because it is 'amateur'.<sup>78</sup> Also indicating a more general link between professionalism and payment, he notes how ridiculous it is that work is judged by money rather than merit:

If an author writes two novelettes, and sends one to *Temple Bar* and one to – say the *Scribbler* – both being equally good, or if there be any difference, the one sent to the *Scribbler* has the advantage, Why, in the name of common sense, has he to be lauded to the skies for the tale for which he has been paid, and sneered at for that which he has written out of love for letters? The idea is preposterous, and yet it is the case ... But despite the fact that some of the best articles and verses published in England are the productions of amateurs, amateur magazines are pooh-pooed.<sup>79</sup>

There is a clear sense here that literature was being judged by its context rather than its content, its value bound up in its financial, rather than intrinsic, worth.

As to why the literary profession was so dominant in discussions about writing, part of the reason undoubtedly lies in the earlier professionalisation of authorship. In *The Formation of the*

---

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp.200–3.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp.204–5.

<sup>77</sup> Besant, *All in a Garden Fair*, Volume III, p.165.

<sup>78</sup> *The Scribbler*, Volume 2, July 1877, pp.21–2. The editor notes (p.22) that this sneering is, generally, 'confined to third- and fourth-rate professionals' with the 'leading authors of the day' being very supportive of non-professionals.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

*Victorian Literary Profession* (2013), Richard Salmon charts the transition from Romantic ideas about literary genius in the early nineteenth century to ‘an increasingly influential mid-century ethos of professional labour’, showing how novels and other texts reflected and shaped ideas surrounding the professionalisation of authorship.<sup>80</sup> Peterson also notes how the periodical press of the 1850s and 1860s analysed journalism as a profession or trade.<sup>81</sup> Given that subsequent decades saw the growth of a literary advice industry and the establishment of the Society of Authors – both obviously geared towards literature as a profession – it is unsurprising that newspapers, magazines, and novels continued to discuss fiction writing in this way.

Significantly, though, this stripped down representation of writing-as-profession indicates an important lack of thinking about writing in other ways. An emphasis on writing as a vocation suggests that contemporaries were less concerned with, or less aware of, the non-professional uses of fiction writing and the creative aspects and benefits of writing as an activity. In the news articles and novels examined for this study, at least, there is little comprehension or discussion of fiction writing as a standalone activity that one might pursue for pleasure, self-development, or even as a sideline (apart from warnings to aspirants not to make literature their sole occupation, which will be considered in the following section).

Just as *New Grub Street* deals with the professional world of writing, we might see then how the emphasis on writing as a profession elsewhere also might exclude, or fail to acknowledge, the aspirant experience. The narrative of going off to join the ‘profession of letters’, like Engledew and Glen, may be a Romantic one that accurately reflected some people’s experiences, but it is likely not reflective of the wider working-class engagement with literacy.

It is also important to consider the possible wider effect of this focus on the literary profession. Regardless of *why* newspapers and novels in this period emphasised the profession of writing (and it could be argued that Besant’s, Riddell’s, and Gissing’s semi-autobiographical novels all simply reflect the lives of their authors), the fact that they *did* might have meant that aspirants lacked a model for writing outside of this full-time, professional, and commercial understanding.<sup>82</sup> Lastly, we might detect in *The Scribbler’s* complaint about negative attitudes towards amateur work a sense of elite possession of writing amongst some professionals and of

---

<sup>80</sup> Salmon, *Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, p.212.

<sup>81</sup> Peterson, ‘Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*’, p.101.

<sup>82</sup> *All in a Garden Fair*, *A Struggle for Fame*, and *New Grub Street* are all known to have been at least partly autobiographical, Riddell’s in particular. It is also important to recognise that not all novels about aspirants or writing in this period adhere to this full-time professional model. Aspirant Osmond Waymark in Gissing’s *The Unclassed* (1884), for example, works a series of jobs – teacher, rent collector and library assistant – during the day. See George Gissing, *The Unclassed* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976), pp.44, 96, 116, and 124.

fear about the democratisation of writing, issues that will be touched on further in the remainder of this chapter.

### **The Business Side of Literature**

‘Thousands of would-be novelists are now thinking longingly and hopefully of the coming autumn publishing season. They have oiled their typewriters, mended their fountain pens, and sharpened their pencils before writing the great works which will, they believe, next autumn bring them fame and wealth.’

- *The Northern Whig*, 1899<sup>83</sup>

Given the focus on the literary profession in late-nineteenth-century representations of writing, it is unsurprising that, particularly in newspapers, there is a preoccupation with the business aspects of writing, notably earnings. Coverage of authorship in print media and other literature frequently dwelt upon financial matters, with many news pieces warning readers about the precariousness of the literary profession. With literature generally portrayed as a full-time vocation, papers regularly spoke about money and about how difficult it was to make a living from writing. Bound up in this were assumptions that those writing had commercial ambitions and were motivated by fame and fortune. Neither, does it seem, were people dissuaded from commercial ambitions out of an effort to ensure that less problematic, non-commercial ambitions were prioritised.

Success and failure were generally understood in commercial and financial terms, while commercial success was, in a way, central to the definition of the literary aspirant. Aspiring, by implication, was a temporary condition that would cease on the attainment of commercial success. Overall, we can see how a focus on the business aspects of literature led to a fairly negative depiction of writing. With writing talked about as a profession rather than an activity, the dreadful insecurities of a literary career were acknowledged far more than the less materialist joys and benefits of writing.

Newspaper articles often emphasised how little was to be earned from authorship. One, titled ‘Unprofitable Authorship’, noted how literature was ‘for all but a few... an unfortunate business’, giving examples of authors, who despite being well-known, had still only left modest amounts on their deaths.<sup>84</sup> Others, titled ‘The Gains of Authorship’, ‘The Rewards of Authorship’, and ‘The Profits of Novel Writing’, all concluded that there weren’t many gains,

---

<sup>83</sup> ‘The Market in Fiction. A Guide for Would-Be Novelists.’ *Northern Whig*, 31 May 1899, p.8.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Unprofitable Authorship.’ *Nottingham Daily Express*, 28 August 1907, p.6.

rewards, or profits, whilst *The Observer* failed to think of ‘twenty novelists earning an income which would satisfy a moderately successful fishmonger’.<sup>85</sup>

Other pieces emphasised the likelihood of failure. Noting that novel writing was not ‘after all, such a gloriously profitable business’, one article warned that ‘the percentage of failures quasi or complete and hopeless’ over the past 18 years was ‘enough to chill the blood of the new and enthusiastic recruit’, noting that there were an estimated 2600 literary failures during that time, compared to 80 writers to whom the public had given encouragement.<sup>86</sup>

Aspirants, meanwhile, were warned not to be dependent on literature. *The Observer* cautioned aspirants against trying to make novel-writing a livelihood in pieces in both 1905 and 1906, whilst other articles emphasised how poor the earning prospects were in literature compared to other professions.<sup>87</sup> Even where contemporaries advocated the pursuit of literature alongside another vocation, however, this was seen simply as a preventative against the hardships of the profession of writing; the personal benefits that writing as an activity, or as a hobby, might have had do not seem to have been mentioned.<sup>88</sup> Listing a host of authors who had successfully written alongside other jobs, a literary handbook by Leopold Wagner noted just that the young author should be very unwilling to give up a ‘secure position for the precarious “profession” of literature’.<sup>89</sup> The ‘delight’ of being able to call himself an ‘author by profession’ would, he said, ‘be sadly tempered by the terrible anxieties attendant on efforts to earn a livelihood by the pen’.<sup>90</sup>

Print media pieces also sometimes pointed out to the aspirant the dangers within the literary profession. One warned of ‘bogus societies and literary jackals’ who might keep his

---

<sup>85</sup> “The Gains of Authorship.” *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 August 1886, 4<sup>th</sup> page; “The Rewards of Authorship.” *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 15 August 1899, 4<sup>th</sup> page; “The Profits of Novel Writing.” *The Daily News* [London], 26 December 1879, p.6; and “The woes of the minor novelist have been forcibly illustrated...”, *Observer*, 6 June 1909, p.5. For other discussions of the slim earnings of authorship, see: “The woes of the minor novelist have been forcibly illustrated...”, *Observer*, 6 June 1909, p.5; “Can the ‘Average Author’ Live?”, *Daily Mail*, 22 September 1899, p.3; “Novel Writing.” *The Shields Daily Gazette and Shipping Telegraph*, 9 June 1887, p.3; “The writer who enlivens the pages of the ‘National Review’ with the confessions of a ‘Minor Novelist’...”, *Manchester Guardian*, 21 September 1912, p.6; and “Novel writing is not, after all, such a gloriously profitable business...”, *Sportsman*, 12 November 1892, p.4.

<sup>86</sup> “Novel writing is not, after all, such a gloriously profitable business...”, *Sportsman*, 12 November 1892, p.4. Peter Keating also notes how Anthony Trollope, despite the positivity of his *Autobiography*, was ‘careful to point out that earning a living from literature is a distressingly precarious business and that failure is a far more common experience than success’. See Keating, *The Haunted Study*, pp.14, and 459, footnote 20. Keating mentions how part of why Trollope was discouraging was because of his experience on the committee of the Royal Literary Fund.

<sup>87</sup> “The woes of the minor novelist have been forcibly illustrated...”, *Observer*, 6 June 1909, p.5; “Considerable publicity has lately been given to the emoluments of successful novelists...” [Under ‘Literary Notes’], *The Observer*, 5 June 1910, p.8; “Mr Andrew Lang on ‘The Novel Business.’” *Edinburgh Evening News*, 23 August 1886, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; and “The Gains of Authorship.” *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 August 1886, 4<sup>th</sup> page.

<sup>88</sup> See, for example, “Mr Andrew Lang on ‘The Novel Business.’” *Edinburgh Evening News*, 23 August 1886, 3<sup>rd</sup> page, and Wagner, *How to Publish a Book or Article*, p.6.

<sup>89</sup> Wagner, *How to Publish a Book or Article*, p.6.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

money and refuse to return his manuscript.<sup>91</sup> Another explained how adverts published in the autumn asking for Christmas-related copy were untrustworthy, with Christmas editions of magazines being put together well in advance over the summer.<sup>92</sup> Hinting at other potential traps, it noted how a considerable amount of money was annually ‘drawn from the pockets’ of those keen for literary success.<sup>93</sup> Reports of literary crimes also highlighted aspirants’ vulnerabilities.<sup>94</sup>

Tied up in the emphasis on the business aspects of authorship was an assumption that aspirants, and writers generally, were motivated chiefly by money and fame. Rooting aspirants’ motivations in the success stories of others, one paper noted how ‘just as the success of one golddigger [sic] leads to a rush for the goldfields, so the success of a few writers of fiction induces many to try their hand at what seems a very easy business’.<sup>95</sup> Another piece noted that ‘the great body of novelists write for money’, with those who write ‘because they cannot help it’ being ‘few and far between’.<sup>96</sup> In other articles, the motivations of fame and wealth were more of an underlying assumption. Noting that the ‘prizes’ in authorship were ‘few’, one piece asked readers to ‘think of the multitude of novels which are published every year whose authors are never heard of again’, concluding that ‘altogether, the outlook for the aspiring amateur cannot be considered very encouraging’.<sup>97</sup>

That money, fame, and the success of others *were* motivations is undeniable, but other motivations – such as a desire for self-expression – received scant attention in literary representations. Even a published lecture by Andrew Lang, which briefly mentions the ‘impulse to tell a story’ and points out that success and failure do not have to be understood in commercial terms – ‘a man may succeed, as far as his art goes, and yet may be unread, and may publish at his own expense, or not publish at all. He pleases himself ... I do not call that failure’ – still has a commercial thrust.<sup>98</sup> As with Annie Swan’s warning not to make money a main

---

<sup>91</sup> “The Gains of Authorship.” *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 August 1886, 4<sup>th</sup> page.

<sup>92</sup> “The Literary Aspirant.” *North and South Shields Daily Gazette and Shipping Telegraph*, 18 September 1882, p.3.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.* See also “The Gains of Authorship.” *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 August 1886, 4<sup>th</sup> page.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example: “How Literary Aspirants are Swindled.” *Illustrated Police News*, 7 April 1894, p.4; “The Literary Aspirant and his Publishers. A Swindle Exposed.” *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 1892, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; “Literary Agent and his Clients. Curious Guildhall Story.” [Under ‘At the Police Courts’], *The Standard* [London], 11 December 1906, p.10; and “Literary Aspirant and Her Tutor. Serious Allegations of Fraud.” *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 22 April 1894, p.3. For more discussion of crime/fraud, see Walter Besant, *The Society of Authors. Record of its Action from its Foundation* (London: The Incorporated Society of Authors, 1893), pp.10, 20–1, and 29–31.

<sup>95</sup> “Hamlet, on being asked ‘What do you read?’ answered...” *Dundee Advertiser*, 3 April 1893, p.5.

<sup>96</sup> “Novel Writing as an Art.” *The Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser from Tinsley’s Magazine*, 21 March 1877, p.3.

<sup>97</sup> “The Gains of Authorship.” *Gloucestershire Echo*, 21 August 1886, 4<sup>th</sup> page.

<sup>98</sup> Andrew Lang, *How to Fail in Literature: A Lecture* (London: Field & Tuer, 1890), pp.10 and 18.

consideration – as ‘literature must be first wooed for love’ – this, also, is advice *to* writers, rather than a recognition or celebration of non-commercial motivations.<sup>99</sup>

A general preoccupation with the business of authorship is also evident in fictional representations of writing. *A Beginner* (1894) has a general commercial focus in that – as already noted – it covers the period from the point of publication of Jocelyn’s novel to her destruction of it – it is not concerned with her creation of it in the first place. Indeed, a recurrent topic running through the book is other people’s opinions of *Miching Mallecho* – from Jocelyn’s aunt and her cousin, Lesbia, to local newspaper reviewers, to her literary friend Edgar Hatcheson, who, it turns out, penned the *Porch* review that causes her so much heartache.<sup>100</sup> In another chapter, Jocelyn visits her London publishers, hoping for a crumb of good news about her novel’s sales.<sup>101</sup> As these things suggest, success and failure in *A Beginner* are seen very much in commercial and external terms. The impression given is that reviews, opinions, and sales – the *afterlife* of one’s writing – are what matters, not the creative act itself.

Moreover, the business elements of writing are shown to be powerful. The *Porch* review kills Jocelyn’s novel commercially, whilst the pride, satisfaction, and optimism she feels on holding her published book in her hands at the beginning of the story – the ‘pure delight in her own composition’ – soon dissipates in the face of the negative reactions of other people.<sup>102</sup> Whilst, at the outset, she makes it clear that she does not expect to make any money from her novel, and doesn’t ‘care a straw about that’, the fact that she ends up obliterating all trace of it hints at the extent to which the arrows of the world end up wounding her, overpowering her self-esteem and erasing the confidence she had in her own work.<sup>103</sup>

In *A Struggle for Fame*, the business of authorship is also foregrounded through Glen’s financial motivations. Her whole aim initially is to earn money to support her father and restore their lost wealth. As Ifill notes, ‘it is not inspiration or ambition that drives Glen to write, but the basic need to support her family’.<sup>104</sup> Early on, she also has plans – once she has ‘made her fortune and reinstated her father in the house of his ancestors’ – to carry out various philanthropic acts, such as ‘rebuilding the Vicarage ... purchasing an organ for the church ...

---

<sup>99</sup> ‘Annie S. Swan on Fiction Writing as a Profession.’ *Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 17 January 1891, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

<sup>100</sup> Broughton, *A Beginner*, see, for example, pp.10–12, 40–4, 55–9, 65–6, 84–5, 89–90, and 200–3. See also pp.67–8, 129, and 115–6.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.129–32.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.3–4, 130–1, and see, for example, 93–4, 115–6, 131–2, and 201–3.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p.9.

<sup>104</sup> Ifill, ‘The Female Professional as Orphan’, p.131.

allowing ten pounds a year to each poor family in the village’, and giving presents to people she knows.<sup>105</sup>

As Ifill points out, Glen is naturally suited to writing, but it is only financial necessity that actually spurs her to action:

The reasons behind Glen’s decision to write are important. The idea, which seems to be ‘conceived under the spur of the moment’, is actually the result of the fact that ‘during the whole of her young life there had never been a time when to every look and tone of nature she failed to respond with the deep sympathy of an imaginative and poetical temperament’ ... While this explains her choice of profession, the motivation to begin writing has all to do with supporting her father and herself. Until their financial situation drives her to it, Glen’s creativity is not something she desires to share with the world, or even to channel into concrete stories.<sup>106</sup>

As Ifill notes, Glen’s reaction, in her first meeting with publisher Vassetz, to his comment that she might write something decent ‘in the course of a few years’ – that she had hoped ‘to commence making money that week, that day, that hour!’ – ‘shows that her immediate concerns are practical and financial’.<sup>107</sup> For the rest of Riddell’s novel, the question of money is never far away for Glen.<sup>108</sup> Her financial motivations for writing are not entirely constant, however, as Ifill notes. For example, after the death of her father, and her marriage to Mr Logan-Lacere – who initially tells her to publish only for her own satisfaction, and not to concern herself with ‘money or money-making’ – she composes a book, *Ashtree Manor*, ‘in one of the few moments in her marriage that she is not harassed by financial worries’.<sup>109</sup> ‘Unlike her previous writing, “the greed for gain or applause was not on her when she began her task, and she finished it, not for the sake of writing, but because she had something to say, and could know no rest till it was said”.’<sup>110</sup>

Her husband’s financial situation then deteriorates, however, and she is again obliged to write for money, which she does this time with greater success.<sup>111</sup> She then experiences various downturns and upturns (mainly the former, including illness, bad treatment from her publisher, and the illness and death of her husband).<sup>112</sup> The novel ends with Glen achieving a contented independence, living alone in a farmhouse, rejecting a proposal from her childhood friend, Ned, and ‘learn[ing]’, writes Ifill, ‘that she must take her writing seriously, value it more than domestic

---

<sup>105</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, p.90.

<sup>106</sup> Ifill, ‘The Female Professional as Orphan’, p.133

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p.134.

<sup>108</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, see, for example, p.328.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p.286, and Ifill, ‘The Female Professional as Orphan’, p.137.

<sup>110</sup> Ifill, ‘The Female Professional as Orphan’, pp.137–8.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.138–40.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.140–1.

and financial cares, and make space for it if it is ever to be fulfilling as well as profitable'.<sup>113</sup> The novel, argues Ifill, 'looks forward to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929)', with Glen having 'managed to craft not only a room, but also a life of her own'.<sup>114</sup>

Although Peterson sees an 'opposition' in Riddell's novel, 'between authors of genius and authors of the marketplace', with Glen 'align[ed] ... with Romantic, Brontëan authorship' and Bernard Kelly as the one linked to 'a market-conscious, commercially driven attitude to writing', the fact remains that money is the reason Glen starts writing, and a professional and commercial vision of authorship is the one that, overall, is presented by the novel.<sup>115</sup> Being published is what is continually important to Glen; as the novel at one point notes, it is "getting into print", on which she had so pinned her faith', and on which she continues, throughout the story, to pin her faith.<sup>116</sup>

Riddell's novel also does not show authorship in a particularly attractive light. From Glen's disheartening trudges 'from publisher to publisher, only to meet with "No", worded in a hundred different ways', to her later illness that arises after the 'social whirl' of celebrity 'begins to take its toll', there is plenty to dissuade and disillusion the aspirant.<sup>117</sup> Highs, it is made clear, can be followed by deep lows: 'seven years' after standing 'almost at the top of the literary tree', Glen is again 'toil[ing] up flights and flights of stairs', with one editor claiming not to have heard of her or any of the three book titles she mentions.<sup>118</sup> 'It was then', notes the narrator, that 'the iron entered into [her] soul'.<sup>119</sup>

In *All in a Garden Fair* (1883), meanwhile, the residents entirely equate success with money, and conversations about Engledew's career change revolve around his paltry literary earnings. Within the village, literature is a noble and worthy pursuit only to Engledew and his supporters – Claire, Hector, and Will.

Explanations as to why material relating to authorship emphasised the business aspects of literature must at least partly be found in the debates and developments within the profession at this time, relating, for example, to royalties, copyright, intellectual property, and relations

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp.141–5.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p.145.

<sup>115</sup> Peterson, 'Charlotte Riddell's *A Struggle for Fame*', pp.106 and 108.

<sup>116</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, p.242.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p.122 (and see also, for example, p.328), and Ifill, 'The Female Professional as Orphan', pp.134 and 140.

<sup>118</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, p.396. Ifill also refers to this scene – see Ifill, 'The Female Professional as Orphan', pp.140–1.

<sup>119</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, p.396.

between authors and publishers.<sup>120</sup> In warnings about the literary profession, however, we may detect efforts to put aspirants off writing, as much as efforts to protect them from hardship and exploitation. Again, the emphasis on the commercial aspects of the literary profession also indicates a lack of acknowledgement of writing as a non-professional activity, and of non-commercial motivations. As a natural consequence of the discussion of writing as a profession, coverage of authorship in newspapers focussed on the financial difficulties of writing for a living, rather than the joys or benefits that writing as an activity might involve.

### The Young Writer

So far, we have seen how representations of writing in print media, fiction, and other literature largely revolved around the profession and business of literature. Another significant feature of literature on authorship from this period is the trope of the young writer. Some material was explicitly aimed at young writers, whilst the terms ‘young writer’ and ‘young author’ are frequently employed to mean ‘aspirant’. Just as findings in the previous sections suggest restrictive understandings – or, at least, a lack of acknowledgement – of what fiction writing was, so the trope of the young writer indicates a lack of acknowledgement about who aspiring writers were.

Richard Salmon notes how the late Victorian literary manual conveyed a somewhat ‘instrumental, rationalised relationship between the youthful apprentice and professional master’.<sup>121</sup> Unsurprisingly, several manuals and advice books were explicitly aimed at young people, such as Leopold Wagner’s *How to Publish a Book or Article, and How to Produce a Play; Advice to Young Authors* (1898), and George Bainton’s *The Art of Authorship: Literary Reminiscences, Methods of Work, and Advice to Young Beginners* (1890), a compilation of advice from 187 authors.<sup>122</sup> The first line of Walter Besant’s *The Pen and the Book* (1899) states that it was ‘written for the instruction and the guidance of those young persons ... who are thinking of the Literary Life’.<sup>123</sup> Percy Russell’s *The Authors’ Manual*, covering ‘all branches of literary work’, contains numerous references to the ‘young writer’, ‘young aspirant’, and ‘young journalist’ and so on.<sup>124</sup> Salmon also mentions how Anthony Trollope’s *Autobiography*, written like a literary manual, issued ‘practical

---

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, Keating, *The Haunted Study*, pp.15–21. The establishment of the Society of Authors in 1884 was part of this too.

<sup>121</sup> Salmon, *Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, p.219.

<sup>122</sup> Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.220.

<sup>123</sup> Besant, *Pen and the Book*, p.v.

<sup>124</sup> Percy Russell, *The Authors’ Manual: A Complete and Practical Guide to All Branches of Literary Work*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (London: Digby & Long, c.1892), title page, and see, for example: pp.8, 14–15, 65, 75, 94, 109, 129, 135, 138, 162, 185, 188, 191, 198, 206, 216, 220–1, 228, 248–9, 251–3, 267, and 272–3.

advice to the “young aspirant” ... based on the hard-won experience of his own career’.<sup>125</sup> Andrew Lang’s humorous published lecture ‘How to Fail in Literature’ also contains references to the ‘young aspirant’, the ‘young writer’, the ‘young author’, and the ‘young fellow’.<sup>126</sup> The advice section of periodical *The Bookman*, meanwhile, was called ‘The Young Author’s Page’.

Several newspaper pieces on authorship are also littered with references to the young writer. One alone talks about the ‘young man’ (or lady) who ‘sits down to write a first novel’; the ‘mind of the young author’; and the ‘young author who has been made to revise his book’, as well as having two other ‘young’ references – to the ‘young author’ and ‘young writers’.<sup>127</sup> Another, titled ‘Hints to Literary Aspirants’, offers advice to the ‘young aspirant’ and talks about the ‘young author’.<sup>128</sup> Other pieces of various kinds refer to the ‘young author’, the ‘young writer’, and the ‘young litterateur’ [sic].<sup>129</sup> Another considers the commercial progress of an imaginary ‘young novelist’ (meaning aspirant).<sup>130</sup> Crucially, pieces such as these do not (as a rule) simply refer to young writers when talking about information that might *pertain* to young writers – they are assuming that young people are the ones who are writing.

The young author can also be found in fiction – unsurprisingly, given that the Bildungsroman traditionally ‘has as its protagonist the young man who is an apprentice to life’.<sup>131</sup> In *A Beginner*, Jocelyn is 23, and there are at least seven references either to her age, or to her as a ‘young author’ or ‘young novelist’.<sup>132</sup> (Her writer friend Edgar Hatcheson is also described as a ‘young author’ and ‘young writer’.)<sup>133</sup> Engledew in *Garden Fair* is also young – a teenager for much of the novel’s first volume – while Glen in *A Struggle* is also young – around 15 when she has her ‘scene of vocation’, and ‘still not out of her teens’ shortly before marrying Mordaunt Logan-Lacere at the close of Volume II.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> Salmon, *Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, p.219.

<sup>126</sup> Lang, *How to Fail in Literature*, see pp.11, 31, 46–7, 56, and 77.

<sup>127</sup> “The Profits of Novel Writing.” *Daily News* [London], 26 December 1879, p.6. It should be noted that the first reference here is actually “The young man or the lady who sits down to write a first novel’, so they may not have consider the ‘lady’ to be young also in this particular article.

<sup>128</sup> “Hints to Literary Aspirants.” *Woman’s Herald*, 24 August 1893, p.423.

<sup>129</sup> See “How to Succeed as a Novelist. Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant.” *Daily Mail*, 26 March 1902, p.4; “What a lot of petty grievances the would-be author has to put up with...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *The Banbury Beacon and District Intelligencer*, 1 March 1902, p.8; “Another novelist is being boomed by her publisher apparently because of her youth...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 18 September 1908, p.3; and “Nursery for Novelists. Miss Florence Marryatt’s [sic] Scheme.” *Daily Mail*, 11 January 1897, p.3.

<sup>130</sup> “The Market in Fiction. A Guide for Would-Be Novelists.” *Northern Whig*, 31 May 1899, p.8.

<sup>131</sup> Goldberg, “The Artist-Novel in Transition”, p.12.

<sup>132</sup> Broughton, *A Beginner*, see pp.6, 11–12, 41, 56, 86, 127, and 151.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, see pp.19, 31, 36, and 38.

<sup>134</sup> Besant, *All in a Garden Fair*, Volume I (see, for example, pp.3, 84–5, 103, 179–80, 183, and 204), and Riddell, *Struggle*, pp.88–9, 261, and 266. See also Ifill, “The Female Professional as Orphan”, pp.133 and 138, and Margaret

The impression of the author as a young person in literary representations of authorship is revealing. To a large extent, we can see how this idea emanates from the emphasis on writing as a literary profession. Youngsters, not middle-aged or older adults, are naturally going to be the ones associated with following a career path.<sup>135</sup> The trope of the young author, though, also suggests assumptions about the demographic of the new mass readership. It also hints at a belief that only young people *should* be writing, one of several detectable ideas about the right to write.

## PART III

### The Right to Write

‘We [the Society of Authors] can do little to keep down the swelling stream of aspirants. Thousands of pens are flying over the paper ... and every moment producing bad novels and worse poetry.’

- Walter Besant, *The Society of Authors. Record of its Action from its Foundation*<sup>136</sup>

Within the representations and discussions of fiction writing in this period, one can detect several ideas and assumptions not only about what fiction writing is, but who should be writing, and why. Within several newspaper pieces, there is a sense that while everyone *is* now an aspiring writer, not everyone *should* be, giving an impression of fiction writing as something that is not an automatic right, or something open or valuable to all.

Firstly, there is a clear sense that there were too many aspirants, and that this was having a detrimental effect on the literary landscape. Aspirants were both the cause of a clogged market and the reason too many sub-standard books were being published.<sup>137</sup> In the 1880s, one paper noted that the market was ‘glutted with aspiring *littérateurs*’ [sic], while in 1893, Walter Besant referred to the ‘swelling stream of aspirants’ after trying to refute accusations that his Society of Authors was partly responsible for it, ‘fostering the ambitions of the incapable, and ... helping to flood the market with trash.’<sup>138</sup> Publisher Heinemann was still linking the aspirant to the

---

Kelleher, ‘Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*: The Field of Women’s Literary Production.’ *Colby Quarterly*, 36.2 (2000), p.121.

<sup>135</sup> This is well-illustrated by one piece that refers to ‘the young writer who chooses this delightful profession’ (i.e. authorship). See ‘Paper and Ink.’ *The Illustrated London News*, 6 September 1884, p.226.

<sup>136</sup> Besant, *Society of Authors*, p.30.

<sup>137</sup> See, for example, ‘Eleven Thousand Scribblers.’ *The Manchester Courier*, 3 May 1909, p.6. For the idea of there being too many books, see also ‘Motives of Authorship. Judge Parry on Books and Their Writers.’ *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 April 1909, p.8.

<sup>138</sup> ‘Mr Besant and Literary Aspirants.’ *Lancashire Evening Post*, 23 January 1888, p.2, and Besant, *Society of Authors*, p.30.

‘enormous surplus of rubbish’ reaching print in 1914.<sup>139</sup> Whilst chiefly laying the blame with literary agents, he also in the same breath mentioned the ‘extent to which the novel-writing habit has grown of recent years, so much so that the possession of a pen and an inkpot seems quite excuse enough for anyone to turn author’.<sup>140</sup> Another piece sees a direct link between the numbers trying to write and the ‘gigantic “output” of books – good, bad, and indifferent that appears from year to year’.<sup>141</sup> Yet another blames would-be writers for the ‘immense number of immature novels’ in existence.<sup>142</sup>

Other pieces simply considered there to be too many *writers* already, and so did not think the creation of more aspirants was wise. One claimed that ‘the number of living novelists’ was ‘too great’, adding that if a proposed writing school was started ‘the number will be greater’, and noting that there ‘surely ... ought to be some natural check on their multiplication’.<sup>143</sup> Commenting on a manual entitled *How to Write a Novel*, another noted that ‘with an output of something like twenty-five novels a week’, a more necessary book might be one called *How Not to Write Fiction*.<sup>144</sup> Yet another thought there was ‘more than enough ... fiction as it is’, and commented that even ‘if we *could* instruct the amateur how to write’ – which they did not consider possible – ‘it would still be a question whether we ought not to refrain from the experiment’.<sup>145</sup>

Aspirants were also blamed for writing rubbish that didn’t make it into print, and were painted as a nuisance to publishers, editors, and novelists. One piece noted how ‘every man who becomes editor of a newspaper or magazine straightaway begins to receive MSS. from literary aspirants’, a claim that other pieces seem to substantiate.<sup>146</sup> One, quoting Andrew Lang, noted how writers come every week with ‘gigantic paper parcels’ that are ‘perfectly hopeless, worthless, useless – [a] mere waste of foolscap, and ink, and labour’.<sup>147</sup> The *Warrington Guardian*, meanwhile,

---

<sup>139</sup> “The Glut of Fiction. A Stricter Test of Merit Wanted. Mr Heinemann’s Views.” *The Observer*, 1 March 1914, p.12.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> “Eleven Thousand Scribblers.” *Manchester Courier*, 3 May 1909, p.6.

<sup>142</sup> “Hamlet, on being asked ‘What do you read?’ answered...” *Dundee Advertiser*, 3 April 1893, p.5.

<sup>143</sup> “In the latest number of the *Author* Mr Walter Besant once more affirms that novel writing can be taught...” *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 April 1891, p.5.

<sup>144</sup> “In this connection it is amusing to note...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *The Banbury Advertiser*, 25 April 1901, p.8.

<sup>145</sup> “What a wonderful age we live in...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette*, 5 July 1907, p.3.

<sup>146</sup> “Mark Twain to Literary Aspirants.” *Young Folks Paper*, 17 April 1886, pp.246–7.

<sup>147</sup> “Novel Writing Not Remunerative.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 14 November 1892, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

indicated that they were inundated every spring with poems about nature that ended up being thrown away.<sup>148</sup>

A publisher elsewhere suggested that aspirants had no idea what they were doing, either in terms of subject or style. After explaining that ‘the man or woman of the lower middle class’ was ‘fond of describing the ways of the aristocracy’ without knowing anything about that kind of life, he noted that there was ‘no apparent reason for most of the manuscripts’ he received – it seemed simply that the authors had ‘resolved to write a novel’, and so had ‘strung together so many incidents, filled out so many pages with conversation, and kept on until the necessary number of pages was completed’.<sup>149</sup> Even novelist Annie Swan, who lectured on fiction writing, admitted that ‘those who come into touch with the aspiring writers of the present day are, I think, a little discouraged by the prevailing mediocrity’.<sup>150</sup> Again, we can see how the writing of aspirants, and aspirants themselves, were being seen in commercial terms.

There are also, again, assumptions about the commercial motivations of aspirants. In response to a claim that there were 11,000 unknown ‘scribblers’, one Manchester paper expressed sadness and concern at the thought of this ‘presumably sane’ lot, calling them ‘valiant’, but also questioning if they had heard of John Davidson, the troubled Scottish poet and novelist who had died by suicide a few weeks earlier.<sup>151</sup> It also, revealingly, noted how one could not count the names of this 11,000, as they were ‘not famous enough’.<sup>152</sup> The implication was that most, if not all, of this 11,000 were suffering and wasting their time; that they all dreamt of commercial success but would never achieve it, and so should not be attempting to write in the first place.

Other newspaper pieces hint at a legitimacy surrounding writing to do with ability and right and wrong types of motivation. One described the *cacoethes scribendi* – or urge to write – as ‘the result either of legitimate artistic impulse or of mere vanity’.<sup>153</sup> It went on to divide the population into three categories – those with both talent and the impulse to write; those without great talent who take up a different profession; and those with the impulse to write, but either

---

<sup>148</sup> “The worst thing connected with life in a newspaper office at this time of the year...” [Under “Town and Country”], *The Warrington Guardian*, 21 March 1903, p.4.

<sup>149</sup> “The Market in Fiction. A Guide for Would-Be Novelists.” *Northern Whig*, 31 May 1899, p.8.

<sup>150</sup> “The Art of Story-Writing.” *Barnet Press, Finchley and Hendon News, Southgate and Edgware Chronicle, and General Advertiser for North Middlesex and South Herts*, 6 November 1909, p.3.

<sup>151</sup> “Eleven Thousand Scribblers.” *Manchester Courier*, 3 May 1909, p.6. Davidson was still missing from his Penzance home at the time this article appeared, but his suicide was assumed. His body was found by fishermen a few months later. NB: The ‘eleven thousand scribblers’ were understood to be dramatists as well as authors.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>153</sup> “Early Authorship.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee] from *The Athenaeum*, 18 December 1877, 4<sup>th</sup> page.

without talent or with vanity.<sup>154</sup> This latter category were ‘so numerous that it may almost be said that in our country the fools all write, or *would* write but for the difficulty of getting into print’.<sup>155</sup> As was evident earlier in the claim that the Society of Authors was ‘fostering the ambitions of the incapable’, there is a sense that talent legitimised one’s ambition; being literate and being able to write were two different things.<sup>156</sup>

One can also see in some of this literature more specific negative views about aspirants. Seemingly justifying *The Scribbler’s* opinion that ‘professional authors, as a rule, regard their amateur brethren with a considerable amount of distrust and disdain’, one journalist expressed sarcasm and amusement at the maiden issue of the *Amateur Journalist and Literary Aspirant*, saying he now ‘tremble[d]’ for his position, and advising anyone who wished to do him out of his job to give the ‘comic’ paper a read.<sup>157</sup> *The Scribbler’s* determination to maintain a respectable standard of quality in their magazine is also, perhaps, a sign of how strongly felt such opinions about aspirants and amateurs were. At the close of 1877, they noted: ‘The public is beginning now to look upon the *Scribbler* as *the* organ for Amateurs, and tries to find all the fault it can with the composition. Let us – the Amateurs of Great Britain and Ireland – then take every precaution to avoid the slightest error, and show that our productions are worthy of perusal.’<sup>158</sup>

At times, print media also mocked, or made entertainment out of, both fiction writing and, occasionally, aspirants. Reacting to some literary advice for young girls in another magazine, *Punch* noted that if *they* had been responding to the ‘dear little literary aspirants’, they would have just said ‘Don’t’.<sup>159</sup> They then listed their own (deliberately ridiculous) writing tips.<sup>160</sup> A fictional piece entitled ‘The Perils of Authorship’, meanwhile, featured a young woman whose first effort

---

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> “Mr Besant and Literary Aspirants.” *Lancashire Evening Post*, 23 January 1888, p.2, and Besant, *Society of Authors*, p.30. A lecture in 1909 also, albeit jokingly, talks about four distinct motives of authorship – vanity or conceit; greed; fun; and having a message to impart. See “Motives of Authorship. Judge Parry on Books and Their Writers.” *Manchester Guardian*, 1 April 1909, p.8. The publisher Heinemann also makes a distinction between being able to read and being a discerning reader, saying ‘it is true ... that elementary education has multiplied the number of people able to read, but is it so certain that the number of discerning readers is any greater? I doubt it.’ See “The Glut of Fiction. A Stricter Test of Merit Wanted. Mr Heinemann’s Views.” *Observer*, 1 March 1914, p.12. As might be expected, given the belief that many sub-standard books were being published, getting into print was not always seen as an indicator of talent. A short review of one new book in 1897 began: ‘Novel writing seems to be a fatally attractive occupation for the amateur author. Such a book as the one before us ... would appear to have been written by some girl just left school, so absurd is the story...’ See “Novel writing seems to be a fatally attractive occupation...” [Under ‘Books and Magazines’], *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 21 November 1897, p.2.

<sup>157</sup> *The Scribbler*, Volume 2, March 1878, pp.336–9, and “For threepence a month it will be possible (more or less) for the literary aspirant to learn how to become a journalist...” [Under ‘Humber-Side Echoes’], *The Daily Mail, Hull Packet and East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Courier*, 18 December 1906, p.3.

<sup>158</sup> *The Scribbler*, Volume 2, December 1877, p.242.

<sup>159</sup> “Furnishing Fictionists.” *Punch*, 24 December 1887, p.292.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

at a story – a love letter from one character to another – is mistaken by her husband as evidence of an affair, after she leaves it lying on a table.<sup>161</sup>

A piece from 1890 displays a patronising attitude couched in commercial assumptions. Seeing aspirants as a pitiful, suffering mass, it considers it ‘astonishing how much and how long some persons will write without any sort of encouragement’.<sup>162</sup> These people, it said, ‘have the history of ... the successful failures in literature at their fingers’ ends. They know to a day how long one man wrote before he caught the eye of a publisher, and how long another starved before he woke to find himself famous ... If the aspirant writes with difficulty and pain, so did Mr Thackeray...’.<sup>163</sup> The aspirant is painted as innocent but misguided, with ‘his fatal facility of impulse ... encouraged by a fatal facility of means’ (i.e. pen and ink).<sup>164</sup> There is no recognition of non-commercial uses of writing, or the possible joys or benefits of creativity. The journalist even believes that dictionary editors and advertisement writers and so on ‘must have begun with higher aspirations ... that every tailor’s poet is ... a Milton who has lost his way’, because ‘no man sets out in life’ with those kind of aspirations.<sup>165</sup> Such pieces are suggestive of the anxieties that the aspirant as a figure evoked. In some of this literature we can see hints of fears about mass literacy, about losing control of writing, and about social mobility.

Several of these ideas and assumptions also crop up in fiction. In *A Beginner*, Jocelyn’s aunt asks rhetorically, ‘in a voice of gloomy ire’, ‘who does not write now?’ whilst Jocelyn herself believes that publishers are ‘deluged’ with manuscripts.<sup>166</sup> Her novel, *Miching Mallecho*, is seen as ‘trash’ in the *Porch* review and as the wrong sort of novel by Jocelyn’s aunt, who ‘should not have complained’ if her niece had ‘treated’ relations between the sexes ‘within wholesome and legitimate limits’.<sup>167</sup> Jocelyn herself is – and is seen as – a stereotypical neophyte. She is young and female, facts the *Porch* review bets ‘with complete certainty’; has been rejected by ‘four or five’ publishers; and is naive (she pays £50 to have her book published, and believes ‘no critic’ will ‘be harsh’ to an anonymous author signing herself only ‘A Beginner’).<sup>168</sup>

---

<sup>161</sup> “The Perils of Authorship.” *The Leeds Mercury Weekly Supplement* from the *New York Graphic*, 5 February 1887, p.6. For other entertaining pieces see, for example: “A Popular Author.” *The Illustrated London News*, 17 July 1897, p.73; “The New Novel-Writing.” *Punch, or The London Charivari*, 18 September 1897, p.122; and “How to Write a Story.” *The Dundee Courier and Argus*, 27 August 1887, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

<sup>162</sup> “A Guide to Authorship.” *Daily News* [London], 17 September 1890, p.5.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Broughton, *A Beginner*, pp.8 and 31.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.42 and 90.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.4, 8–9, and 89.

There is also a sense that fiction writing, at least by someone like Jocelyn, is something to be discouraged, and there is no recognition of the possible benefits of self-expression. Both Mrs Chantry and the *Porch* review preface comments about Jocelyn with the words ‘if [you/she, respectively] must write a novel’, suggesting the desire to do so is unfortunate, whilst the former asks her niece, regarding her book’s topic, ‘why should you tamper with such a subject at all?’<sup>169</sup> A real-life notice about Broughton’s novel in the *Saturday Review* even described the character of Jocelyn as ‘a very nice young lady, brought up in the best county society, wealthy, well-connected ... who is, nevertheless, *driven by some maggot in her fair brain* to write an anonymous novel, “treating the interaction of the passions”’.<sup>170</sup>

In *A Struggle*, meanwhile, publisher Vassett ‘received all new writers with a manner which implied that, as there were already far too many candidates for literary honours, it was ridiculous to expect any help from him to introduce another. He was weary of persons “possessed of genius”, of persons who brought manuscripts, of men and women who, regarding him as a mere porter at the gates of the temple of Fame, came clamorously demanding admission into the sacred precincts’.<sup>171</sup> He also ‘steeled his heart against the prayers of young beginners’.<sup>172</sup> He tries to foist these people off onto other publishers where at all possible, and gets his assistant to deal with them when he can.<sup>173</sup> Vassett doesn’t even like fiction as a genre, considering imaginary writing ‘very odd’ and generally ‘out of his line’.<sup>174</sup>

Hidden behind – and relevant to – many of these opinions and ideas about aspirants and about who should be writing is the question of teachability – whether fiction writing could be taught. This is another topic that crops up in literary representations and which reveals more about attitudes towards aspirants and writing in this period.

### **The Teachability of Writing**

‘Novelists, like poets, are born, not made.’  
- *Banbury Advertiser*, 1901<sup>175</sup>

On 23 January 1897, a small notice for author Florence Marryat’s new School of Literary Art, offering ‘instruction in composing and writing fiction, journalism, and the drama’, appeared in

---

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., pp.42 and 90.

<sup>170</sup> “Miss Broughton’s New Novel.” *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art*, 5 May 1894, p.474. My emphasis.

<sup>171</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, p.44.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., p.45.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p.46.

<sup>175</sup> “In this connection it is amusing to note...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Banbury Advertiser*, 25 April 1901, p.8.

the educational advertisements section of the front page of the *Daily Mail*.<sup>176</sup> An almost identical notice appeared in the *Athenaeum* the same day.<sup>177</sup> Having seen the latter, the *Globe* offered their thoughts on the venture the following week, calling the school a ‘curious establishment’.<sup>178</sup> Whilst they could understand ‘instruction in journalism’, and in writing generally, they said, ‘vocal lessons on the art of story-writing’ were ‘too comic’.<sup>179</sup> ‘Will the scholars all sit together?’ they asked.<sup>180</sup> ‘And will they leave school all writing like Miss Marryat?’<sup>181</sup> They went on: ‘The aim of the school is, we take it, to make writing pay. To do this it may be necessary to observe what kind of book the public is buying, and teach the scholar to emulate it. Thus we expect to see advertisements of special courses of instruction in Corelliography, and Barrieography’ (references to Marie Corelli and J. M. Barrie).<sup>182</sup>

Florence Marryat issued a firm, lengthy, and well-written response in the *Globe* a few days later. People, she said, could ‘have talent which they are unable, simply from want of experience, to turn to account in the most profitable way’.<sup>183</sup> They could ‘possess both imagination and power, without the capability of weaving a plot or constructing a story, so as to render it available for marketable purposes’.<sup>184</sup> As an editor and reviewer, she had had experience of manuscripts which ‘were full of “grit”’, but were ‘quite unfit for publication’.<sup>185</sup> She was not claiming to be able to give her students an imagination, ‘any more than [famous opera singer] Sims Reeves professes to endow his with a voice’, but that ‘given the imagination and the voice, we can both teach them how to turn it to the best account’.<sup>186</sup> As to whether her students would all end up writing like her, she asked, ‘Do all Sims Reeves’ pupils sing like himself?’<sup>187</sup>

Their columnist ‘seem[ed] to imagine’, she said, ‘that though singing, music, painting, sculpture, and all the professions require training, literature only wants pen, ink, paper, and plenty of assurance to crown it with success, that there is nothing to be taught concerning it’.<sup>188</sup> She continued:

---

<sup>176</sup> “The School of Literary Art...” *Daily Mail*, 23 January 1897, p.1. This was not the only advert in the paper – see, for example, “The School of Literary Art...” *Daily Mail*, 1 March 1897, p.8.

<sup>177</sup> “The School of Literary Art.” *The Athenaeum*, 23 January 1897, p.98.

<sup>178</sup> “In the current number of the ‘Athenaeum’...” [Under ‘Literary Gossip’], *The Globe and Traveller*, 30 January 1897, p.6.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> “A School of Fiction.” *The Globe and Traveller*, 4 February 1897, p.3.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

If your reviewer imagines that nothing more is necessary to write a novel than fertile ideas, he is very much mistaken. That is the notion most young authors commence with, and that is the reason that nine-tenths of them fail. In instructing pupils to compose and write an ordinary novel there are many things to be considered – grammar, plot, construction, composition, style, length, euphony; the development of the plot, the complexity of plot, the sub-plot; proportionate space for characters, description and dialogue; the difference between narration and action; how to begin and how to finish.<sup>189</sup>

Furthermore, young people could be taught ‘how to think, to judge, to observe, and to deduct conclusions from what they see and hear’ to compensate for their limited ‘experience in studying character and the delineation of the human passions’.<sup>190</sup> A lot of this, she said, was about passing on her experience, precisely what teachers of all subjects did by definition.<sup>191</sup> Neither was her school an unwelcome, hare-brained scheme. ‘Before announcing it publicly’, she noted, she had ‘submitted’ the idea ‘to some of the men who are highest in the profession of letters to-day, and they not only approved ... but thought that such a school was needed’.<sup>192</sup>

Marryat was dead by the end of the century, but opinion over her school – seemingly the first of its kind – appears to have reignited a debate that had gone on for some time.<sup>193</sup> In 1891, comments from Walter Besant about the idea of starting a school had prompted reaction in several publications.<sup>194</sup> The *Scotsman* had noted that a lot had been said on the idea, and that ‘perhaps’ it was ‘time for the public to waken up to the fact that a new institution is probably about to be added to the “features of the times”’.<sup>195</sup> One local paper had asked why, as a fine art, fiction should not be ‘systematically studied and mastered’ as opposed to being ‘learned by bitter experience and disheartening trials’.<sup>196</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> In 1894, three years before Marryat started her school, the *Pall Mall Gazette* wrote, ‘so far as we are aware, no school or college of novel-writing exists in the country’. See “The Education of Novelists.” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 March 1894, p.3.

<sup>194</sup> See, for example, “A School for Fiction.” *The Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express*, 11 April 1891, p.5; “A School of Fiction.” *The Illustrated London News*, 18 April 1891, p.507; “In the latest number of the *Author* Mr Walter Besant once more affirms that novel writing can be taught...” *Manchester Guardian*, 23 April 1891, p.5; “Mr Walter Besant has in hand, or at any rate in the air, a scheme for starting a School of Fiction...” *The Scotsman*, 24 April 1891, p.4; and “A School of Fiction.” *Northern Daily Mail* [Hartlepool], 1 May 1891, p.2. From these articles, it appears Besant made comments in (at least) the *Author* and the *New Review*.

<sup>195</sup> “Mr Walter Besant has in hand, or at any rate in the air, a scheme for starting a School of Fiction...” *Scotsman*, 24 April 1891, p.4.

<sup>196</sup> “‘A School for Fiction.’” *Blackburn Standard*, 11 April 1891, p.5.

In the mid-1880s, meanwhile, a review of a literary manual had claimed that literature and journalism could not ‘be taught in ... any amount of printed matter’.<sup>197</sup> No “guide”, they said, could ‘teach a man how to succeed as a writer’, and that if ‘technics’ could ‘be acquired through the medium of a treatise’, ‘then would the world indeed be overrun with journalists and authors!’.<sup>198</sup> They even considered writing guides ‘cruel’, due to their implication that ‘by the observance of certain rules any person can become an author or a journalist’, with ‘special aptitude and capacity, it would seem, being quite unnecessary’.<sup>199</sup> Around 1895, meanwhile, there appears to have been a ‘proposal to teach novel writing in the Board schools’.<sup>200</sup>

Opinions on the teachability of writing continued to be aired into the new century. In 1901, the *Banbury Advertiser* found it ‘amusing to note’ that a book titled *How to Write a Novel: A Practical Guide to the Art of Fiction* was to be published.<sup>201</sup> The journalist had reviewed another manual six years previously, and had thought then that its author had ‘attempted the impossible by trying to teach what cannot be taught’.<sup>202</sup> They had not changed their mind, stating, ‘novelists, like poets, are born, not made’ and expressing ‘little hope’ that the present book would ‘do any more for the creation of the species than past volumes of its kind have done’.<sup>203</sup> A local journalist in 1907 was even more convinced. Commenting on writer Barry Pain’s *First Lessons in Story-Writing*, they stated:

... I would say that the person who wants ‘lessons’ in story writing should not attempt story writing at all. Great writers of fiction are not made by rule. They are not even made by practice, as the musician or the painter is; indeed, their first triumphs are often their first amateur attempts. I have studied several books of the ‘How to Write Fiction’ order, and yet I am as far from being able to write a story as Mr Andrew Lang, who ‘gives away’ three or four good themes in his ‘Adventures Among Books’ simply because he could not make use of them himself. Fielding, Scott, Cervantes, and Dickens, we may be certain, began to write stories without any tuition from a master of the craft. They just used their eyes and their brains, and if they had any theories of technique it is almost certain they would not be in accord with those of Mr Barry Pain.<sup>204</sup>

Regardless of the popularity of literary manuals, the expression of such opinions, even just in local papers, suggests that these sorts of views were not particularly uncommon or controversial. They clearly coexisted, though, alongside opposing views. In 1910, the *Scotsman*

---

<sup>197</sup> “Guides to Authorship.” *The Globe and Traveller*, 14 May 1886, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> “Fiction and the School Board.” *Pick-Me-Up*, 30 March 1895, p.404.

<sup>201</sup> “In this connection it is amusing to note...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Banbury Advertiser*, 25 April 1901, p.8.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> “What a wonderful age we live in...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette*, 5 July 1907, p.3.

noted the assumption that ‘the art of novel writing can be taught’, praising the anonymous *How to Write a Novel* as ‘one of the best’ books about novel writing, which would ‘undoubtedly be useful to the amateur who is willing to learn the rudiments of the art’.<sup>205</sup>

Debates about the teachability of fiction writing and opinions about the right to write are revealing, and tell us more about attitudes towards aspirants and about what writing was and who could, and should, be doing it. In the arguments that writing was *not* teachable, and in some of the views about aspirants’ compositions, we can see the perpetuation of Romantic ideas of literary genius: writing was something mysterious; the core of what being a writer was could not be learnt; and people could either write or they couldn’t (and many aspirants – it was clearly thought – simply could not). In this black and white vision, there appears to be little belief in, or acknowledgement of, the possibility of improvement, or in a gradation of ability.

Again, it is interesting to see how these knotty ideas play out in fiction. *A Beginner* gives the impression that fiction writing is not something that can be learnt. Despite stating early on that she does not expect to make money from a first novel, Jocelyn’s book bonfire at the end suggests she comes to believe herself incapable of improvement.<sup>206</sup> Her destruction of her unsuccessful novel suggests she sees it only as an horrendous nightmare to be forgotten, not – in the *Self-Help* sense – as a necessary stepping stone on the path to success. By contrast, Glen, in *A Struggle*, makes gradual – if unconscious – improvements in her writing, and persevering, moves on from setbacks and bounces back from disappointments.<sup>207</sup> Rather than burning *her* failed novel, *Tyrrel’s Son*, on a bonfire, she moves on, later ‘eschew[ing] all mention of her early failures’ and ‘dat[ing] her career from the publication of [the successful] *Ashtree Manor*’.<sup>208</sup> Interestingly, Glen does burn a pile of manuscripts herself, in a small scene very early on, but after ‘watch[ing] them consume till no scrap remained’, she – significantly – ‘with a lightened heart’, then ‘betook herself to a different sort of writing – bolder, more ambitious, and indeed, considering her youth and inexperience, extraordinary’.<sup>209</sup> Perhaps crucially though, Glen ‘possesses literary genius’.<sup>210</sup>

In the simplistic stances of these debates, there is also a reluctance to recognise that *some* elements of writing might be taught – or at least understood to a greater extent – through tuition.

---

<sup>205</sup> “Although we have it on authority that no one thinks of questioning that poets are born and not made...” [Under ‘Miscellaneous Works’], *The Scotsman*, 8 December 1910, p.4.

<sup>206</sup> Broughton, *A Beginner*, pp.9 and 204–5.

<sup>207</sup> Riddell, *Struggle*, see, for example, pp.225 and 190.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.239 and 329.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, p.119.

<sup>210</sup> Colella, *Charlotte Riddell’s City Novels and Victorian Business*, see Epilogue, paragraph following footnote 26 (accessed via electronic legal deposit). See also Peterson, ‘Charlotte Riddell’s *A Struggle for Fame*’, pp.100, 104–5, and 108, and Ifill, ‘The Female Professional as Orphan’, pp.136 and 144.

Literary manuals, meanwhile, were sometimes seen not as benign tools that may or may not be helpful, but as something actively malignant, that could inflict cruelty on aspirants (by making them think they could write) and – along with proposed schools of fiction – could have a negative impact on the fiction writing profession by creating even more writers and further saturating the market. Seen again in a commercial sense, writing was, in some ways, a runaway train to which brakes must be applied.

Aspirants, in many ways, appear to have been in a lose-lose situation; on the one hand they were criticised for plunging headlong into writing, but on the other, avenues of instruction, such as literary manuals, were (by some) rubbished. As we have seen, aspirants were also sometimes not given much credit, either in terms of their literary ability, or in their ability to be able to recognise the pitfalls and impressions within literary advice. Aspirants are impressionable, lacking not only the skills to write, but the skills to protect themselves from apparently harmful literary forces. The sense of the literary profession, and the sense of writing as a commercial activity, are also very clear in some of these opinions. There is little recognition or appreciation that some aspirants might have wanted to learn to write fiction for their own enjoyment, or that such an endeavour might be worthwhile. On the contrary, there is a sense that fiction writing was not a skill that everyone could, and should, develop.

Through an examination of literary representations of fiction writing and aspirant writers, this chapter has explored how particular assumptions about writing and writers were central to the depictions of them in print media, novels, and other literature in this period. Discussion of fiction writing was generally contained within discussion of the literary profession – a professional, commercial, and often full-time model of authorship. The aspiring writer was also frequently assumed to be young, whilst assumptions and fears about the aspirant are evident in debates about the right to write and the teachability of writing. We can also see how Romantic ideas of authorship seem to have persisted into this period, supporting Clare Pettitt's stance that the stereotypes of both 'the Romantic creator and the middle-class professional ... maintained currency throughout the nineteenth century'.<sup>211</sup>

We can also get a sense, however, of how the professional definition of authorship may have led to an exclusion of other understandings of writing, ones that would have been of particular importance for new generations of working-class authors using their literacy skills for the first time. With writing rarely depicted as a pleasurable, beneficial activity that could be

---

<sup>211</sup> Clare Pettitt, *Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.12. Also see Salmon, *Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession*, p.10.

conducted by people of all ages, or as something that could be pursued as a part-time hobby, as opposed to a career, we can see a lack of acknowledgement of the non-materialist uses of, and motivations for, writing. In the discussions and representations of the aspirant figure, meanwhile, we can detect the fears and anxieties that some contemporaries had about the concept of mass literacy.

By starting to think about the differences between aspirant writers and more established writers, this chapter has also hinted at how aspirants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may have experienced writing somewhat differently. Chapter 3 will examine evidence of real-life aspirant writers and their motivations in this period to consider the extent to which the lives and experiences of real writers may have diverged from these literary representations.

## CHAPTER 3 – THE ASPIRANT IN FACT

Finding concrete evidence of the ‘invisible masses’ of aspirant writers in this period is a difficult task. Traces of aspirants do exist, however, in publishers’ archives, newspapers, and magazines. With the help of census data, these traces can be fleshed out, providing, in some cases, biographical portraits of individuals who were attempting to write in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The first part of this chapter will present social and geographical evidence of real-life aspirants in this period. It will lay out data gathered for this study about individuals who submitted work to publishers, those who wrote autobiographies, and those who sent their work to magazines or entered literary competitions in newspapers. Following Chapter 1’s discussion of the background to, and wider changes throughout, this period, Part II will look at the reasons why individuals put pen to paper.

### PART I

#### Submitters to Macmillan and Chatto and Windus Publishers

The first section of this part will draw on the data of 71 individuals who submitted fictional writing (novels, stories, or poetry), to the publishers Macmillan or Chatto and Windus (or both) between 1870 and 1914.<sup>1</sup> How this data was gathered will now be briefly explained. The names, addresses, and submission details of individuals were taken from the manuscript entry books of both publishers, listing, in date order, work received by the company. Name and address searches were then conducted in the census nearest to the individual’s submission date (either 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, or 1911) followed by additional censuses, where possible.<sup>2</sup> Where a definite or highly probable identification in the census was made, an individual was added to the

---

<sup>1</sup> The archives consulted were the Macmillan Archive at the British Library, London (Records of Manuscripts, henceforth ‘RoM’, Volumes 56016–56021, and Readers’ Reports, henceforth ‘RR’, Volumes 55934–55935, 55941, 55944–55946, 55961–55964, 55977, and 55982) and the Archives of Chatto and Windus Ltd, University of Reading (Manuscript Entry Books, henceforth ‘MEB’, CW E/1 to CW E/10). For a list of all the writers’ archive details, see Appendix 1, and for their submission details, see Appendix 2. A small minority of the Chatto and Windus cases appear to have been offers to submit work, rather than actual submissions of work, based on the comments given in the entry books. (For example, some short stories and a novel by D. O’Brien – thought to be Daniel O’Brien – were ‘offered for perusal’ in December 1904. Chatto ‘declined to see’ the material. See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 19884.) Such entries have been treated the same as actual submissions. Three individuals in the sample submitted work to both publishers – these are: Charles Ely (Macmillan in 1901, Chatto in 1901); Gladys Davidson (Macmillan in 1911, Chatto in 1911 and 1912); and K./R. Widdup, believed to be Katherine Widdup (Macmillan in 1901 and 1913, Chatto in 1912). One of the submissions, that of Ellen Cloke, appears to have been a translation. See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26042. Cloke submitted “The Story of the Wind and the Rain’, from the French of Paul de Musset’ in 1914. This was published in 1923: see Paul De Musset, *Mister Wind and Mistress Rain*, translated by Ellen E. Cloke (London, G. G. Harrap & Co., 1923).

<sup>2</sup> For a list of the census findings for all 71 writers, see Appendix 2.

dataset. Individuals with ‘author’ or ‘writer’ (or a variation) listed as a profession were excluded, as were those with clear wealth, independent means, a relatively high-level profession, or a spouse with a relatively high-level profession (bar three exceptions).<sup>3</sup>

Some listings in the entry books were deliberately bypassed due to incomplete information that would have made finding a definite census match difficult; entries with a first initial rather than a first full name, or with a house name rather than a numbered house in a street, for example, were often skipped over. Some entry books were also deliberately selected over others; entry books from or near census years naturally yielded more positive census identifications than entry books dated four or five years from a census year. Entry books from later in the period also tended to be more comprehensive than the earliest books, whilst the handwriting in some entry books was more legible than in others.

Even taking into account these points, census searches often drew a blank, possibly due to missing, incorrect, or mistranscribed census data. The 1911 Census, meanwhile, is a more useful census than the four preceding it in that it provides additional information, such as the number of rooms in each dwelling.<sup>4</sup> It is also, generally, clearer and more accurate. The purpose of this investigation was to create small biographical portraits for an illustrative range of aspirants writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These aspirants offer some insight into the situations and circumstances of some ordinary people who were trying to write in this period.

It is believed that the submissions of all individuals in the dataset were rejected. Rejected individuals in the entry books were deliberately chosen, although the vast majority of submissions to both publishers were rejections – only a fraction of submissions were accepted, and virtually all successful submitters researched were listed as authors in the census and/or were

---

<sup>3</sup> The first exception is Doris Wheler, who was kept in the sample simply because of her unusual age (15). Wheler, the daughter of a retired army lieutenant colonel, lived in Hove, East Sussex, with her family, in a house that according to the 1911 Census had 15 rooms, excluding bathrooms. (See Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13783; 1901 Census, household record for 114 Lansdowne Place, Hove; 1911 Census, household record for 114 Lansdowne Place, Hove; and 1939 Register, record for Doris L. Wheler, London, b. 1886.) The second exception is Cyril Silverston, who lived in a 12-roomed house. (See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23857, and 1911 Census, household record for 10 Rotten Park Road, Birmingham.) The third exception is Wallace Nichols whose house in Tulse Hill had 10 rooms, according to the 1911 Census. (See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20481, and 1911 Census, household record for 51 Palace Road, Tulse Hill.) As will be seen, a number of individuals in the sample *were* already authors at the time they submitted; these have been kept in given that the censuses consulted did not describe them as authors. An exception is Linda Gardiner, who does have the word ‘author’ written near her occupation of ‘journalist’ in the 1891 Census; she has been kept in as authorship was still apparently not her main profession. (See Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7597, and 1891 Census, household record for 64 Parchment Street, Winchester.)

<sup>4</sup> The 1911 Census also gives the total number of children born to a woman, as well as the breakdown of those still living and those who have died.

wealthy. This database, however, should be seen as a snapshot of these writers at one moment, rather than as a comprehensive picture of all their writing and publication attempts. Whilst the submissions recorded here were all rejections, and many of the writers may never have had commercial success with writing, research suggests that around 25 of the 71 individuals published something at some point. Around 11 of these individuals appear to have been published authors already at the point they submitted.<sup>5</sup> Four more appear to have become published authors within a year or two of submission; five more within four to six years; a further three within nine to 13 years; and a final writer 28 years after submission.<sup>6</sup> At least seven of the individuals appear to have gone on to publish a single work after submission.<sup>7</sup> Around 12

---

<sup>5</sup> These are: Regina Bloch, Gladys Davidson, Linda Gardiner, Claude Greening, Jessie Krikorian, Alfred Macey, Joseph Orme, Hamilton Seymour, Cyril Silverston, Herbert Rowland Walker, and John Wrigglesworth. Regina Bloch submitted in 1914 and published a book in 1911. Gladys Davidson submitted in 1911 and 1912. Given her submissions were children's tales, it is presumed she is the same Gladys Davidson who was a prolific author before and after this point (over 25 works). Linda Gardiner submitted in 1892. There are two works by a Linda Gardiner before that date. Claude Greening submitted poetry in 1901, and a verse work by a Claude Greening was published in 1896. Jessie Krikorian submitted in 1892, and Jessie Krikorian is listed as the author of a book published in 1883, as well as another in 1892 (this latter could have been her Chatto submission as the two have slightly similar titles). Alfred Macey submitted poetry in 1911, and there is a poetic work by an Alfred Macey dated 1899. Joseph Orme submitted in 1912 and 1914. There are three works by a Joseph Orme published in the 1880s. Hamilton Seymour submitted in 1911. There are three works by a Hamilton Seymour published in the 1880s and 1890s. (Two are co-authored.) Cyril Silverston submitted in 1910. Chatto's notes mention he is already a published author, and there are indeed two pre-1910 books by him. Herbert Rowland Walker (Rowland Walker in the Chatto records) submitted in 1914. There are at least three works published by Rowland Walker before this date. John Wrigglesworth submitted in 1891 (under his name, but using Hubert Cloudesley for his work). He appears to have published one work under his pseudonym the previous year. For submission details, see as follows. For the above published works, see the British Library Catalogue. For Regina Bloch, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25824. For Gladys Davidson, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20854, and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24405, 24406, and 24731. For Linda Gardiner, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7597. For Claude Greening, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13558. For Jessie Krikorian, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/3, entry 11186. For Alfred Macey, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24162. For Joseph Orme, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24649, and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26095. For Hamilton Seymour, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24260 and 24268. For Cyril Silverston, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23857. For Herbert Rowland Walker, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25917. For John Wrigglesworth, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7294.

<sup>6</sup> Those published within a year or two are: Doris Wheler, Charles Pritchard, Mary Hullah, and Agnes Holliday. Those published four to six years after submission are: Wallace Nichols, William Clay, Richard Goddard, Annie Gertrude Letch, and Stephen Springall. Those published nine to 13 years after submission are: Ellen Cloke, Sarah Wilcher, and Maysel Jenkinson. The writer who published after 28 years is Sarah Cooper. NB: The final writer, here, Evelyn Spearing, has been excluded given that she became a literary scholar (see footnote 9). Details of all relevant submissions/publications here are given in subsequent footnotes.

<sup>7</sup> These are: William Clay, Ellen Cloke, Sarah Cooper, Agnes Holliday, Annie Gertrude Letch, Doris Wheler, and Sarah Wilcher. William Clay submitted in 1914, and appears to have published a non-fiction work in 1918. Ellen Cloke submitted an apparent translation in 1914, which was published in 1923. Sarah Cooper submitted in 1905, and a work with the same title, by an 'S. A. Cooper', was published in 1933. (Sarah Cooper's middle initial was 'A'.) Agnes Holliday submitted in 1911, and published one title in 1913. Annie Gertrude Letch submitted in 1904, and appears to have published this submission in 1910. Doris Wheler submitted in 1901, and this work appears to have been published by a different publisher in 1902. Sarah Wilcher submitted in 1910, and this work was published in 1921. For submission details, see as follows. For the above published works, see the British Library Catalogue. For William Clay, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26045. For Ellen Cloke, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26042. For Sarah Cooper, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20143. For Agnes Holliday, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24286. For Annie Gertrude Letch, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 19927. For Doris Wheler, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13783. For Sarah Wilcher, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20179.

to 15 writers appear to have authored two or more works during their lifetime, with at least three of these being or becoming prolific writers.<sup>8</sup> One further submitter, Evelyn Spearing (later Simpson), became a literary scholar, and is listed in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.<sup>9</sup>

The analysis that follows will look at the occupations and then the locations of the aspirants in the sample. The year an individual submitted their writing to Macmillan or Chatto and Windus is given in brackets after their name. Where an individual published at some point, this is also indicated.

The occupation that appears most frequently – where a current or previous job could be found for a submitter – is teaching. Of the 71 individuals, 10 had worked in the teaching profession in some capacity.<sup>10</sup> At least three appear to have had fairly substantial teaching careers. Sarah Wilcher (1910, published 1921), is listed as a schoolmistress in 1901, an elementary

---

<sup>8</sup> The prolific writers were Gladys Davidson (who was already prolific at the point of her submissions), Herbert Rowland Walker (known as Rowland Walker), and Wallace Nichols. For their submissions, see as follows: Gladys Davidson: Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20854, and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24405, 24406, and 24731; Herbert Rowland Walker: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25917; and Wallace Nichols: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20481. For their works, see their numerous entries in the British Library Catalogue. Evelyn Spearing (later Simpson) could also possibly be included here if one includes academic works. (See Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20858, and D. Phillips, “Simpson [née Spearing], Evelyn Mary (1885–1963), literary scholar.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 04 October 2008.) The remaining writers are Regina Bloch (3 works), Linda Gardiner (5 works), Claude Greening (4 works), Mary Hullah (at least 10 works), Maysel Jenkinson (4 works), Jessie Krikorian (2 works), Charles Pritchard (at least 7 works), Stephen Springall (3 works), John Wrigglesworth (4 works), and possibly Richard Goddard (5 works), Alfred Macey (2 works), and Joseph Orme (3 works). For their submissions, see as follows. Regina Bloch: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25824; Linda Gardiner: Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7597; Claude Greening: Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13558; Mary Hullah: Macmillan RoM Volume 56016, entry 3533; Maysel Jenkinson: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25541; Jessie Krikorian: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/3, entry 11186; Charles Pritchard: Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13708; Stephen Springall: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17842; John Wrigglesworth: Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7294; Richard Goddard: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24407 and 24720 (under R. Hazlewood – his wife’s maiden name); Alfred Macey: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24162; and Joseph Orme: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24649, and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26095. For their works, see their entries in the British Library Catalogue, or later text/footnotes. NB: 1) Three of Wrigglesworth’s titles are under the name Hubert Cloudeley. 2) A further submitter, George Wilson (middle initial ‘F.’), who sent in poems, may, potentially, be the George F. Wilson that authored two works of poetry in 1902 and 1905, but this is unclear.

<sup>9</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20858, and D. Phillips, “Simpson [née Spearing], Evelyn Mary (1885–1963), literary scholar.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 04 October 2008.

<sup>10</sup> In three additional cases, the submitter may have been a teacher, but it is not certain which of two or more family members the submitter was. These cases are as follows: 1) Miss Kingman (it is unclear whether the submitter was retired elementary teacher Mary Kingman or her sister Ellen Kingman, a shop assistant to a greengrocer (presumably her father, who was a greengrocer); 2) Joseph Baxter (there are a father and son living in the same house, both named Joseph Baxter. The son is a schoolteacher, while the father appears to own a bootmaker’s shop); 3) Miss Hogg (there is a widow living at the specified address with her five daughters – all of them could be the submitter Miss Hogg. The three daughters who have an occupation listed are a schoolteacher, a typist, and a showroom assistant at a draper’s). See, respectively: Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7492, and 1891 Census, household record for 2a Lansdown Road, Bath; Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20112, and 1901 Census, household record for 60 Barking Road, West Ham; and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24344, and 1911 Census, household record for 58 Streathbourne Road, Upper Tooting.

teacher in 1891, and was a retired schoolmistress nine months after submission.<sup>11</sup> The occupation of Edith Giles (1901) is unclear at the time of submission, but she was a schoolteacher both 10 and 20 years previously, and is listed as a retired teacher 38 years after her submission.<sup>12</sup> Marian Diamond (1911) had been a teacher for at least 10 years at submission, and was also a retired teacher in 1939.<sup>13</sup> Two others – Emily Roff (1913) and Agnes Holliday (1911, published 1913) – were, or had been, elementary schoolteachers, while Louisa Simmons (1892) was a kindergarten principal.<sup>14</sup> Of the others somehow involved in teaching, Evelyn Spearing (1911, many later publications) was an assistant lecturer in English, Mary Hullah (1882, many later publications) was a governess, while Sarah Cooper (1905, published 1933) was a self-employed teacher working from home.<sup>15</sup> Three of the 10 women were also not the only teachers

---

<sup>11</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20179; 1911 Census, household record for 53 Thanet Road, Margate; 1901 Census, household record for 23 Gladstone Street, Southwark; and 1891 Census, records for Gladstone Street, Southwark – it is unclear which house Wilcher is in – possibly no. 52. Her 1910 Macmillan submission was called ‘A Chance in Life’, and this was published in 1921: see Sarah A. Wilcher, *A Chance in Life. A Novel* (London, A. H. Stockwell, 1921).

<sup>12</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13416; 1901 Census, household record for Stafford Villa, Paignton; 1891 Census, household record for 235 Hyde Park Road, Leeds; 1881 Census, household record for 86 Victoria Road, Leeds (Headingley with Burley); 1939 Register, record for Edith J. F. Giles, Malvern, Worcestershire, b. 1856; and 1911 Census, household record for 6 Westgate Road, Beckenham, Kent.

<sup>13</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20878; 1911 Census, household record for 50 Crofton Road, Plaistow, London; 1901 Census, household record for 63 Ravenscroft Road, West Ham, London; and 1939 Register, record for Marion E. Diamond, Wales, b. 1877.

<sup>14</sup> For Emily Roff, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22605; 1911 Census, household record for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester; 1901 Census, household records for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester (Roff is absent) and 8 Toronto Road, Tilbury, Chadwell St Mary, Essex (the Emily Roff present here is likely our Emily Roff, despite the incorrect age – birthplace and occupation fit); and 1939 Register, record for Emily Roff, Colchester, b. 1872. For Agnes Holliday, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24286; 1911 Census, household record for Agnes Theresa Holliday, Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire (Croft Cottage); and 1939 Register, record for Agnes T. Holliday, Berkshire, b. 1878. Holliday appears to have published a title in 1913: see, on British Library Catalogue, Agnes Theresa Holliday, *Five and One. A Tale* (London: Christian Knowledge Society, 1913). NB: This was not Holliday’s 1911 submission. For Louisa Simmons, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7601, and 1891 Census, household record for Louisa Simmons, Wellington Road, Enfield, Edmonton, Middlesex (Rosebank).

<sup>15</sup> For Evelyn Spearing, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20858; 1911 Census, household records for 6 Parkside, Cambridge (Spearing absent) and 9 Bateman Street, Cambridge; 1901 Census, household record for 4 Park Terrace, Cambridge (on transcript as Emmanuel House, 4 Parker Street, Park Terrace); and 1891 Census, household record for 12 Warkworth Street, Cambridge. For information on Spearing’s publications, see D. Phillips, “Simpson [née Spearing], Evelyn Mary (1885–1963), literary scholar.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 04 October 2008. For Mary Hullah, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56016, entry 3533, and 1881 Census, household record for Mary E. Hullah, London (5 Allsop Place Cornwall Residences). (Mary may have been a daughter of the choirmaster John Pyke Hullah – the 1851 Census lists what appears to be John Pyke Hullah in the house of his father-in-law, with four children, one of whom is a Mary Hullah with the correct age and place of birth. See 1851 Census, household record for John Foster, 17 Norfolk Terrace, Kensington, London.) The British Library Catalogue lists multiple works by a Mary E. Hullah. Her 1882 submission, ‘Hannah Tarne’, appears to have been published by Macmillan the following year. See British Library Catalogue entry for *Hannah Tarne: A Story* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1883). See also Mary E. Hullah, *A Little Owl and Other Stories* (London: Remington & Co., 1883); Mary E. Hullah, *The Lion Battalion and Other Stories* (London: Hatchards, 1885); Mary E. Hullah, *Philippa. A Novel* (London: Hatchards, 1887); Mary E. Hullah, *Namesakes. A Story* (London: Hatchards, 1887); Mary E. Hullah, *The Gracious Lady’s Ring. A Tale* (London: Hatchards, 1887); Mary E. Hullah, *In Hot Haste. A Novel* (London: R. Bentley & Son, 1888); Mary E. Hullah, *As the Tide Turns. A Novel* (London: Ward & Downey, 1890); Mary E. Hullah, *Hans and His Friend and Other Stories* (1893); and Mary E. Hullah, *My Aunt Constantia Jane. A Story for Children* (London: Bliss, Sands, and Foster, 1893). For Sarah Cooper, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20143; 1901 Census, household record for Sarah A. Cooper, Lichfield Street, Walsall (Oxford House); and 1911 Census, household record for 50 Lichfield

in their immediate family – Emily Roff (1913) had three sisters who were all either elementary or secondary school teachers, and was the daughter of a school master; the sister of Sarah Wilcher (1910, published 1921) was a teacher of ‘deaf and dumb’, while Sarah Cooper (1905, published 1933) taught alongside her sister at their home, Oxford House, which, six years after her submission, they were calling Oxford House School.<sup>16</sup>

The second most common occupation in the sample is journalism, with nine of the men and women listed as journalists in the census.<sup>17</sup> Their occupational experience of writing does not seem, however, to have made these individuals natural fiction writers. Cecil Coote, listed as a newspaper reporter three years before submitting a story to Chatto in 1914, was described as ‘almost illiterate’, while the efforts of journalist William Bryant (1881), were deemed by Macmillan to be ‘quite unworthy of serious words’.<sup>18</sup> Charles Montague Clark (1914)’s story was judged ‘not very grammatical’, while his ‘mere literary performance’ was ‘without qualities’.<sup>19</sup> Thomas Clarke (1911), meanwhile, was criticised for ‘padding’ and ‘very little character-drawing’, whilst the reader of Regina Bloch’s work, sent to Chatto in 1914, noted how she was ‘one of those young ladies whose works are mysteriously various and unpublished’, who ‘in spite of her strain[?] after beauty of thought and diction ... never once achieves anything but an air of

---

Street, Walsall. Cooper’s 1905 submission was titled ‘Links in Life’. This was published in 1933. See S. A. Cooper, *Links in Life* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1933).

<sup>16</sup> For the Roff family, see 1911 Census, household record for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester; 1901 Census, household record for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester (Emily Roff is absent); and 1939 Register, record for Emily Roff, Colchester, b. 1872. For the Wilcher family, see 1911 Census, household record for 53 Thanet Road, Margate, and 1901 Census, household record for 23 Gladstone Street, Southwark. For the Cooper family, see 1901 Census, household record for Sarah A. Cooper, Lichfield Street, Walsall (Oxford House), and 1911 Census, household record for 50 Lichfield Street, Walsall. ‘Oxford House School’ is written on the actual census record.

<sup>17</sup> The nine journalists are as follows: William Bryant (Macmillan RoM Volume 56016, entry 3335); Linda Gardiner (Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7597); Thomas Clarke (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24150); Cecil Coote (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25945); Hamilton Seymour (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24260 and 24268); Regina Bloch (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25824); Charles Montague Clark (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26011); Frederick Stevens (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25206); and Alfred Gregory (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20840). Eliza Porter may also have previously been a journalist (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24506). For William Bryant, see 1881 Census, household record for 7 Greystoke Place, London. For Linda Gardiner, see 1891 Census, household record for 64 Parchment Street, Winchester. For Thomas Clarke, see 1911 Census, household record for 14 Ruskin Walk, Herne Hill, London. For Cecil Coote, see 1911 Census, household record for 6 Neale Road, Halstead, Essex. For Hamilton Seymour, see 1911 Census, household record for 40 Guilford Street, Russell Square, London. For Regina Bloch, see 1911 Census, household record for 88 Duke’s Avenue, Chiswick, London. For Charles Montague Clark, see 1911 Census, household record for 27 Holford Square, London. For Frederick Stevens, see 1911 Census, household record for 8 Belgrave Terrace, Wakefield. For Alfred Gregory, see 1911 Census, household record for 20 Guildford Place, Heaton, Newcastle on Tyne. For Eliza Porter, see 1911 Census, household record for 55 Gratton Road, Hammersmith/West Kensington, London.

<sup>18</sup> For Cecil Coote, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25945, and 1911 Census, household record for 6 Neale Road, Halstead, Essex. For William Bryant, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56016, entry 3335; Macmillan RR Volume 55935, entry for ‘An Evil Life (William Bryant) 3335’; and 1881 Census, household record for 7 Greystoke Place, London.

<sup>19</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26011.

moaning'.<sup>20</sup> (She had, however, published at least one item by this point – a booklet titled *The Vision of the King: A Coronation Souvenir* (1911) – and went on to publish two more a few years later.)<sup>21</sup>

The length of some of these aspirants' attempts, however, is worth noting. Alfred Gregory's story, 'Shadows', in 1906, was 110,000 words long, and came in at 588 pages.<sup>22</sup> Charles Montague Clark's submission was 96,000 words long; Frederick Stevens' was 463 pages, whilst Hamilton Seymour (1911, apparently published 1880s/1890s) submitted two stories within a week of each other – one of 70,000 words, and the other of 110 pages.<sup>23</sup>

Of the remaining aspirants in the sample, around 20 fall into low-level white-collar work. There are eight current or former clerks, such as shipping clerk George Walkington, merchant's clerk Charles Pritchard (apparently published later), and solicitor's clerk and apparent poet Claude Greening, all of whom submitted work in 1901; two typists, Rhoda Meyer (1901) and Gladys Davidson (1911 and 1912, multiple publications); and a handful of current or former agents, secretaries, and assistants, including stationer's representative Ernest Estcourt Hayward (1914), land agent and valuer's assistant Reginald Taylor (1892), and Richard Goddard, a secretary at a motor manufacturer's, who submitted work in 1911 and 1912.<sup>24</sup> Stephen Springall

---

<sup>20</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24150 and 25824, respectively.

<sup>21</sup> See Regina Miriam Bloch, *The Vision of the King. A Coronation Souvenir* (London: Greening & Co., 1911), Regina Miriam Bloch, *The Swine-Gods, and Other Visions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> impression (London: John Richmond, 1917), and Regina Miriam Bloch, *The Book of Strange Loves* (London: John Richmond, 1918).

<sup>22</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20840.

<sup>23</sup> See, respectively: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26011; Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25206; and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24260 and 24268. There are at least three works by a Hamilton Seymour published in the 1880s and 1890s. See Hamilton Seymour and Keith Robertson, *The Golden Pin, Or a Week of Madness* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood & Sons, 1884); Hamilton Seymour and Keith Robertson, *The Scarlet Cord. A Medical Love Story* (Edinburgh: William Paterson, c.1886); and Hamilton Seymour, *The Black Cross. A Story* (Glasgow: Morison Bros, 1894).

<sup>24</sup> For George Walkington, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13822, and 1901 Census, household record for 25 Taylor Street, Birkenhead. For Charles Pritchard, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13708; 1901 Census, household record for 48 Grosvenor Park Road, Walthamstow; 1911 Census, household record for 51 Peterborough Road, Leyton; and 1891 Census, household record for 57 Granville Road, Walthamstow. Pritchard (who submitted poetry) appears to have gone on to publish – there are seven poetry works by a Charles H. Pritchard dated between 1902 and 1926 (and Pritchard's middle initial was 'H'). See Charles H. Pritchard, *Poems* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1902) – this was likely his 1901 submission, which is recorded as just 'Poems'; Charles H. Pritchard, *Gods Triumphant, and Other Poems* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1906); Charles H. Pritchard, *Elijab, and Other Poems* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1907); Charles H. Pritchard, *Owen Glyndwr, and Other Poems* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1908); Charles H. Pritchard, *Vision; and Other Verse* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1910); Charles H. Pritchard, *Poems on Legendary and Historical Subjects, Series 1* (London: A. H. Stockwell, 1923); and Charles H. Pritchard, *Poems of Jewry* (London: Elliot Stock, 1926). For Claude Greening, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13558; 1901 Census, household record for 46 Marion Road Lonesome, Mitcham, Croydon; and 1891 Census, household record for Claude Greening, Palace Road, Streatham (Rookwood). Greening submitted poetry, and there is an 1896 work by a Claude Greening, see Claude Greening, *Wedded for Love. A Play, etc. In Verse* (Balham: The Author, 1896). There are also three much later works: Claude Greening, *God's Beauty Scenes, and Other Poems* (London: Brixton Free Press, 1928); Claude Greening, *Inhlobane, and Other Poems* (London: Brixton Free Press, 1928); and Claude Greening, *'Once more unto the Breach'. A Further Selection of Poems* (London: Brixton Free Press, 1928). For Rhoda Meyer, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13883, and 1901 Census, household record for 31 Fountain Street, Hull. For

(1901, published 1907, 1908, and 1910) was some form of steward, whilst an aspirant believed to be William Pimblett was working as an auditor (apparently in the textiles industry) two years before his submission in 1913.<sup>25</sup> William Clay, who submitted a story about trade union organisers in 1914 (and, it seems, at some point earlier), was the busy, hard-working, and well-respected librarian of Southend Public Library.<sup>26</sup> (He also published a small non-fiction booklet in 1918.)<sup>27</sup>

There are merchants, namely egg and butter merchant John Donnelly (1911), fruit dealer George Lee (1912), and colonial general produce merchant Edward Jacobson (1911).<sup>28</sup> There is also a scattering of manual workers. Alfred Macey (1911, possibly published 1899 and 1919) was a shipyard driller, John Wrigglesworth (1891, published 1890, 1897, 1899, and c.1900) was a

---

Gladys Davidson, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20854; Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24405, 24406, and 24731; and 1911 Census, household record for 78 Glen Road, Sheffield. Davidson had already published numerous children's stories, adaptations and school texts by 1911–1912. See British Library Catalogue, for example: Gladys Davidson, *The Life of Bob the Cat* (London: G. W. Bacon & Co., 1902); Gladys Davidson, *Outline Text Lessons for Junior Classes* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1905); Gladys Davidson, *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments. Selected and Retold for Children by Gladys Davidson* (London: Blackie & Son, 1906); Gladys Davidson and H. M. H., *Queer Adventures by Strange Adventurers. In Prose and Verse* (Leeds: Alf Cooke, 1907); Gladys Davidson, *The Water Babies. Very Simply Told for Infants by Gladys Davidson* (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1908); Gladys Davidson, *The Story of Perseus. Told Simply for the Lower Standards* (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1908); Gladys Davidson, *The Story of Robin Hood. Told Simply for the Lower Standards* (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1908); and Gladys Davidson, *Overheard at the Zoo* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1910). She also published works in succeeding decades. For Ernest Estcourt Hayward, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26031, and 1911 Census, household record for 32 Oakington Road, Paddington, London. For Reginald Taylor, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7813; 1891 Census, household record for 7 Castle Terrace, High Wycombe; and 1881 Census, household record for 36 St Clement Street, St Clement, Truro. For Richard Goddard, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24407 and 24720 (under R. Hazlewood – his wife's maiden name), and 1911 Census, household record for 7 Ranelagh Gardens, Fulham, London. Goddard possibly went on to publish. There are four works from the 1920s and 1930s, and a non-fiction work from 1916, all penned by a Richard E. Goddard, and 'E.' is the correct middle initial – this may or may not be him. See British Library Catalogue.

<sup>25</sup> For Stephen Springall, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17842; 1901 Census, household record for 3 Enfield Place, Uxbridge; and 1911 Census, household record for 3 Enfield Place, Uxbridge. Stephen Springall published his submission in 1908, see Stephen Springall, *That Indomitable Old Lady. A Romance of Fitzroy Square* (London: Henry J. Drane, 1908). He also published two non-fiction texts in 1907 and 1910: Stephen Springall, *Country Rambles round Uxbridge: A Descriptive Guide to the Neighbourhood* (Uxbridge: Lucy & Birch, 1907) and Stephen Springall, *Mr Springall's New Series of Right-o'-Way Leaflets* (Uxbridge: publisher unknown, 1910). NB: Springall lived in Uxbridge (see above census records). For William Pimblett, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22645, and 1911 Census, household record for 563 Chorley Old Road, Bolton. Pimblett's profession is given as 'auditor, [textile machine?]' – unclear word could be 'works'.

<sup>26</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26045, and 1911 Census, household record for William Clay, Hermitage Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Southend-on-Sea (Kersbrook). Chatto's comments say that 'it seems to be the same story which author submitted' some time previously. Also see "Election of a Librarian." [Under 'Public Library' section of 'Southend Town Council'], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 22 March 1906, p.3, and "Southend Council and Their Officials. Salaries Question Again." *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 20 February 1908, p.2.

<sup>27</sup> His published title is as follows: William Clay, *A History of Prittlewell Priory, Illustrated* (Southend-on-Sea: Donald Munro, 1918).

<sup>28</sup> For John Donnelly, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24305, and 1911 Census, household record for John Donnelly, Ravens Street, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury. For George Lee, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25103, and 1911 Census, household record for 3 Vale Terrace, Spital, Chesterfield. For Edward Jacobson, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 21284, and 1911 Census, household record for 41 The Avenue, West Ealing, London.

cotton dyer's labourer, and Georgina Lovesey (1891) was a dressmaker.<sup>29</sup> Alfred Phillips, who lived in Leicester and submitted in 1910, appears to have been a house painter – a Midlands equivalent of house painter and aspiring writer Robert Noonan, (pseudonym Tressell), whose working-class novel about painters and decorators, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, was being rejected from several publishers at almost exactly the same time.<sup>30</sup> (It was finally published in 1914.)<sup>31</sup>

Ellen Cloke (1914, published 1923), meanwhile, was working in service at a large estate three years prior to submitting to Chatto and Windus.<sup>32</sup> Both Millicent Burbridge (1910) and Maysel Jenkinson (1913, published 1920s/1930s) helped out at home in some capacity; Jenkinson as a poultry farmer.<sup>33</sup> Samuel Oakley (1910) was an artist.<sup>34</sup> Of the handful of

---

<sup>29</sup> For Alfred Macey, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24162; 1911 Census, household record for 119 Hedley Street, South Shields; and 1901 Census, household record for 15 Robertson Street, South Shields. Macey submitted poetry and there are two published poetic works by an Alfred Macey: *The Heart's Love and Feeling in Poetic Verses* (London: J. Blackwood & Co., 1899) and *A Quartette. Verses* (London: A. H. Stockwell, c.1919). For John Wrigglesworth, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7294, and 1891 Census, household record for John Wrigglesworth, Crescent, Elland with Greetland, Halifax. Wrigglesworth's publications are as follows: Hubert Cloudesley [pseud. John Wrigglesworth], *Passing Thoughts of a Working Man* (London: Elliot Stock, 1890); John Wrigglesworth, *Grass from a Yorkshire Village* (London: Roxburghe Press, 1897); Hubert Cloudesley [pseud. John Wrigglesworth], *Adventures of the Remarkable Twain* (London: Digby, Long & Co, 1899); and Hubert Cloudesley [pseud. John Wrigglesworth], *Idylls of Yorkshire* (Elland: Henry Watson, c.1900). He attached the name 'Hubert Cloudesley' to his work's title in his 1891 submission, although he submitted under his own name. As he lived near Halifax, it is assumed the work without the pseudonym, about Yorkshire, is him also. His 1891 submission was serialised in a local newspaper in 1894. See, for example: "A Yorkshire Story..." [advert], *The Halifax Guardian*, 10 March 1894, p.5; "The Sweetest Maid in Glowton." *The Halifax Guardian*, 17 March 1894, p.3, and "The Sweetest Maid in Glowton." *The Halifax Guardian*, 21 April 1894, p.2. These pieces contain references to a couple of other works, also possible serialisations or newspaper publications. For Georgina Lovesey, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7173; 1891 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, High Street, Stoke Goldington, Newport Pagnell; 1901 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, High Street, Stoke Goldington, Newport Pagnell; 1911 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, The Green, Stoke Goldington; and 1881 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, The Lamb Inn, High Street, Stoke Goldington.

<sup>30</sup> For Alfred Phillips, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24028, and 1911 Census, household record for 58 Bardolph Street, Leicester. Phillips' occupation, 'painter', may have word 'house' beside it in pencil. (Other male occupations in the house are manual/physical – a bricklayer and a chauffeur at a motor garage). See also Tristram Hunt, 'Introduction', in Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (London: Penguin, 2004), pp.viii, xi, and xxv.

<sup>31</sup> Hunt 'Introduction', *Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*, p.xxv.

<sup>32</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26042, and 1911 Census, household record for Colne Place, Earls Colne, Essex. Cloke was very likely still working in service at the estate at the point of her submission in 1914 – her address appears to be the same as in the 1911 Census, in which she is listed as a servant (lady's maid) at the estate. As already noted, Cloke submitted a translation, "The Story of the Wind and the Rain", from the French of Paul de Musset, in 1914. This was published in 1923: see Paul De Musset, *Mister Wind and Mistress Rain*, translated by Ellen E. Cloke (London, G. G. Harrap & Co., 1923).

<sup>33</sup> For Millicent Burbridge, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23852, and 1911 Census, household record for 51 Coventry Road, Ilford. For Maysel Jenkinson, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25541, and 1911 Census, household record for Duffs Hill, Glemsford, Suffolk. There are four later works (three of them plays) by Maysel Jenkinson. See: Maysel Jenkinson, *Beyond the Hills* (London: F. Warne & Co., 1926); Maysel Jenkinson, *The Flood. A Play in One Act* (London: H. F. W. Deane & Sons, 1931); Maysel Jenkinson, *Plenty of Time. A Play in One Act* (London: H. F. W. Deane & Sons, 1932); and Maysel Jenkinson, *Overflow. A Play in One Act* (London: H. F. W. Deane & Sons, 1933). A resource from 1933 lists the latter work alongside her name and 'Glemsford, Suffolk', which is where she was living in 1911 and at the time of her submission in 1913.

<sup>34</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20499, and 1911 Census, household record for 29 Burlington Road, Paddington, London. NB: Oakley's full name was Samuel Harold Oakley, and there is a Samuel Harold Oakley who

submitters who have no occupation listed in their nearest census, Annie Gertrude Letch (1904, published 1910) was the daughter of an assistant schoolmaster; Jessie Krikorian (1892, published 1883 and 1892) was the wife of a merchant; Emily Kornitzer (1911) was the wife of a precious stone and pearl broker; Ethel Hanna (1911) was a young widow living with her mother and two brothers (a clerk and a cashier); whilst an aspirant believed to be Katherine Widdup (1901 and 1913) was the wife of a timber merchant and (later) saw mill owner.<sup>35</sup>

Several of these aspirants may have wished to have writing careers and, at the very least, the fact that they submitted their work to publishers obviously shows commercial ambition. Many of them, though, were also clearly writing whilst working other jobs and following other careers, even if some of them were linked to writing. These portraits therefore offer a part-time example of authorship that may have been far more familiar to many aspirants than the full-time professional model discussed earlier.

The bibliographer and anthologist Catherine W. Reilly also found evidence of huge numbers of poets – many part-time – who published poetry in book form between 1860 and 1899.<sup>36</sup> Philip Waller notes how the nearly 3000 people she identified in her 1880 to 1899 volume ‘came from all walks, the great majority pursuing livings apart from writing’, from more high-end occupations to jobs including railway worker, blacksmith, postman, house painter, shepherd, weaver, clerk, draper, maidservant, and cowherd.<sup>37</sup>

---

in this period appears to have composed many musical scores (see British Library Catalogue). It is unclear if these are the same person. The 1911 Census for our Oakley, though, gives his occupation as ‘artist painter’.

<sup>35</sup> For Annie Gertrude Letch, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 19927; 1901 Census, household record for 38 Castlewood Road, Hackney, London; and 1911 Census, household record for 38 Castlewood Road, Hackney, London. The submitter’s name is Gertrude Letch, and Annie’s full name is Annie Gertrude Letch, so this is a presumed match. Her published title is: Gertrude Letch, *Joan Harcourt: The Story of a Plain Woman* (London: Henry J. Drane, 1910). This appears to have been her Chatto submission, as that was called ‘Consequences: The Story of a Plain [?]’ (word unclear). For Jessie Krikorian, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/3, entry 11186, and 1891 Census, household record for 43 Redcliffe Gardens, London. There are two titles by a Jessie Krikorian: Jessie Krikorian, *A Knave and a Fool. A Novel* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1883; 2nd edition, London: Eden, Remington & Co., 1892) and Jessie Krikorian, *A Daughter of Mystery. A Novel* (London: Griffith & Farran, 1892). This latter could have been her Chatto submission, as the title of that was ‘Daughter of the Devil’. For Emily Kornitzer, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24370, and 1911 Census, household record for 19 Kenilworth Gardens, Seven Kings, Essex. Kornitzer submitted under Elliott, her maiden name. For Ethel Hanna, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24488, and 1911 Census, household record for 48 Nightingale Lane, London. For Katherine Widdup, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13349; Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22556; Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24657; 1901 Census, household record for 12 Merlin Road, Blackburn; and 1911 Census, household record for Katherine Widdup, Merlin Road, Blackburn.

<sup>36</sup> See Catherine W. Reilly, *Mid-Victorian Poetry, 1860–1879: An Annotated Biobibliography* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 2000) and Catherine W. Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry, 1880–1899: An Annotated Biobibliography* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1994). Reilly also planned a third volume, to cover the years 1840 to 1859 (see Reilly, *Mid-Victorian Poetry*, p.ix) but died in 2005.

<sup>37</sup> Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.404.

Whilst those of her poets for whom biographical information is available appear to be well-born and/or university educated far more often than not, her two volumes do include individuals who are closer to the aspirants of this study. Walter Chisholm (1856–1877), whose verse appeared in local newspapers and whose *Poems* was published posthumously in 1879, was the son of a shepherd, and was himself a shepherd boy on the Scottish borders before moving to Glasgow and working in a leather factory as a porter.<sup>38</sup> (He then died of pleurisy.)<sup>39</sup> John Brown, who lived in Scotland and Manchester, was a pattern-maker whose book, *Song Drifts*, was published in 1874.<sup>40</sup> Other examples include Durham miner Alexander Barrass, who had two books of poetry published in 1887 and 1897, and qualified gardener Alick Murray, from Scotland, who contributed poetry to several newspapers and had a book of verse published in 1885, when he was around 29.<sup>41</sup>

Ascertaining the ages of the writers in the Macmillan/Chatto dataset was more problematic. The approximate age of each individual at the time of their submission was established using census data, although this data was not always reliable. While some individuals' ages were consistent across several censuses, or could be confirmed via the more reliable 1939 Register, which recorded birthdates, other census records were inconsistent and contradictory. In several cases there was just one unverifiable census age for an individual.

A lot of this rough data is still useful, however. If we assume that the potentially problematic census ages, if not completely accurate, are unlikely to be drastically wrong, it is possible to split the accumulated age data into seven age brackets: 19 or under; 20s; 30s; 40s; 50s; 60s; and 70s. In three cases where individuals submitted when they were in two different age categories, they have been counted in both of those categories.<sup>42</sup> In four cases where it was not clear which of two age categories an individual fell in, that individual was also counted in both age categories.<sup>43</sup>

Out of 76 names (including seven duplications and two omissions), eight were aged 19 or under; 21 were in their 20s; 22 were in their 30s; 15 were in their 40s; four were in their 50s; five

---

<sup>38</sup> Reilly, *Mid-Victorian Poetry*, p.93.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.61. According to Reilly's entry, *Song Drifts* was also re-issued by a different publisher in 1883.

<sup>41</sup> Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry*, pp.31 and 343.

<sup>42</sup> Those who submitted when they were in two of the different age categories are: Sidney Durston (19 or under, and 20s), Alfred Harbert (19 or under, and 20s), and Katherine Widdup (20s and 40s). Individuals who submitted more than once in the same age category have not been duplicated, however.

<sup>43</sup> These cases are: Georgina Lovesey (who was either 17 or 21); Rhoda Meyer (who was either 19 or 20); Ebe White (who was either 29 or 30); and Ernest Estcourt Hayward (who was either 39 or 40).

were in their 60s; and one writer was over the age of 70.<sup>44</sup> Looking at some of the youngest submitters, Rhoda Meyer, a typist aged 19 or 20, submitted fairy stories in 1901; Georgina Lovesey, a dressmaker in her late teens or early 20s, submitted poetry in 1891; Wallace Nichols, aged 17 or 18, submitted in 1905 what Chatto described as ‘a volume of verse of juvenile melodramatic despair’ (although he later published prolifically); and Sidney Crown, the 16- or 17-year-old son of a tailor, submitted a 253-page manuscript in 1901.<sup>45</sup>

Dorothy Thody, meanwhile, was only 15 or 16 when she submitted a seven-chapter story in 1910, while Doris Wheler – seemingly from a wealthier background, but included in the sample due to her exceptional age – was 15 when she submitted a children’s story to Macmillan in 1901.<sup>46</sup> (Wheler’s story, rejected by Macmillan, met with success soon after, though – it was published by Grant Richards in 1902.)<sup>47</sup> Perhaps most notable, however, was Alfred Harbert,

---

<sup>44</sup> The seven duplications are listed in the previous two footnotes. The two omissions are the cases where it is not definite which occupant of a house is the author. These are Joseph Baxter (father and son are both called Joseph Baxter), and Miss Hogg (there is a widow and her five daughters in the house, all with the surname Hogg). Those in each category (excluding those listed in the previous two footnotes, who straddle two categories) are as follows: 19 or under: Doris Wheler, Sidney Crown, Dorothy Thody, and Wallace Nichols; 20s: Evelyn Spearing, John Mutch, Reginald Taylor, Daniel Curtois, George Walkington, Ernest Ife, Linda Gardiner, Cecil Coote, Maysel Jenkinson, Alfred Phillips, John Leonard Nutty, Daniel O’Brien, Annie Gertrude Letch, Thomas Clarke, and Regina Bloch; 30s: Marian Diamond, Gladys Davidson, Louisa Simmons, William Bryant, Mary Hullah, Charles Ely, Charles Pritchard, Claude Greening, George Wilson, John Wrigglesworth, Agnes Holliday, Richard Goddard, Millicent Burbridge, Ethel Hanna, Herbert Rowland Walker, William Clay, Cyril Silverston, Ralph Roberts, Jessie Krikorian, and Alfred Gregory; 40s: Emily Roff, Edith Giles, Mary/Ellen Kingman, Samuel Oakley, Ellen Cloke, George Lee, Alfred Macey, John Donnelly, Stephen Springall, Eleanor Kennedy, William Johnson, Emily Kornitzer, and John Rumfit; 50s: William Pimblett, Edward Jacobson, John Wilson, and Sarah Cooper; 60s: Sarah Wilcher, Joseph Orme, Eliza Porter, Charles Montague Clark, and Hamilton Seymour; 70s: Frederick Stevens.

<sup>45</sup> For Rhoda Meyer, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13883, and 1901 Census, household record for 31 Fountain Street, Hull. For Georgina Lovesey, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7173; 1891 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, High Street, Stoke Goldington, Newport Pagnell; 1901 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, High Street, Stoke Goldington, Newport Pagnell; 1911 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, The Green, Stoke Goldington; and 1881 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, The Lamb Inn, High Street, Stoke Goldington. For Wallace Nichols, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20481; 1911 Census, household record for 51 Palace Road, Tulse Hill; and 1901 Census, household record for 41 Thornton Avenue, Streatham. Nichols’ middle name was Bertram, and there are in excess of 25 publications of fiction, poetry, and other works (including a compiled anthology of poetry) by a Wallace Bertram Nichols (and Wallace B. Nichols) dated between 1909 and the 1950s. See, for example: Wallace Bertram Nichols, *Date Lilia. An Elegy on Algernon Charles Swinburne* (London: Thomas Burleigh, 1909); Wallace Bertram Nichols, *The Eagle and the Pelican. Poems* (London: David Nutt, 1911); Wallace Bertram Nichols, *The Dream of Alfred. An Epic of the Navy* (London: David Nutt, 1911); Wallace Bertram Nichols, *The Song of Sharruk* (London: Erskine Macdonald, 1916); Wallace Bertram Nichols, *Secret Market. A Novel* (London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1926); Wallace Bertram Nichols, *A Wonder for Wise Men* (London: Ward, Lock & Co., 1930); Wallace Bertram Nichols, *The Secret Son* (Leicester: Newman Wolsey, 1944); and Wallace Bertram Nichols, *Two Days of the Devil, and Other Stories* (London, Newman Wolsey, 1947). The earlier publications explain why he is listed as a poet in the 1911 Census. For Sidney Crown, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17918; 1901 Census, household record for 208 High Street, Walthamstow; and 1891 Census, household record for 109 Lambeth Walk, Lambeth.

<sup>46</sup> For Dorothy Thody, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24044, and 1911 Census, household record for 14 Leighton Road, Cheltenham. For Doris Wheler, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13783; Macmillan RR Volume 55964, p.47; 1901 Census, household record for 114 Lansdowne Place, Hove; 1911 Census, household record for 114 Lansdowne Place, Hove; and 1939 Register, record for Doris L. Wheler, London, b. 1886.

<sup>47</sup> See Doris L. Wheler, *The Treasure of the Castle. A Story for Children* (London: Grant Richards, 1902). Her 1901 Macmillan submission was titled ‘The Treasure of the Castle’. See Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13783.

who appears to have submitted to Chatto five times between his late teens and mid-20s.<sup>48</sup> Chatto's notes on his unsuccessful 1905 submission mention that Harbert said this was 'the fourth time he has submitted a book' to them, having tried 'unsuccessfully for six years to get a footing on the bottom rung of the ladder'.<sup>49</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum, widower (and apparent author) Joseph Orme was in his 60s when he submitted two substantial manuscripts in 1912 and 1914; Eliza Porter was in her mid-60s and an inmate at a 'Home for Aged Poor' when she offered various manuscripts to Chatto in 1911; and a writer assumed to be Frederick Stevens was in his late 70s when, in 1913, he submitted a 463-page story to Chatto, who described it as 'the tedious prating of a septuagenarian'.<sup>50</sup>

The geographic information for the writers in the dataset is perhaps the most useful information as it is completely reliable. As the addresses of submitters were written in the publishers' entry books, the location data is completely accurate for these individuals at the times of their submission. Even where the exact *identity* of a submitter in the dataset is unclear (there are two cases where the submitter could have been one of two different individuals within a household), the city, town, or village in which they lived is still clear.<sup>51</sup> For ease of analysis, London, for the purposes of this investigation, has been defined as it is now. (Locations now considered to be in Greater London have been counted as London, even if they were strictly in other counties at the turn of the century, such as East Barnet (then in Hertfordshire) and Ilford and Leyton (suburbs in Metropolitan Essex).)<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entries 20294 and 20858; 1901 Census, household record for 128 Venner Road, Sydenham; and 1911 Census, household record for 43 Selby Road, Anerley, Croydon. Harbert may have gone on to publish – the British Library Catalogue lists five plays in the 1920s by an 'Alfred Trebrah, pseud. [i.e. Alfred Harbert]' which may be him.

<sup>49</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20294.

<sup>50</sup> For Joseph Orme, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24649; Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26095; and 1911 Census, household record for 11 Mere Avenue, Pendleton, Salford. There are three works by a Joseph Orme published in the 1880s. See: Joseph Orme, *The Adventures of Gulliver Redivivus* (London: Blackwood & Co., 1881); Joseph Orme, *Stories of Holiday Time* (London: Blackwood & Co., 1883); and Joseph Orme, *Little Jack's Christmas Eve* (Manchester, John Heywood, 1883). NB: Joseph Orme was living in the Manchester area at the time of his submissions, so this latter place of publication makes sense. For Eliza Porter, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24506, and 1911 Census, household record for 55 Gratton Road, Hammersmith/West Kensington, London. ('Sunset Home for Aged Poor' appears on the Find My Past results page – it is not written on the actual record, but the record lists eight of the 10 residents as 'inmates'.) For Frederick Stevens, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25206, and 1911 Census, household record for 8 Belgrave Terrace, Wakefield.

<sup>51</sup> The two cases are: 1) Joseph Baxter (father and son are both called Joseph Baxter) – see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20112, and 1901 Census, household record for 60 Barking Road, West Ham. 2) Miss Hogg (there is a widow and her five daughters in the house, all with the surname Hogg) – see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24344, and 1911 Census, household record for 58 Streathbourne Road, Upper Tooting.

<sup>52</sup> Uxbridge, Walthamstow, Seven Kings, and Enfield are also included in this broader definition. For brief mention of London suburbs in this period, see Michael Heller, *London Clerical Workers, 1880–1914* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), p.2.

Using this broader definition, around half (or 36) of the 71 aspirants in the sample were living in the greater London area at the time of their submission, whilst the other half (or 34) lived outside London. The remaining one individual worked in London, but appears to have lived outside it (with her family in Cambridge).<sup>53</sup> Those within London came from all over the city, including central London, Archway, Brixton, Streatham, Sydenham, Clapham, and Plaistow. Those outside London lived in locations including Margate, Colchester, Southend, rural Essex, Suffolk, Brighton, Buckinghamshire, Bath, Cheltenham, Winchester, Devon, rural Oxfordshire, Birmingham, Walsall, Lincoln, Leicester, Nottingham, Sheffield, Chesterfield, Newcastle, and South Shields. A further 10 authors lived in a rough band of locations stretching from Merseyside to East Yorkshire: Birkenhead, Bolton, Blackburn, Manchester, a village near Halifax, Dewsbury, Wakefield, Pontefract, York, and Hull.

Looking at this data alongside Figures 1 and 2, we can see that, with a few exceptions, the writers in the sample lived largely in, or near, urban areas at the times of their submissions, but also came from towns and cities all over the country, including several northern locations.



Figure 1:  
Non-London locations of Macmillan and Chatto writers

<sup>53</sup> The one individual is Evelyn Spearing. Her Macmillan entry has two addresses – the London college where she lectured, and her family’s house in Cambridge. See Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20858; and 1911 Census, household records for 6 Parkside, Cambridge (Spearing absent), and 9 Bateman Street, Cambridge.



Figure 2: Non-London locations of Macmillan and Chatto writers, closer view

These writers' knowledge about individual publishers and the literary profession more broadly is unknown. Macmillan and Chatto and Windus (established in the 1840s and 1850s respectively) were, though, clearly known to these individuals, whether due to advice literature, or because they possessed, or had read, books from these publishers.<sup>54</sup> This was a period when the number of publishers to choose from was expanding rapidly. Frederic Whyte noted that in the 1880s, there were only around a dozen publishing firms of 'unquestionable importance', Macmillan among them, although around another dozen were 'widely known', including Chatto.<sup>55</sup> By the late 1920s, there were 'some thirty or forty' significant firms.<sup>56</sup> Although it is impossible to know why these writers settled on Macmillan or Chatto and Windus, the fact that these were big, established firms – albeit high-end ones – may have made them more attractive, or acceptance by them seem more likely.

<sup>54</sup> Macmillan was established in 1843; Chatto and Windus was formed out of the publishing firm of John Camden Hotten, started in 1855, becoming Chatto and Windus proper in the 1870s.

<sup>55</sup> Frederic Whyte, *William Heinemann: A Memoir* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), p.15.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

## Other Aspiring Writers: Autobiography and Print Media

As well as the aspirant writers that can be glimpsed in publishers' archives from this period, evidence of other writers exists within autobiographies, newspapers, and magazines. The autobiography of Welsh-born ex-miner Joseph Keating (b. 1871) describes his tremendously difficult struggle to earn money from writing between 1895 and 1913.<sup>57</sup> Despite having several novels and numerous stories published (several of which were sold abroad), his account is overwhelmingly one of pennilessness, poverty, and bad luck. He was cheated out of earnings by both his literary agent and an editor, and mentions having received royalties of just one shilling and five pence for his first published novel, *Son of Judith* (1900).<sup>58</sup> Voracious reader and learner Edward Brown (b. 1880) worked in the office of a gas works in Bromley between the ages of 14 and 23, before taking a job as a bookkeeper and private secretary to the owner of a wine journal and an aspiring MP.<sup>59</sup> In his autobiographical writings, Brown briefly mentions entering some of the *Westminster Gazette's* daily competitions for short poems, sketches, and other pieces as a young man.<sup>60</sup> He also wrote a short novel, which he sent to several publishers.<sup>61</sup> It was rejected, and he later threw it on the fire 'in disgust'.<sup>62</sup>

As Chapter 4 will examine further, the correspondence pages of some magazines in this period were also used by aspirants to gain feedback on their work, and some of the responses offered by these publications mention the locations of the correspondents, or give clues as to their occupations. Readers of magazine *The Young Man* sending in poetry, fiction, and/or asking for literary advice in the 1880s and 1890s came from locations including Canterbury, Gateshead, Rotherham, Accrington, Liverpool, Ashton-under-Lyne near Manchester, Beccles in Suffolk, Warwickshire, Yorkshire, South Wales, and East Ayrshire in Scotland.<sup>63</sup> One correspondent was 15 years old, another a 'pit laddie' working in the mines.<sup>64</sup> Correspondents sending in work to the *Young Man's* sister journal *The Young Woman*, meanwhile, included a 12-year-old girl (who had

---

<sup>57</sup> Joseph Keating, *My Struggle for Life* (London: Simpkin, Marshall Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd., 1916).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.200, 209–14, and 229–30. *Son of Judith* was accepted in 1900; the 1s 5d royalties total was some time later, but not later than 1904. See also Paul O'Leary, "Keating, Joseph (1871–1934), novelist." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 19 May 2011.

<sup>59</sup> Edward Brown, 'Untitled', Burnett Archive of Working-Class Autobiographies, Brunel University, especially 14th page, and pages marked as pp.31–2, 38, 40–1, 48–9, 51–61, and 68.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, page marked as p.73.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pages marked as pp.73–4.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> See *The Young Man*: September 1892, Volume 6 (1892), p.320; November 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.395; October 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.360; September 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.324; July 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.252; September 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.323; August 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.286; and October 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.359.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, see September 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.324, and November 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.395.

expressed an ambition to become an author), a 14-year-old girl, a 16-year-old girl, and another 16-year-old who had their work included in an 1895 issue.<sup>65</sup>

Some newspapers running literary competitions, meanwhile, printed the names (or initials) and addresses of winning entrants, also enabling some individuals to be searched in the census. Many winners of the *Hampshire Telegraph's* literary competitions in the 1880s and 1890s came from the local Portsmouth area, with at least 10 living in the streets of Southsea, at the southern end of Portsea Island.<sup>66</sup> Three winners in 1884 and 1885 lived on the same street, Sultan Road, in the nearby Landport area.<sup>67</sup>

On 19 July 1884, the winner of the newspaper's third prize, for an original story called 'Uncle Ned's Yarn', was William J. Maunder.<sup>68</sup> Maunder was a shipwright in his early 30s, who had moved to Portsmouth from Cornwall as a young adult, with his wife, Ellen.<sup>69</sup> In 1884, they were living at 12 Herbert Road with their growing family.<sup>70</sup> They would have five children and would live in three different houses along Herbert Road (first at number 44, then at number 12, and then at 19), before, coincidentally, also moving to Sultan Road.<sup>71</sup> Maunder was still working at the dockyard in his late 50s, in a higher role.<sup>72</sup> His middle child, Edward, followed the same career, working as a shipwright in his 20s, after starting as an apprentice as a teenager.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> See reply to 'Young Schoolgirl', "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, August 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.395; reply to 'Erato', "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, October 1894, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.35; and reply to 'Ivy', "Between Ourselves." *Young Woman*, May 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.286. NB: The 16-year-old who had their work included is mentioned in the reply given to the 16-year-old 'Ivy'.

<sup>66</sup> For Southsea examples, see: "Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 14 June 1884, p.10; "Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 9 May 1885, p.10; "Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 May 1886, p.10; "Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 June 1886, p.10; "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 27 August 1887, p.10; "Our Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 5 May 1894, p.10; "Our Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 June 1894, p.10; and "Our Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 23 February 1895, p.10.

<sup>67</sup> "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 August 1884, p.10, and "Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph*, 9 May 1885, p.10.

<sup>68</sup> "Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 19 July 1884, p.10.

<sup>69</sup> See 1871 Census, household record for William J. Maunder, Feock, Cornwall, b. 1853; 1881 Census, household record for 44 Herbert Street, Portsmouth; 1891 Census, household record for 12 Herbert Street, Portsmouth; 1901 Census, household record for 19 Herbert Street, Portsmouth; and 1911 Census, household record for 141 Sultan Road, Portsmouth.

<sup>70</sup> "Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph*, 19 July 1884, p.10.

<sup>71</sup> See 1881 Census, household record for 44 Herbert Street, Portsmouth; 1891 Census, household record for 12 Herbert Street, Portsmouth; 1901 Census, household record for 19 Herbert Street, Portsmouth; and 1911 Census, household record for 141 Sultan Road, Portsmouth.

<sup>72</sup> 1911 Census, household record for 141 Sultan Road, Portsmouth. Maunder is listed as 'Inspector Shipwrights' at the dockyard.

<sup>73</sup> See 1901 Census, household record for 19 Herbert Street, Portsmouth, and 1911 Census, household record for 141 Sultan Road, Portsmouth.

Some of the *Hampshire Telegraph's* winners lived outside Hampshire, from nearby Surrey and the Isle of Wight, to Herne Bay and Folkestone in Kent, and Plymouth and Exeter to the west.<sup>74</sup> (The Plymouth winner was at the Royal Naval Engineering College in the city.)<sup>75</sup> The winner of the first prize on 7 October 1893, meanwhile, was in South Africa.<sup>76</sup>

In Part I, we have started to see ways in which the lives of some real-life aspirants diverged from the fictional representations outlined in Chapter 2. The evidence above shows working- and lower-middle-class writers writing alongside other jobs. Several of these individuals were also not young. Following on from this, Part II will consider the extent to which the fictional representations may be inaccurate in terms of aspirants' motivations for writing also.

## PART II

As discussed in Chapter 2, many print media pieces assumed that aspirants were writing chiefly to try and achieve fame and fortune – what we might call external motivations. More internal motivations, such as writing for self-expression, were not really acknowledged. That fame and fortune were – or were seen to be – motivations at this particular historical moment is significant, if unsurprising. This period saw the birth of the 'bestseller', the emergence of a literary advice industry, and an ever-expanding array of outlets for published work, whilst authors (and their wealth) were increasingly visible in photographs, 'celebrity' interviews, and other journalism.<sup>77</sup>

The question of whether a more emulation-driven process or a more bottom-up process was occurring here is one not unique to this topic or time period. Debates surrounding the consumer revolution have tackled the same question. In his work on eighteenth-century clothing consumption, for example, John Styles has argued that whilst new types of goods trickled down the social hierarchy and many poorer individuals desired items which 'aped' those owned by the wealthy, 'the everyday fashion worn by ordinary people amounted to more than just an effort to

---

<sup>74</sup> "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 16 July 1887, p.10; "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 6 May 1893, p.10; "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 December 1887, p.10; "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 15 November 1890, p.10; "Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 May 1886, p.10; and "Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph*, 12 June 1886, p.10.

<sup>75</sup> "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph*, 6 May 1893, p.10.

<sup>76</sup> "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 7 October 1893, p.10. Presumably that entrant may have been stationed there.

<sup>77</sup> See, for example, Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, Preface, pp.348 and 350–1, and Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp.12 and 15–16.

emulate the taste of the rich'.<sup>78</sup> Upwards emulation of the elite also forms an important element of ideas such as conspicuous consumption. Neither, with authorship, was the emulation of famous authors seen to end with the decision to write. Leopold Wagner's 1898 handbook, *How to Publish...* (1898), noted that neophytes 'uniformly' made the 'great mistake' of imitating a successful author in their writing, rather than 'striking out a new path of their own'.<sup>79</sup>

Even if aspirants were sometimes driven by emulation, however, there is evidence that motivations were often only partly commercial, and at other times were not commercial at all. Nor did commercial ambition necessarily equate to a desire for fame and fortune. Motivations could also be complex and varied, even within the mind of one individual. Specific evidence of aspirants' motivations is hard to find – unsurprisingly, given that evidence of aspirants themselves is relatively scarce. Tentative conclusions about motivation can be drawn, however, by analysing the types of writing aspirants produced, as well as by probing occupational data, such as that presented in Part I. Autobiographies also offer further evidence.

This part will be split into two sections. The first will explore the many different ways in which we can see evidence of aspirants' intrinsic motivations. Considering first how reading could turn to writing, before looking at the types of writing aspirants produced and other evidence, it will suggest the extent to which we can see aspirants taking a delight in literary and imaginative worlds in this period and embracing writing as a democratic activity.

This section will also consider the influence of Romanticism. 'The dominant literary mode of romanticism', writes Norman Vance, 'moved in the direction of modernism' across the nineteenth century, 'yet romance refused to go away'.<sup>80</sup> Christopher Hilliard notes how 'writers' guidebooks sometimes echoed Wordsworth almost to the verge of quotation' and touches on Romanticism's continued influence into the twentieth century.<sup>81</sup> We saw in Chapter 2 how Romantic ideas about writing and the writing life – such as the notion of authorship as a vocation – were prevalent in literary representations of writing. This section will touch on the different Romantic influences on aspirants' motivations, whilst also suggesting that aspirants can be seen to have rejected the Romantic concept of literary genius. It will also highlight the complexity of motivation, showing how multiple influences and motivations could coexist.

---

<sup>78</sup> John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), pp.323–4.

<sup>79</sup> Leopold Wagner, *How to Publish a Book or Article, and How to Produce a Play; Advice to Young Authors* (London: Redway, 1898), p.12.

<sup>80</sup> Norman Vance, 'Patterns of Literary Transformation', in G. Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp.221 and 234.

<sup>81</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.9–10.

A second section, dealing with occupations, will consider the links between white-collar work and writing, exploring how some white-collar jobs in this period may have pushed aspirants towards writing, for example as an imaginative outlet.

## **Intrinsic Motivations**

### READING TO WRITING

We saw in Chapter 1 how some young people derived a great deal of pleasure from reading, and what literature likely gave these new readers. With Helen Corke's example, we saw how reading could naturally progress to writing. It is perhaps not surprising that a period which saw a huge expansion of the literary marketplace would also see an increase in aspirants. There was also more literature for the reading public to read. The period from 1880 to 1895 saw a more than threefold increase in the number of new novels published, whilst, as already noted, the number of daily papers rose from just 14 in 1846 to 200 by 1890.<sup>82</sup>

Philip Waller notes how, for the 'first mass literate society', 'reading inspired creative imagination'.<sup>83</sup> For these 'excited' new readers, just as for readers now, fiction, as well as non-fiction and newspapers, would have taken them to worlds outside their own experience, and may have inspired them to write themselves.<sup>84</sup> In the *Young Man*, W. J. Dawson noted that 'most youths with a taste for literature' were 'pretty sure to try their hands on original production'.<sup>85</sup> Jonathan Rose, in *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, also touches on how the engagement with literature at school helped some individuals who went on to write. He cites the examples of Edgar Wallace (b. 1875) and H. M. Tomlinson (b. 1872/3), who felt their learning of Shakespeare, poetry, and other literature at school had been hugely beneficial.<sup>86</sup>

Aspirants Joseph Keating, Edward Brown, and Thomas Burke were all, also, voracious readers. This period saw a boom in public library building, particularly in London, as Michelle Johansen has noted, and Edward Brown (b. 1880), growing up in Bromley, was one of its many

---

<sup>82</sup> See Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.206, and Joel H. Wiener, *The Americanization of the British Press, 1830s–1914: Speed in the Age of Transatlantic Journalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.102.

<sup>83</sup> Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.402.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> *The Young Man*, February 1894, Volume 8, (1894), pp.66–7.

<sup>86</sup> Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 2nd edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), pp.157–9.

beneficiaries.<sup>87</sup> The opening of Bromley Public Library had a huge impact on him as a young man. He explains:

The only facilities for borrowing books previously had been afforded by the Bromley Literary Institute – a private venture run chiefly by the doctors and professional men of the town, and far beyond both my purse and my position. The Public Library opened a new world of literature to me. I had read every book we had in the house, and the very few I had been able to borrow; and to have practically unlimited facilities for reading anything I pleased was beyond my wildest hopes. I started on a regular orgie of reading – fiction largely, but a good deal of general literature as well, including several books on the origin and construction of languages, in which I was deeply interested. I always read for an hour or so before rising, and usually whilst walking to and from the [gas] works [where he worked], and at any time I could spare in the evenings. ... in the summer I was out a good deal playing cricket or cycling, although as the mornings were light I made up for this by reading for a couple of hours in the early mornings instead of one. In this way I made the acquaintance of most of our standard authors of many types, and I have no doubt that this intensive if somewhat indiscriminate course of reading taught me a good deal and widened my knowledge and my vocabulary very considerably.<sup>88</sup>

Brown also later joined the Bishopsgate Library in London.<sup>89</sup> While his autobiography does not discuss the link between his reading and his writing, the latter is clearly linked to the former.

Welsh-born Joseph Keating (b. 1871), who started work down the mines on his 12<sup>th</sup> birthday, and held a variety of jobs before trying to write fiction in his mid-20s, was also a keen reader at different times.<sup>90</sup> Whilst still in the pits, reading for him had become a ‘habit’, and he bought ‘cheap, paper-covered, miserably printed editions of Goldsmith, Fielding, Dickens, Smollett, Pope’ and other authors, as well as the periodical *Dicks’ English Library*, in which he read the serialised *Vanity Fair*.<sup>91</sup> Later, during a brief stint above ground as a pumping engine attendant, he was able to read all day, his little engine hut, where he worked alone, becoming ‘a study, library, and a university’.<sup>92</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Michelle Johansen, ‘The Supposed Paradise of Pen and Ink’: Self-Education and Social Mobility in the London Public Library (1880–1930),’ *Cultural and Social History*, 16.1 (2019), p.47.

<sup>88</sup> Brown, ‘Untitled’, p.38.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68. Also see p.107.

<sup>90</sup> In the ODNB entry for Keating, Paul O’Leary states that Keating started working down the mines at the age of 14. This is contradicted by Keating’s autobiography. See O’Leary, “Keating, Joseph...” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.40, and (more generally) pp.37–53. Keating’s variety of jobs included being an odd-job man – cleaning street lamps, painting railings, and so on – (see *ibid.*, pp.104–5), a pedlar (see pp.107–9), a post office assistant (see p.115), a violinist in a music-hall orchestra (see pp.118–9), and a shorthand clerk in a fish shop (see pp.140–3). He also worked for a couple of newspapers, including as a junior reporter (see, for example, pp.121–34).

<sup>91</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.74. He also mentions having read periodicals as a child – see pp.26–7.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.99–100. For another reference to his reading, see p.112.

Keating later resolved to become a ‘great journalist’, spending around three months as a junior reporter for a local paper in south Wales, and then – after two clerical stints and a month of unemployment – securing a modest office job at the *Western Mail* in Cardiff.<sup>93</sup> Whilst his ambitions in this direction do not appear to have come out of a desire to join a literary profession, he acknowledges that, initially, it was ‘probably the example of Dickens’ that ‘put journalism into my head’.<sup>94</sup>

Keating’s impulse to start writing fiction a few years later does not seem to have come directly from reading, or from a desire to emulate the success of a particular author (although it undoubtedly came from literature indirectly), but once he had decided to write, it was to books again that he turned in order to understand the craft of writing, people, and the world around him.<sup>95</sup> ‘Entangled’ by psychology, he borrowed the two volumes of Herbert Spencer’s *Principles of Psychology* from Cardiff Public Library, and spent 12 months studying them in an effort to understand how people thought and acted.<sup>96</sup> He also sought out ‘every kind of book or essay ... dealing with dramatic construction’, scrutinising ‘De Maupassant, Tolstoy, Thomas Hardy, Stevenson, Flaubert, and Meredith ... to find out what principle guided them in shaping their stories’.<sup>97</sup>

Future novelist Thomas Burke (b. 1886), as a youngster working first in a stockbroker’s office, then part-time in both a bookshop and newspaper office, and then as an assistant at the Literary Agency of London, was a devoted reader of literary journals.<sup>98</sup> The *Bookman* was particularly significant to him. He later wrote how it was ‘exactly the periodical’ he needed, ‘charged’, for him, ‘with something more than articles and pictures’.<sup>99</sup> Whereas ‘other people bought a popular literary magazine which they read with critical detachment’, he ‘bought a Magic Lantern’.<sup>100</sup> The purchase of an issue, the anticipation of reading it, and the hour spent doing so were moments of huge importance to him, the latter so powerful that it ‘would somehow work

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., pp.119–22, 125–8, 131–4, 140–7, 149–53, and 161–3. He gains more responsibility at the *Western Mail* – see pp.161–3.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.119. One can assume that his enjoyment of reading did not make journalism an unattractive prospect, but various push factors (such as not wanting to go back to pit work or peddling), as well as the exhaustion of other avenues (such as walking out of his job at the post office), seem to be just as important here as any pull factors of journalism itself.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., pp.169–71 and 174.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., pp.170–1. Keating explains that ‘after observ[ing] the confusing and mystifying conduct of men and women’, he ‘wished to see the scaffolding and ladders by which their thoughts built up an action. Psychology I regarded as the grammar of motives’. (See p.170.)

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.174.

<sup>98</sup> Anne Witchard, ‘Thomas Burke, the ‘Laureate of Limehouse’: A New Biographical Outline.’ *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*, 48.2 (2005), pp.168–70.

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Burke, *Son of London* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1946), p.140.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

back and suffuse all the preceding hours of the day with its richness'.<sup>101</sup> Even years later, picking up an old issue would instantly bring back memories of what time of day he bought it, what books he had been reading at the time, and even what the weather was like.<sup>102</sup> Similarly, a reference to a month and year – such as March 1903 – would immediately bring back the contents of that month's issue.<sup>103</sup>

Anne Witchard has written how Burke 'typified the new reader' in this period – 'educated by the state, employed as a clerk, or in a shop', and digesting *T. P.'s Weekly* during spare moments.<sup>104</sup> It was to these magazines and journals that Burke started sending his work, 'submitting verse, "short stories, London sketches, and articles on literary topics"'.<sup>105</sup> Initially having success 'only with the common penny weeklies', he finally got into monthlies and sixpenny weeklies when he was 20.<sup>106</sup> There also seems to have been a clear link between some of the books he read and the development of his writing. During his stint working in a second-hand bookshop in Clapham, he 'had an unmolested run ... of a library of ten thousand volumes', and discovered an American author 'whose works awakened him "to the curve, hue and aroma of words, and of the structure of a sentence"', and showed him how writing should really be done.<sup>107</sup> Witchard says the author was 'undoubtedly Stephen Crane', with Burke's book *Limestone Nights* 'clearly written in emulation of Crane's impressionistic and spare prose style'.<sup>108</sup>

Newspaper reading could also inspire, or aid, writing. Autobiographer Edward Brown mentions how the short novel he wrote included several elements of the Suffragette movement, 'mostly culled or adapted from the daily papers'.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, Chatto submitter Stephen Springall seemed to have 'drawn his inspiration from newspaper paragraphs relating to the Warren St Scandal, and the Cleveland St Scandal', according to notes left by the publisher.<sup>110</sup> David Vincent has written how 'increasing access to provincial newspapers' in this period acted as an 'incentive ... to composition', undoubtedly not just in terms of supplying ideas for stories, but in encouraging writing as an activity.<sup>111</sup> Pieces about authors and authorship also could easily have prompted readers to give fiction writing a try, helping to perpetuate the popularity of authorship

---

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp.140–1.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., pp.139–40.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p.140.

<sup>104</sup> Witchard, 'Thomas Burke', p.169.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.170.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Brown, 'Untitled', p.73.

<sup>110</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17842.

<sup>111</sup> David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.216.

as well as reflecting it, whilst newspaper reading must also have increased interest in journalism as an occupation.

Readers may also have gained a romanticised view of the writing life from non-fiction and fiction alike. In his discussion of literary manuals, and the plethora of other literary books and accounts from this period, Peter Keating notes that ‘romanticism was just as strong an element as cynicism in the late Victorian literary marketplace’.<sup>112</sup> Even *New Grub Street*, famed for its highly unappealing vision of the literary life, may have offered some aspirants an opposing view in its depiction of the optimistic and successful Milvain. Even if not, there is evidence that it certainly did not always have the dispiriting effect that one might have expected. When the young Thomas Burke was urged by his literary advisors to read the novel, he did, but was not put off in the slightest.<sup>113</sup> The literary life to him was still a far better prospect than office life, so he steadfastly ‘ignored their advice and followed their example’ instead.<sup>114</sup>

## TYPES OF LITERATURE

Signs of intrinsic and non-materialist joys and motivations can also be found within the general types of literature that aspirants produced in this period. Poetry, firstly, appears to have been a very popular choice amongst aspirants. It was a popular submission to correspondence columns in magazines (as will be discussed further in Chapter 5), whilst eight of the 71 Macmillan and Chatto writers submitted poems. Catherine W. Reilly has identified 2964 individuals in the United Kingdom (including Ireland) who published poetry in book form in the 1880s and 1890s, as well as 2605 who did so in the 1860s and 1870s (the latter portion of whom are also therefore relevant to this study).<sup>115</sup> Like the Macmillan/Chatto group, most of these writers (at least in the later sample) did not write for a living, but had one of a large range of other occupations, from postman and cowherd to barrister and archaeologist.<sup>116</sup> Andrew Hobbs and Claire Januszewski, meanwhile, have emphasised the significant amount of poetry carried in local newspapers, as has already been noted.<sup>117</sup>

---

<sup>112</sup> Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875–1914* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd, 1989), p.73. See also Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.402.

<sup>113</sup> Thomas Burke, *Son of London*, p.157.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> See Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry*, p.ix, and Reilly, *Mid-Victorian Poetry*, p.ix. (The majority of poetry books mentioned in the earlier volume do appear to have been published in the 1860s, however, rather than the 1870s.)

<sup>116</sup> Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry*, pp.ix–x. See also Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.404.

<sup>117</sup> Andrew Hobbs and Claire Januszewski, ‘How Local Newspapers Came to Dominate Victorian Poetry Publishing.’ *Victorian Poetry*, 52.1 (2014), see, for example, pp.65, 67, and 72–5. This poetry was not all original, but a proportion of it was (and a rising proportion between 1880 and 1900 – see pp.74–5).

The popularity of poetry writing suggests, in part, a Romantic influence. As Michael Ferber has written, ‘no characteristic of Romanticism is more prominent than the prestige ... it confers on the poet’.<sup>118</sup> The prevalence of poetry about nature amongst these social groups (discussed further in Chapter 5) also shows a Romantic impulse to observe, privilege, and celebrate the natural world.

The popularity of poetry also indicates an overall desire to express, and perhaps work through, particular thoughts, feelings, and emotions. In the 1890s, the *Bookman* told one aspirant, who had submitted verse to their Young Author’s Page, that they did not ‘want to be too discouraging, as you seem to wish for some outlet to your genuine emotions’.<sup>119</sup> A stanza of another aspirant’s work prompted the magazine to guess ‘that a strong human motive impelled’ them ‘to write the verses’.<sup>120</sup>

The popularity of poetry also, of course, hints at the inaccuracy of the idea that all aspirants simply sought fame and fortune. Poetry was not lucrative, and being published – whether in book form or in print media – was therefore chiefly, we might assume, about personal achievement and/or the sharing of one’s work. Speaking of Reilly’s findings, and touching again on Romantic influences, Philip Waller notes how one can detect ‘real pride in the possibility of achievement’ and ‘that the ordinary individual might, if not take wing and join the immortals, then at least leave an impression on the hearts and minds of some few others’.<sup>121</sup> Both Reilly and Waller also quote from the preface of an 1896 book of poems written by a Yorkshire factory operative named George Henry Wilson. Wilson noted:

I am perfectly aware that the country is almost flooded with books of poems ... Yet I hope, notwithstanding the adverse criticism which I know this small volume will receive, that nevertheless it may do some good to those who peruse its contents.<sup>122</sup>

The writing of poetry also, of course, fits in with the part-time model of authorship that many aspirants would have experienced. Novels and stories can be complex and time-consuming; poetry, on the other hand, could ‘be written between periods of work at the loom or workbench’, as Martha Vicinus has noted.<sup>123</sup> Novels and stories too, though, can also, of course, point towards a genuine enjoyment of the use of words and an awakening of ambition amongst

---

<sup>118</sup> Michael Ferber, *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.32.

<sup>119</sup> See reply to ‘O. C.’, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, January 1897 (No. 64, Volume XI), p.128.

<sup>120</sup> See reply to ‘A. P.’, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, June 1893 (No. 21, Volume IV), p.91.

<sup>121</sup> Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.404.

<sup>122</sup> Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry*, p.x, and Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.404.

<sup>123</sup> Martha Vicinus, *The Industrial Muse: A Study of Nineteenth-Century British Working-Class Literature* (London: Croom Helm, 1974), p.140.

aspirants, as well as a belief in their own abilities and potential. Possessed with the tools to read and write, many in these new literary generations may have believed that they too might be creators of imaginary worlds and content.

Specific topics aspirants chose to write about will mainly be discussed in Chapter 5, but it is worth noting here that at least half of the manuscripts submitted by the 10 teachers in the Macmillan/Chatto sample, were, or appear to have been, stories for or about children. The 118-page, 35,000-word novelette submitted by a writer assumed to be Ebe White (1905), titled ‘Minnie’s Views’, was, Chatto noted, ‘chiefly for older schoolgirls’, but contained ‘touches on present-day secondary education’.<sup>124</sup> Edith Giles (1901), submitted a story entitled ‘Dorothy: A Tale of Some Old-Fashioned Girl’, which a Macmillan reader noted dealt with ‘nursery and school-room life about fifty years ago’.<sup>125</sup> Louisa Simmons (1892)’s ‘A Blue-Eyed Boy’, meanwhile, was a ‘children’s story’ that appears to have dealt with the ‘sentimentalism of childhood’, while Marian Diamond (1911) and Emily Roff (1913) submitted work with the respective child-oriented titles ‘Dolly and the Teddy Bear’ and ‘The Boy Who Ran Away’.<sup>126</sup>

Here, again, we can see how the desire for publication can be decoupled from commercial aims. In submitting to Macmillan and Chatto, these women clearly wished to be published, but given the subject matter of their work, a desire to share their stories was, we might assume, a key motivation. The fact that they were likely drawing on their own experiences or (at least) lines of work also indicates a belief that their experiences and perspectives as teachers might have worth and value.

The wider context of the place of writing in aspirants’ lives, meanwhile, can show how misleading it can be to assume a writer’s motivation from an attempt at publication. Edward Brown was unsuccessful in both his ‘serious effort’ to publish his novel, and his ‘one or two half-hearted attempts’ to publish some verses and sketches.<sup>127</sup> His autobiography, however, not only mentions various other compositions, but notes how *all* of them – including the fiction he tried to publish – were written first and foremost for the purposes of self-expression. He explains:

---

<sup>124</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20475. NB: There is a raft of later non-fiction works (1917 and 1920s, 1930s, and 1940) by an Ebe Minerva White. It unclear whether or not this is the author assumed here to be Ebe White. It is possible however: an apparent birth location and birth year for an Ebe Minerva White fit with Ebe White, and Ebe’s middle initial appears to have been ‘M’.

<sup>125</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13416, and Macmillan RR Volume 55963, p.50.

<sup>126</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7601, and Macmillan RR Volume 55946, pp.5–6; Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20878; and Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22605.

<sup>127</sup> Brown, ‘Untitled’, p.135. Brown also wrote a number of business articles, published in the *Secretary* and other professional journals, and a book on business management, which was also published. See pp.124 and 135.

I have written all sorts of things at different times ... occasional verse at such times as Christmas, birthdays, weddings, comings-of-age, and often apropos nothing in particular, but just for the sake of writing them – sketches – one full-length novel, long since consigned to the flames – a play, remarkable only for the fact that I also produced it and acted the leading part in it – numerous articles on various facets of business life and problems – and a book on business management. All these – even the technical essays and the book – were written more for the pleasure of self-expression than anything else, and publication was quite a secondary consideration.<sup>128</sup>

Joseph Keating's autobiography offers another brief example of how a desire for self-expression or personal achievement could motivate aspirants who tried to get their words in print. Recalling a short-lived clerical job in Cardiff, he mentions how a fellow clerk with 'journalistic ambitions ... wrote an article describing a marketing street on Saturday night in Cardiff'.<sup>129</sup> The piece was printed in a local paper, and although the clerk 'did not receive any payment ... the reward of seeing in print what he had written was enough'.<sup>130</sup> Keating notes that the man 'was overjoyed at his success, and bought many copies of the paper to show to his friends'.<sup>131</sup>

The impulse to write autobiography, meanwhile, suggests non-materialist motivations perhaps more than any other literary impulse. In recalling and recording details of their own lives, working- and lower-middle-class writers were demonstrating an awareness of the value of their stories and their possible historical significance, whether to their descendants, their community, or the world at large.

James Ashley (b. 1833) wrote some autobiographical notes around 1907, in his 75<sup>th</sup> year.<sup>132</sup> Born in Wrexham, north Wales, Ashley had later moved to London, and had worked as a hatter.<sup>133</sup> (Two of his children – William and Percy – would go on to have distinguished careers and both be knighted.)<sup>134</sup> Ashley states that his reason for putting pen to paper was to 'write of events and recollections' of his life, which might be of interest to his 'children and their descendants'.<sup>135</sup> In his 60s (in 1896–1897), he had also written multiple letters to the *Wrexham Advertiser*, 'describing the town and many of its inhabitants' in the 1840s, as well as 'small incidents' from his childhood, also, presumably, with the aim of sharing his memories of an

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p.135.

<sup>129</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.144.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. Keating interestingly notes that he 'pitied' this clerk and his exhibition of 'amateur joy'.

<sup>132</sup> James Ashley, 'Untitled', Burnett Archive of Working-Class Autobiographies, Brunel University, pp.1 and 3.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., pp.1, 5–6, 14, 17, 22, and 25.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., pp.3, 40, 44, and 48–9.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., pp.1 and 49.

earlier era.<sup>136</sup> He clearly thought his memories had value, either to his family or the wider community.

John Burnett, writing of the more than 2000 working-class autobiographies identified by himself, David Mayall, and David Vincent in the 1980s, notes how, despite their differences, ‘many’ of the accounts ‘begin by describing as much of [the author’s] own ancestry as they know’, concluding that these individuals ‘are ... conscious of writing a history, locating themselves in time and space and also, although the term may not be used, in social class’, observing that ‘notes of class-consciousness became more audible in the closing decades of the [nineteenth] century’.<sup>137</sup> Autobiographical accounts also represent a desire to understand oneself and one’s development, mirroring the Romantic idea of the artist as hero and the ‘romantic concern with the growth of the individual’.<sup>138</sup> They also suggest a desire to narrativise one’s life, shaping and controlling that narrative in the process.

Joseph Keating, as already noted, found his own life captivating, writing that his ‘own existence had been ... a more fascinating romance than I had ever read’, with ‘every day ... like turning over a fresh page of an irresistible story’.<sup>139</sup> Remarks in his autobiography – published just after the end of this period, in 1916 – highlight the extent to which he wanted to put a Romantic narrative arc on his life story thus far. The final pages of his account cover the ‘brilliant climax’ of the London production of his play in 1914, which saw ‘streets and railway stations... placarded with posters’ emblazoned with his name.<sup>140</sup> (Nor was this his only bit of success – his novel *The Marriage Contract*, which ‘reached a second edition within five weeks’ was also published around the same time.)<sup>141</sup> In the preface of his autobiography, he claimed:

Stories of beginnings have always interested me. Mystery and romance are rooted in them. Whether a man be a statesman, financier, burglar, poet, or road-sweeper, his starting point is so full of mystery that I love to hear how he became what he is.<sup>142</sup>

A sense of trajectory is seemingly also evident in the Burnett/Mayall/Vincent autobiographies, with Burnett noting that ‘education is ... a major theme of those who greatly valued their hard-won ability to write’.<sup>143</sup> (Even if a trajectory is not explicitly referred to, the writing of an autobiography along with a description of one’s education somewhat implies one.)

---

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p.1.

<sup>137</sup> John Burnett, “The Autobiography of the Working Class.” *Labour History Review* 55.1 (1990), pp.14–15.

<sup>138</sup> Vance, ‘Patterns of Literary Transformation’, p.225. (Vance is writing here with reference to the Bildungsroman.)

<sup>139</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.228.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., pp.304–6.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., pp.304–5.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p.v.

<sup>143</sup> Burnett, “The Autobiography of the Working Class”, p.14.

Keating thought that his trajectory (or at least its happy ‘ending’) might inspire others, observing that his ‘story ... may be of use to young men who see the golden flower of their ambition on the mountain-top, but can find no way up to it’.<sup>144</sup>

## MOTIVATION AND AGE

The ages of aspirants offer further clues about potential intrinsic motivations. We saw in Part I how aspirants identified for this study were of many different ages. Amongst the Macmillan/Chatto group, the 20s and 30s age brackets contained the highest figures. This is perhaps not surprising, but suggests that these individuals were, perhaps, visualising a different future for themselves. This was clearly the case for Alfred Harbert, who, as noted earlier, submitted at least five times between his late teens and mid-20s, and was deeply frustrated at not being able to get on the bottom rung of the literary ladder. At 20, when he had already started to write, he was a commercial clerk, living in Sydenham.<sup>145</sup> At 30, after having had at least five manuscripts rejected by Chatto, he was working as a company secretary, and living a couple of miles away in Anerley.<sup>146</sup> Whether he had Romantic dreams of pursuing authorship as a full-time vocation is unclear, but it does seem he wanted writing to form a permanent part of his future.<sup>147</sup>

Of the 18 Macmillan/Chatto submitters who definitely appear to have submitted work at some point during their 20s, at least 11 were white-collar workers, such as clerks and journalists.<sup>148</sup> Two appear to have been manual workers, however – Alfred Phillips appears to have been a house painter (and had a brother and brother-in-law who were a chauffeur and bricklayer, respectively), whilst a submitter assumed to be Daniel O’Brien was working as a

---

<sup>144</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.v.

<sup>145</sup> See 1901 Census, household record for 128 Venner Road, Sydenham.

<sup>146</sup> See 1911 Census, household record for 43 Selby Road, Anerley, Croydon.

<sup>147</sup> If the 1920s plays mentioned earlier are indeed by him, he would seemingly have been in his mid-40s when they were published in 1927/1928. See British Library Catalogue.

<sup>148</sup> These 18 are as follows (for white-collar workers see brackets): Sidney Durston (clerk), Evelyn Spearing (assistant lecturer), John Mutch, Reginald Taylor (land agent and valuer’s assistant), Katherine Widdup, Daniel Curtois (clerk), George Walkington (clerk), Ernest Ife, Linda Gardiner (journalist), Alfred Harbert (clerk), Cecil Coote (journalist), Maysel Jenkinson, Alfred Phillips, John Leonard Nutty (clerk), Daniel O’Brien, Annie Gertrude Letch, Thomas Clarke (journalist), and Regina Bloch (journalist). (If one includes chemists, the white-collar workers rise to 13 – Ernest Ife was a chemist, and John Mutch was a chemist two years after submission.) Three more individuals may have submitted in their 20s – Rhoda Meyer (who was 19 or 20), Georgina Lovesey (who appears to have been 17 or 21), and Ebe White (who may have been in her 20s or 30s). For submission details of Daniel Curtois and John Leonard Nutty (not yet given) see as follows: for Daniel Curtois, see Macmillan RoM 56016, entry 3255 (and 1881 Census, household record for Daniel H. C. W. Curtois, Washingborough, Lincoln). For John Leonard Nutty, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26103 (and 1911 Census, household record for 64 Hunger Hill Road, Nottingham, and 1939 Register, record for John L. Nutty, b. 1892).

druggist's packer a few years before his submission, and an assistant warehouseman at a druggist's company six-and-a-half years afterwards.<sup>149</sup>

The fact that at least six individuals appear to have submitted when they were aged 19 or under is also very revealing.<sup>150</sup> (This includes two authors mentioned above who also submitted work in their 20s.)<sup>151</sup> Not only it is indicative of ambition (either of teenagers themselves or their parents), but it demonstrates that these individuals – even at a young age – were aware of writing as a career.<sup>152</sup>

Significantly, however, several of the Macmillan/Chatto writers were in their 50s, 60s, and 70s, as we have seen, in an era when old age would have been considered to be much younger than it is today. Several of the 50s-70s age group were still working either at the point of submission, or up to two or three years beforehand.<sup>153</sup> Sarah Cooper, in her 50s, was still working from home as a teacher when she submitted her simply written novel 'Links in Life' to

---

<sup>149</sup> For Alfred Phillips, see 1911 Census, household record for 58 Bardolph Street, Leicester. (Phillips' occupation, 'painter', may have word 'house' beside it in pencil.) For Daniel O'Brien, see 1901 and 1911 Censuses for 14 Great Maze Court, Southwark. (Daniel O'Brien is an assumed correct match – the name given in the Chatto entry book is surname O'Brien, with a probable first initial D. There is no one else listed in the house in the 1901 and 1911 Censuses that it could be, although there is always the very minor possibility that another family member with the initial D existed and was living with the family when 'O'Brien' submitted in 1904.) For O'Brien's submission, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 19884.

<sup>150</sup> Two additional submitters may also have been 19 or under – Georgina Lovesey (who appears to have been either 17 or 21), and Rhoda Meyer, who was either 19 or 20. Lovesey's age varies between censuses – if the 1881 and 1891 Censuses are correct, she was 21 at submission, but if the 1901 and 1911 Censuses are correct, she was 17. See 1881 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, The Lamb Inn, High Street, Stoke Goldington; 1891 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, High Street, Stoke Goldington, Newport Pagnell; 1901 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, High Street, Stoke Goldington, Newport Pagnell; and 1911 Census, household record for Georgina Lovesey, The Green, Stoke Goldington. Rhoda Meyer is listed as aged 19 in the 1901 Census (March 1901), and submitted that November, so – providing the census is correct – would have been either 19 or 20 at that point. See 1901 Census, household record for 31 Fountain Street, Hull.

<sup>151</sup> These are 1) Sidney Durston, who submitted both in his late teens and his early 20s, and 2) Alfred Harbert, who, as already noted, submitted in his mid-20s, and (according to Chatto's notes) had, by that point, been submitting on and off for six years. For Sidney Durston, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24112; Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25980; and 1911 Census, household record for 58 Ruckholt Road, Leyton, Essex. For Alfred Harbert, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entries 20294 and 20858; 1901 Census, household record for 128 Venner Road, Sydenham; and 1911 Census, household record for 43 Selby Road, Anerley, Croydon.

<sup>152</sup> It should be acknowledged that two of this group appear to have come from families with some wealth, however. These are: 1) Doris Wheler, aged 15, who, as noted earlier, was the daughter of a retired army lieutenant colonel and lived in a 15-roomed house (see 1911 Census, household record for 114 Lansdowne Place, Hove), and 2) Wallace Nichols, whose house in Tulse Hill had 10 rooms, according to the 1911 Census, as noted earlier (see 1911 Census, household record for 51 Palace Road, Tulse Hill).

<sup>153</sup> Those working up to two or three years before their submission were: Charles Montague Clark (journalist), Frederick Stevens (journalist), Edward Jacobson ('colonial merchant general produce'), and William Pimblett (auditor, apparently in textile industry). For Charles Montague Clark, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26011, and 1911 Census, household record for 27 Holford Square, London. For Frederick Stevens, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25206, and 1911 Census, household record for 8 Belgrave Terrace, Wakefield. For Edward Jacobson, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 21284, and 1911 Census, household record for 41 The Avenue, West Ealing, London. For William Pimblett, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22645, and 1911 Census, household record for 563 Chorley Old Road, Bolton.

Chatto.<sup>154</sup> (More interestingly, she would, it seems, have been in her 80s when it was published in 1933.)<sup>155</sup> Hamilton Seymour, meanwhile – already, it appears, the author of at least three works, as noted earlier – was listed as a 60-year-old journalist in the 1911 Census in the same week that he made two submissions to Chatto (one of 70,000 words).<sup>156</sup> Others in this group were retired or out of work. John Wilson was a retired commercial clerk when he submitted ‘Audrey’s Story’ to Macmillan in 1881, whilst Sarah Wilcher, apparently in her 60s, was listed as a retired schoolmistress 10 months after submitting ‘A Chance in Life’ to the same publisher in 1910.<sup>157</sup> (She would have been in her 70s when it was published in 1921.)<sup>158</sup>

Nine months before sending a 346-page story to Chatto, Joseph Orme – seemingly a published author, as already noted – was listed in the census as a 63-year-old out of business retail provision dealer living in a five-roomed house in Salford with three grown-up children.<sup>159</sup> Two-and-a-half years later, he had moved half a mile away, and sent another manuscript to Chatto, titled ‘The Kirklands of Kirkland’.<sup>160</sup> These individuals were perhaps less likely to have been envisioning a different future, but the fact that they were writing creatively and hoping to see that work in print, in some cases having seen their work in print before, suggests that they were still trying to improve themselves (or their work) and that they felt entitled to be writing.

## THE COMPLEXITY OF MOTIVATION

‘I gather that the profession of letters has an altogether irresistible fascination for you’, wrote the *Bookman* in 1893 in one of its ‘Letters to a Young Writer’ pieces.<sup>161</sup> ‘You look on it as a romantic profession, though you are too young to say so. It will impose no hard-and-fast rules on you, no

---

<sup>154</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20143; 1901 Census, household record for Sarah A. Cooper, Lichfield Street, Walsall (Oxford House); 1911 Census, household record for 50 Lichfield Street, Walsall; and S. A. Cooper, *Links in Life* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1933). The published book is written in relatively simple prose; I am assuming here that the published version did not differ greatly from her initial submission.

<sup>155</sup> See Cooper, *Links in Life*.

<sup>156</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24260 and 24268, and 1911 Census, household record for 40 Guilford Street, Russell Square, London.

<sup>157</sup> For John Wilson, see Macmillan RoM 56016, entry 3435, and 1881 Census, household record for 69 Angell Road, Lambeth. For Sarah Wilcher, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20179, and 1911 Census, household record for 53 Thanet Road, Margate.

<sup>158</sup> See Sarah A. Wilcher, *A Chance in Life. A Novel* (London, A. H. Stockwell, 1921).

<sup>159</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24649, and 1911 Census, household record for 11 Mere Avenue, Pendleton, Salford.

<sup>160</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26095. (This 1914 submission gives a different address to the one listed in his 1912 submission and in the 1911 Census.)

<sup>161</sup> ‘He Would be an Author: Letters to a Young Writer. I’, *The Bookman*, October 1893 (No. 25, Volume V), pp.28–9.

vexing hours ... the whole world will give you material; there will be great, wide prospects, and fine prizes ... That is your view, I have no doubt, of the profession of letters'.<sup>162</sup>

Romantic ideas about literature and creativity are a recurring theme in this period, as we have seen, such as in Helen Corke's idealised notion of 'happy people who spend their lives in writing books'.<sup>163</sup> Some aspirants undoubtedly wished not only to write but to *be* a writer – to adopt some sort of Romanticised identity. (We will see in Chapter 4 how one aspirant wrote into a magazine asking not what to do to write but what to do to 'be an author'.)<sup>164</sup> It is important, though, to note how complex the question of motivation could be, with non-materialist motivations sitting alongside commercial aims, and a Romantic idea of being a writer not always equating to a desire for fame or wealth.

The cases of Thomas Burke and Joseph Keating highlight the possible complexity of motivation. Both men developed a somewhat Romantic commitment to the vocation of literature, but did not measure success in the same way. Burke, who went on to enjoy a successful literary career as the author of *Limehouse Nights* (1916) and a long list of other fictional and non-fictional works, was just nine years old when 'the desire to tell a story' first came to him, after experiencing a dream so vivid and powerful that it 'awoke a desire to tell tales'.<sup>165</sup> He was 16 when he had his first story accepted, an event which confirmed for him the path he wanted to take. 'The solid achievement of the acceptance of that story' he said, 'set all [my] thought and energy in one direction ... I was sure of one thing; that somehow or other my life would be spent in or around literature; that it would be in the fullest sense devoted to literature'.<sup>166</sup> A strong believer in the importance of artists, he 'felt there could be no finer life than to do service in any small capacity in the purlieu of one of the arts', deciding that, for him, 'the art would be literature'.<sup>167</sup>

Fame and fortune do not seem to have been Burke's motivations. In his book, *Son of London*, he explains how he went against advice to write a novel as a way of making a name for himself:

---

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., p.29. (Whether the unnamed young writer being addressed was a real individual or a representative fiction is unclear, although the response suggests the former.)

<sup>163</sup> Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy. An Autobiography, Part I: 1882–1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.73.

<sup>164</sup> See "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, October 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.359.

<sup>165</sup> Burke, *Son of London*, p.133.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., p.132.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., pp.132–3.

Many of my kindly editors in advising me echoed each other with the advice ‘Why don’t you write a novel? That’s the best way towards establishing yourself.’ But I had no desire to write a novel. The novel form did not attract me. I was drawn almost wholly to the short story...<sup>168</sup>

Furthermore, his definition of success seems to have been getting a story accepted by a particular magazine that he revered. He mentions how, in around 1904/1905, he thought that ‘if and when I had a story in *Harper’s* I would be able to feel that I was really and truly an author, a full member of the literary world’.<sup>169</sup>

Joseph Keating wrote around nine novels, well in excess of 100 short stories, and at least a couple of plays during this period, and saw much of this output published.<sup>170</sup> Even he did not know why he started writing fiction – ‘what set me writing novels no one knows – not even myself’ – but he seems to have been taken over by a sudden impulse to write, prompted initially by the sight of a servant girl scrubbing steps, noting that ‘without knowing it’ he was ‘thinking a novel, with herself as the heroine’.<sup>171</sup> This was followed by a ‘confusing storm of thoughts ... lashing’ him ‘towards the strange idea of writing novels’, all of this having arisen ‘from nothing at all’.<sup>172</sup> He became compelled to write, later describing authorship as a ‘disease’, and explaining how he continued to write against doctors’ orders after suffering a nervous breakdown and other problems around five years after first picking up his pen.<sup>173</sup>

It is clear throughout his autobiography that Keating wanted to be published, and very much wanted his name and his work to be known. Publication was crucial to him – on taking up writing in 1895, he gave himself five years to have a novel published, promising to give up writing entirely if he failed.<sup>174</sup> (He was to achieve this goal with less than two months to spare.)<sup>175</sup>

---

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p.182.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p.186. Burke noted how he still hadn’t achieved this goal at the time of writing (in 1945), but that that might have had something to do with the fact he’d never sent them anything.

<sup>170</sup> The novels were: *Merva Brully*, *Gwen Lloyd*, *Son of Judith* (published 1900), *Maurice* (published 1905), *Queen of Swords* (published, apparently in 1906), *The Great Appeal* (published, apparently in 1909), *The Perfect Wife* (published, apparently in 1913), *The Marriage Contract* (published, apparently in 1914), and an unnamed novel. A collection of Keating’s mining stories, *Adventures in the Dark*, was also published in 1906. His play *Peggy and Her Husband* was performed in the West End in 1914. Keating also had stories published in many newspapers. The number of short stories he wrote was probably nearer 200. For mentions of this work, and other material that he wrote/had published, see Keating, *My Struggle for Life*: pp.174–82, 188–90, 193–5, 200, 207, 210, 220, 226–9, 234–5, 240–1, 244–6, 249, 251–6, 261–3, 265, 270–1, 278, and 298–303. See also O’Leary, “Keating, Joseph...” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. According to O’Leary’s entry, Keating published/wrote several other works after this period (from 1915). NB: The ODNB entry refers to *Peggy and Her Husband* being his only play; his autobiography, however, appears to mention him having penned a second. (See Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.254.)

<sup>171</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.viii and pp.164–6. He did write this novel – it became his first finished manuscript, *Merva Brully*.

<sup>172</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.166.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., pp.199–200. See also p.194.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., p.169. See also p.194.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p.195.

It is also clear that being published alone was insufficient – his work had to be successful. When his novel *The Great Appeal* was accepted for publication after 14 rejections, he fully expected it to be ‘a magnificent success ... read all over the country’ and notes with sadness how this book, ‘which was to have thundered and flamed through the world’, instead ‘dropped like a stone in a pool’.<sup>176</sup> (Nor was this expectation wildly unrealistic – his first novel, *Son of Judith*, rejected by seven publishers, had ended up receiving reviews in papers including the *Times*, while his book *Maurice* earned him a ‘most kind letter of praise’ from future Prime Minister David Lloyd George.)<sup>177</sup>

Keating believed that the novels inside him ‘would be great, immortal books’ and that he ‘would be regarded as a master’.<sup>178</sup> Whilst he envisioned success and fame, however – ‘I saw myself famous for all eternity’ – his chief concerns seem to have been the creation of good literature and getting recognition for that work, rather than acquiring fame for its own sake.<sup>179</sup> He explains that his ‘desire was to construct huge pictures of life, with real details of what I had seen, felt, and thought, all moulded into wonderful harmonies of story, truth and characterisation’.<sup>180</sup>

He also seems to have got a strong sense of achievement and satisfaction from expressing himself that was quite separate from his commercial aims. Describing his feelings on finishing his first novel manuscript, *Merva Brully*, he explained:

When I put ‘The End’ under the last line on the last page of the last chapter of my book, it seemed to me that I had done the impossible. I had written a novel out of nothing but an impulse. I had made a picture of a vision. I, who should have been content to think only of coal-mines and rubbish tips, had been imagining wondrous things of life, earth, and heaven ... If what I had done was valueless, if I had made the mistake of a lifetime, the glow in my heart as I looked at my completed story was worth all the toil. No pain of disappointment which might be in store for me could equal the pleasure I felt that night. Whether I had been ... foolish in attempting to write, in such a short time, this terrific number of words to express my ideas, even should those ideas prove to be less extraordinary than the pains they had cost me, I felt that my achievement was glorious.<sup>181</sup>

---

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., pp.261–3. See also p.230.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., pp.194–5 and 229. Lloyd George was, at this time, an MP, and, as Keating says (ibid., p.229), would shortly become President of the Board of Trade.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p.190.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p.190. See also pp.230 and 256. Elsewhere (pp.166 and 306) he claims to not be interested in or thinking about fame, but these apparent contradictions could be seen as suggesting the point being made here – that for him fame was more an expected by-product of success, rather than a goal.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., p.167. Also see Keating’s comments about his interest in people, pp.167–8.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., pp.178–9.

He was also adamant that he did not write for wealth, and desired only enough money to live on.

He explains:

... not once did I see myself rich. I did not think of making a fortune. I thought about making literature. The idea of money only came into my mind with the question of how I was to live in this world while I was writing my masterpieces. Money as money, I never bothered about ... my wish to write had no worldly ambitions in it or cravings for monetary reward. I had no hopes of gaining anything but a living by whatever work I attempted to do.<sup>182</sup>

His wish to write also does not seem to have been influenced by anyone around him. He knew no one in Cardiff with 'literary tastes' and 'knew no one at all there who had ever written anything but news paragraphs'.<sup>183</sup> He notes how 'the first hint that anyone else in Cardiff was writing' came to him only when a large manuscript of a poetic tragedy turned up at his newspaper's office.<sup>184</sup> (Ex-miner Keating subsequently struck up a friendship with its author, an ex-sailor called Patterson.)<sup>185</sup>

Keating also discusses two strong overarching desires, firstly, showing a Romantic influence, to achieve something more than just earning a living – 'Mere existence ... did not interest me. Getting a living was not life. Doing some fine thing was life' – (the thought of simply earning a living made him suicidal), and secondly, to prove that someone without any privilege at all – born not even at the bottom of life's hill, but 'a quarter of a mile below the bottom' – could achieve in life:

I was challenging the whole world in my desire to make it clear that the lowest of the low was as good, on this earth [sic], as the highest of the high ... I had come from a family of working people, and I believed that a child of the workers might be born with as much intellectuality ... as the child of any other sort of people.<sup>186</sup>

(These desires, it appears, were not specifically related to writing, however, and would have applied no matter what path he chose in life. Ambitious, he is convinced early on that he will be a 'great man' in some way or another.)<sup>187</sup>

Overall, we can begin to see evidence, then, of aspirants' intrinsic and non-material motivations. New writers in this period were taking delight in new literary and imaginative worlds and in self-expression. Significantly, these aspirants felt entitled to be writing. Repudiating

---

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., pp.166 and 190.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p.166.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p.172.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., pp.172–4.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., pp.vi and 250.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., pp.119–20. See also p.115.

the idea that the ‘right to write’ was not universal, newly literate generations were embracing writing as a democratic activity. This belief in one’s right and ability to express oneself through words had Romantic roots. As Michael Ferber notes, Romanticism ‘tended to democratise the creative spirit’ giving ‘the impression that anyone could be a poet, if one could break free of conventional thinking, reawaken one’s dreams, revive one’s buried childhood, and expand one’s imagination’.<sup>188</sup> At the same time, these aspirants were arguably rejecting the Romantic idea of literary genius. In declining to be put off by their own failures – at least nine of the Macmillan/Chatto writers were repeat submitters – these individuals seem to have been believers not in God-given ability, but in Smilesian self-improvement and persistence.<sup>189</sup>

### Writing and Occupations

As we saw earlier, the Macmillan/Chatto submitters who were employed worked in a range of different fields, from teaching and journalism to merchantry and manual work. Over half, however, had low-level white-collar jobs in fields such as teaching, journalism, and clerical work, as, at some point, did Keating, Brown, and Burke. All of these aspirants were part of a white-collar labour market which grew in this period.<sup>190</sup>

In order to illuminate the lives of these aspirants and others like them, this section will offer a broad consideration of the links between writing and low-level white-collar work in this period. It will suggest how such occupations may have motivated such individuals to write – both directly in terms of what they involved and the cultural contact they provided, and in more indirect ways as well.

---

<sup>188</sup> Michael Ferber, *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.53. See also Roger Smith, ‘Individuality, the Self and Concepts of Mind’, in G. Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p.145.

<sup>189</sup> These repeat submitters were Katherine Widdup, Joseph Orme, Charles Ely, Gladys Davidson, Alfred Harbert, Richard Goddard, Eleanor Kennedy, Sidney Durston, and John Rumfitt. (I am not including Hamilton Seymour here, even though he submitted twice, because he submitted in the same week, so may not have known his first submission was rejected before he submitted his second.) For Katherine Widdup, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13349; Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22556; and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24657. For Joseph Orme, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24649, and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26095. For Charles Ely, see Macmillan RoM 56019, entry 13334, and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/5, entry 17726. For Gladys Davidson, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20854; and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24405, 24406, and 24731. For Alfred Harbert, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entries 20294 and 20858 (and see comments against the former entry for mentions of additional previous submissions). For Richard Goddard, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24407 and 24720 (under R. Hazlewood). For Eleanor Kennedy, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 23918 and 25058. For Sidney Durston, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24112, and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25980. For John Rumfitt, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24884 (and see note on record mentioning a subsequent submission). For Hamilton Seymour, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24260 and 24268. NB: A further writer appears to have been a repeat submitter – Chatto’s notes against William Clay’s 1914 submission suggest he had submitted the same story to them before. See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26045.

<sup>190</sup> See, for example, Heller, *London Clerical Workers*, pp.1–2, and Johansen, ‘Supposed Paradise’, pp.48 and 56.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

It is perhaps unsurprising that aspirant writers might have emerged from white-collar fields linked to writing and books, such as teaching, journalism, clerical work, and librarianship. Entrants to such occupations are more likely to have been bookish types who enjoyed, and succeeded at, school.<sup>191</sup> A closer examination of these sectors however, reveals that they also shared features that may have made the creation of aspirants within their ranks more likely.

In London at least, both the clerical and teaching professions often involved further education and training. London's new public librarians, meanwhile, were not required to take qualifications, but they saw *themselves* as educators, and, as part of their jobs, were able to enjoy books, and gain and share knowledge about them.<sup>192</sup>

In his study of male clerks in London, Michael Heller explains how the clerical world in this period experienced a number of interlinked changes. The relationship between employers and employees became more formalised and impersonal; systems of industrial welfare emerged, partly as a result, providing benefits for workers such as pensions, sports facilities, and company clubs and societies; and workers came to view their working life as a career – a 'long-term project', in which loyalty and hard work would be rewarded with promotions, pay rises, and perks.<sup>193</sup>

A significant part of this project was 'a commitment to education and the improvement and monitoring of the self'.<sup>194</sup> Heller explains that 'as "brain workers" clerks were expected to improve their education', with evening courses constituting 'one important aspect of commitment'.<sup>195</sup> Taking advantage of the expansion in commercial and continuing education, London's clerks studied shorthand, bookkeeping, and many other subjects, at institutions such as Pitman's Metropolitan School.<sup>196</sup> Further education and self-improvement outside the office was not just encouraged, but was almost a part of the clerical profession.

When not at night school, London clerks could also take advantage of the social and sports facilities that companies offered, which at the generous Holborn Bars (headquarters of life

---

<sup>191</sup> Dina M. Copelman, *London's Women Teachers: Gender, Class and Feminism, 1870–1930* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp.128–9, and Johansen, 'Supposed Paradise', p.56.

<sup>192</sup> See, for example, Johansen, 'Supposed Paradise', pp.57–9.

<sup>193</sup> Heller, *London Clerical Workers*, pp.42–50 and 63.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.49–50.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.69–70.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.70, 153, 166–7, and 169–70.

assurance firm Prudential) included a library, reading rooms, and a stage.<sup>197</sup> Heller also hints at possible opportunities and outlets for creativity and writing. There were clerical and company journals and magazines, and Heller mentions how one clerk – ‘poet of the *L.C.C. [London County Council] Staff Gazette*’ – penned a poem about salary.<sup>198</sup> Highlighting the huge importance of promotion and career to the clerical workforce, he notes how clerks ‘composed poems ... wrote short stories and even novels’ on these subjects, making reference to writer (and former clerk) William Pett Ridge’s book *Sixty-Nine Birnam Road*, about a clerk’s rise up the ranks.<sup>199</sup>

The teaching profession, too, often involved additional education. In her study of London’s female teachers, Dina M. Copelman notes how many teachers took evening courses to gain certificates in extra subjects such as physical education, science teaching, and singing.<sup>200</sup>

London’s librarians, meanwhile, were far from being simply detached assistants. In her study of male public librarians in London, Michelle Johansen shows that these individuals were energetic, dedicated servants of their communities, who saw themselves as ‘vital cogs in a nationwide process of improvement and democratisation’.<sup>201</sup> They not only assisted visitors, but arranged talks, readings, and exhibitions, organised clubs for children, worked with multiple organisations, such as the University Extension Society, and generally ensured that their libraries were not dusty, unused spaces, but vibrant, busy, and important educative institutions.<sup>202</sup> Whilst librarians undoubtedly learnt something themselves from such outreach work, there were also other opportunities to use and gain literary knowledge. Johansen notes how, as managers of new institutions, some librarians were able to select the fiction and non-fiction that stocked their libraries.<sup>203</sup> Another librarian admitted to reading books when his desk was quiet.<sup>204</sup> Some librarians also wrote themselves. Johansen notes that some of her 90 male librarian subjects were published authors.<sup>205</sup>

Chatto submitter William Clay was another librarian-writer, and his career offers proof that librarians outside London were also involved in educational outreach, were displaying and

---

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., pp.45–7.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., pp.75–6. *Clerk*, for example, was the journal of the National Union of Clerks. (See *ibid.*, p.23.)

<sup>199</sup> Heller, *London Clerical Workers*, p.75.

<sup>200</sup> Copelman, *London’s Women Teachers*, p.159.

<sup>201</sup> Johansen, ‘Supposed Paradise’, pp.57–9.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p.57.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., p.48.

using literary knowledge, and were dedicated servants of their communities.<sup>206</sup> Clay beat 94 other applicants to become librarian of Southend's new Carnegie-endowed Public Library in 1906.<sup>207</sup> On being elected, he told the interview panel that they would 'not regret it' and indeed appears to have proved exemplary in the role.<sup>208</sup> He helped stock the library before it first opened, later organised a lecture series, and oversaw the creation of a museum in part of the library.<sup>209</sup>

Evidence of his dedication and the high regard in which he was held is scattered throughout the pages of the local *Southend Standard*. At the Library's opening ceremony, he was already being praised for his efforts, with one councillor remarking that 'they had caught a live Librarian, who would put all his heart into the work'.<sup>210</sup> A month after the library's opening, his book choices were described by one observer as 'well nigh perfect'; years later he was being praised for retrieving some missing books by writing to their departed borrower in South Africa.<sup>211</sup>

The most telling evidence, however, comes from debates over Clay's pay. In support of a proposed salary increase from £150 to £175 in 1908, one councillor noted that not only did Clay have '25 per cent more work than in towns of like size', but he 'was ever at their service and practically lived there'.<sup>212</sup> Agreeing, one of the alderman 'testified to the complete manner in which Mr Clay did his work'.<sup>213</sup> 'He was an excellent man', reports the paper, and 'it was greatly

---

<sup>206</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26045, and 1911 Census, household record for William Clay, Hermitage Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Southend-on-Sea (Kersbrook). The 1911 Census has his occupation as 'librarian', and his address in the Chatto records in 1914 is given as 'Public Library, Southend-on-Sea'.

<sup>207</sup> See "Election of a Librarian." [Under 'Public Library' section of 'Southend Town Council'], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 22 March 1906, p.3. His appointment was also mentioned in many other newspapers nationwide, see: "Ninety-five applications were received...", *Northampton Mercury*, 30 March 1906, p.8; "Ninety-five applications were received...", *The Beverley Recorder and General Advertiser*, 7 April 1906, p.3; "Ninety-five applications were received...", *The Manchester Courier*, 30 March 1906, p.12; "Ninety-five applications were received...", *The Christchurch Times, Ringwood and Bournemouth Advertiser*, 7 April 1906, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; "Ninety-five applications were received...", *East & South Devon Advertiser*, 7 April 1906, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; "Popular Lectures at the Limehouse Library." *Borough of Stepney and Poplar, and East London Advertiser*, 31 March 1906, p.8; and "Ninety-five applications were received...", *Berks & Oxon Advertiser and Weekly Journal for Abingdon, Wallingford, Watlington & Neighbourhood*, 6 April 1906, 7<sup>th</sup> page. See also "Southend's New Free Library." *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 26 July 1906, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

<sup>208</sup> "Election of a Librarian." *Southend Standard*, 22 March 1906, p.3.

<sup>209</sup> See "Southend's New Free Library." *Southend Standard*, 26 July 1906, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; "Public Library." [Under 'Southend Town Council'], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 22 April 1909, p.7; and "Museum for Southend." *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 28 November 1912, p.5.

<sup>210</sup> See "Southend's New Free Library." *Southend Standard*, 26 July 1906, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

<sup>211</sup> See "Music lovers and students will rejoice to know..." *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 2 August 1906, 2<sup>nd</sup> page, and "Public Library." [Under 'Southend Town Council'], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 22 September 1910, p.8.

<sup>212</sup> See "Southend Council and Their Officials. Salaries Question Again." *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 20 February 1908, p.2. NB: This is the newspaper's account of the meeting – it is unclear whether these were the exact words used by the councillor.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*

due to his genius that the library had succeeded as it had'.<sup>214</sup> 'He practically lived at the Library'.<sup>215</sup> Another alderman 'asked was it a fact that the librarian lived at the library. (Voices: "Yes," and laughter.)'.<sup>216</sup> The proposal was passed.<sup>217</sup>

The following year, another £25 pay rise was being discussed.<sup>218</sup> This time there was more opposition (although more relating to the idea and size of the rise, than to Clay himself).<sup>219</sup> Again, arguments were put forward on Clay's behalf.<sup>220</sup> One councillor 'said they had an excellent officer', adding that 'with the increase the salary would still be much smaller than paid to other librarians with much smaller [book] issues'.<sup>221</sup> Another again brought up the number of issues at Southend compared to similar towns, noting that 'the children's issues had involved a greater amount of work than was anticipated' and that 'Mr Clay had also instituted a valuable educational series of lectures'.<sup>222</sup>

All three of these fields, then, at least in London (and in some cases elsewhere) required education and learning. Clerks, especially, were expected to continue their education and often exhibited 'strong self-help and self-improvement ethics'.<sup>223</sup> London's dedicated and bookish librarians, meanwhile, 'lived Samuel Smiles' self-improvement project to the full, taking genuine pleasure in autodidact journeys that lasted a lifetime'.<sup>224</sup>

There was also a vocational element to all three occupations.<sup>225</sup> They were professions that required dedication and that entrants would likely have expected to stay in for several years at least. Heller and Johansen both talk, respectively, about how clerks and librarians rose up the ranks and expected to do so, with Johansen's male librarians generally starting on the ladder with an entry-level position in their local free library as teenagers, before progressing to more senior roles, either at the same institution or elsewhere (more often the latter).<sup>226</sup>

---

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. Again, these are the newspaper's words – not necessarily the exact words spoken.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid. Again, these are the newspaper's words – not necessarily the exact words spoken.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. It is amusing to note that Clay's address in the Chatto records is, indeed, 'Public Library, Southend-on-Sea'. (See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26045.)

<sup>217</sup> See "Southend Council and Their Officials. Salaries Question Again." *Southend Standard*, 20 February 1908, p.2.

<sup>218</sup> "Public Library." *Southend Standard*, 22 April 1909, p.7.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid. Again, this is the newspaper's wording, not necessarily the exact words spoken.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid. Again, this is the newspaper's wording, not necessarily the exact words spoken.

<sup>223</sup> Heller, *London Clerical Workers*, p.70.

<sup>224</sup> Johansen, 'Supposed Paradise', p.49. See also pp.53, 56, and 59–60.

<sup>225</sup> For example, Michelle Johansen briefly mentions that this was the case for librarianship and also other lower-middle-class occupations such as teaching. See *ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>226</sup> See Heller, *London Clerical Workers*, pp.49–50, and Johansen, 'Supposed Paradise', p.50.

## CULTURAL AND GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY

Many of the individuals in these professions were also upwardly mobile. Johansen explains that most of her 90 librarian subjects travelled a significant distance from birth to death, from the working class to the middle class.<sup>227</sup> Two-thirds were from working-class backgrounds – the sons of manual labourers – and as youngsters, would have been surrounded by people who worked in bricklaying, house painting, and other such trades.<sup>228</sup> Most of her librarians managed to permanently cross the manual/non-manual divide into the lower middle class, with many senior librarians experiencing a ‘second stage of mobility’ in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>229</sup>

Johansen explains how librarians were not alone in this mobility, but were ‘surrounded by others undergoing similar upward socio-occupational trajectories as the white-collar labour market expanded’.<sup>230</sup> She adds how both librarianship and elementary school teaching grew in the later nineteenth century, with both fields ‘offer[ing] white-collar openings to bright candidates from less privileged backgrounds’, even if the former was predominantly a male occupation whilst the latter was considered more feminine.<sup>231</sup> The clerical profession was, in part, more exclusive, but Heller notes how ‘many clerks, or their parents, had managed to climb socially out of the working classes’.<sup>232</sup> He notes how clerical workers were ‘foremost’ amongst the ‘upwardly mobile working-class’ and ‘newly emergent lower-middle-class’ groups, ‘high with aspirations for a better life’, whose educational needs were met by emerging institutions such as polytechnics and evening colleges.<sup>233</sup> Self-betterment was, he explains, the ‘epicentre of the conceptual framework of the clerk and the larger lower middle class to which he belonged’.<sup>234</sup>

Johansen’s and Heller’s findings offer a valuable addition to the existing literature on Victorian and Edwardian social mobility. Andrew Miles’ 1999 study, for example, found a small degree of fluidity across the 1837 to 1914 period as a whole, with an increase in mobility (both upward and downward) toward the end of the period, although upward mobility at that point was mostly intraclass – within the different strata of the working and middle classes – rather than

---

<sup>227</sup> Johansen, ‘Supposed Paradise’, p.48. See also p.53.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., pp.51–2. See also p.48.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., p.52.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid., p.48.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p.56. See also p.47.

<sup>232</sup> Heller, *London Clerical Workers*, pp.176–7. See also pp.142 and 153.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid., p.178.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., p.176.

interclass.<sup>235</sup> Even in 1914, according to Miles, more than nine of out of 10 sons born to working-class men remained working class themselves.<sup>236</sup> The majority of Johansen's librarians and several of Heller's clerks, then, appear to have been very much the exception rather than the rule in terms of their class trajectories. They are also therefore very significant. Johansen's sample, in particular, proves that despite immobility between classes being the norm, education and white-collar work was enabling many individuals to climb the social ladder and cross the class divide.

The Macmillan/Chatto writers – where information on their parents could be found – came, most often, from lower-middle-class backgrounds. Several submitters were on the same rough occupational level as their fathers. Two (Emily Roff, teacher; and Annie Gertrude Letch, no occupation listed) were the daughters of school masters; two more (typist and children's author Gladys Davidson and teenager Wallace Nichols) were the children of civil engineers; teenager Dorothy Thody's father appears to have been a secretary; Maysel Jenkinson's father was a correspondent and translator; whilst teacher Agnes Holliday's father appears to have been in the police.<sup>237</sup> Carpet merchant's clerk Sidney Durston was the son of a messenger.<sup>238</sup>

Others had fathers who were more firmly middle class. Assistant lecturer Evelyn Spearing and solicitor's clerk and apparent poet Claude Greening were both children of solicitors; journalist and author Linda Gardiner was the daughter of a newspaper editor; Millicent Burbridge was the daughter of a former factory manager; whilst jewellery gilder, employer, and author Cyril Silverston's father was a wholesale jewellery dealer.<sup>239</sup>

---

<sup>235</sup> Andrew Miles, *Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), see for example pp.22–4, 28–9, and 46–7, and see also Laura Tabili, 'Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England (review)', *Victorian Studies*, 44:3 (2002), pp.515–6; Theodore Koditschek, 'Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England (review)', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 31:4 (2001), pp.631–2; and David Alan Gately, 'Books Reviewed: Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England', *Sociology*, 35:4 (2001), p.1001.

<sup>236</sup> Andrew Miles, *Social Mobility*, p.32. See also Tabili, 'Social Mobility', p.516.

<sup>237</sup> For Emily Roff, see 1911 Census, household record for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester; 1901 Census, household records for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester (Roff is absent) and 8 Toronto Road, Tilbury, Chadwell St Mary, Essex (the Emily Roff present here is likely our Emily Roff, despite the incorrect age – birthplace and occupation fit); and 1939 Register, record for Emily Roff, Colchester, b. 1872. For Annie Gertrude Letch, see 1901 Census, household record for 38 Castlewood Road, Hackney, London, and 1911 Census, household record for 38 Castlewood Road, Hackney, London. For Gladys Davidson, see 1911 Census, household record for 78 Glen Road, Sheffield. For Wallace Nichols, see 1911 Census, household record for 51 Palace Road, Tulse Hill, and 1901 Census, household record for 41 Thornton Avenue, Streatham. For Dorothy Thody, see 1911 Census, household record for 14 Leighton Road, Cheltenham. For Maysel Jenkinson, see 1911 Census, household record for Duffs Hill, Glemsford, Suffolk. For Agnes Holliday, see 1911 Census, household record for Agnes Theresa Holliday, Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire (Croft Cottage) – her father is listed as a 'Police Pensioner' – and 1939 Register, record for Agnes T. Holliday, Berkshire, b. 1878.

<sup>238</sup> See 1911 Census, household record for 58 Ruckholt Road, Leyton, Essex.

<sup>239</sup> For Evelyn Spearing, see 1911 Census, household records for 6 Parkside, Cambridge (Spearing absent) and 9 Bateman Street, Cambridge, and 1901 Census, household record for 4 Park Terrace, Cambridge (on transcript as

Other submitters show more the intergenerational mobility evident in the families of Johansen's librarians. There are a few instances in which a submitter has a white-collar job and their father or mother had a more manual occupation. Teacher Marian Diamond's father, for example, was a shipwright, whilst the mother of clerk John Leonard Nutty was a cook.<sup>240</sup> Many more white-collar submitters were the children of skilled tradesmen and shopkeepers. Three individuals (reporter Cecil Coote, clerk Alfred Harbert, and teenager Sidney Crown) were the sons of tailors; clerk Charles Pritchard was the son of a draper; whilst the father of schoolteacher Ebe White was a bookseller and wood carver.<sup>241</sup> In two further cases where the submitter is likely to have been a teacher or retired teacher but this cannot be confirmed, the fathers, respectively, had a bootmaker's shop, and worked as a greengrocer.<sup>242</sup>

Whilst these writers did not cross the working-class/middle-class occupational divide in the same way as the majority of Johansen's librarians, the fact that they did not follow in their parents' footsteps but took white-collar, more intellectual jobs, nonetheless demonstrates a degree of cultural mobility. In both cases, though, these jobs either brought these individuals into – or kept them in – a cultural environment, one that may have offered a different set of values, and ignited further cultural interests.

---

Emmanuel House, 4 Parker Street, Park Terrace). For Claude Greening, see 1901 Census, household record for 46 Marion Road Lonesome, Mitcham, Croydon, and 1891 Census, household record for Claude Greening, Palace Road, Streatham (Rookwood). For Linda Gardiner, see 1891 Census, household record for 64 Parchment Street, Winchester. There are two works, apparently by Gardiner, that pre-date her 1892 submission. See Linda Gardiner, *The Rev. Miles Latimer. A Tale* (London: Remington & Co., 1885) and Linda Gardiner, *His Heritage. A Novel* (London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1888). For Millicent Burbidge, see 1911 Census, household record for 51 Coventry Road, Ilford. For Cyril Silverston, see 1911 Census, household record for 10 Rotten Park Road, Birmingham. Chatto mention that Silverston is already a published author (see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23857), and there are indeed two books that pre-date his submission: Cyril J. Silverston, *The Dominion of Race. A Novel* (London: Digby, Long & Co., 1906) and Cyril J. Silverston, *The Education of Eve* (London: Sisley's, 1908).

<sup>240</sup> For Marian Diamond, see 1911 Census, household record for 50 Crofton Road, Plaistow, London; 1901 Census, household record for 63 Ravenscroft Road, West Ham, London; and 1939 Register, record for Marion E. Diamond, Wales, b. 1877. For John Leonard Nutty, see 1911 Census, household record for 64 Hunger Hill Road, Nottingham, and 1939 Register, record for John L. Nutty, b. 1892.

<sup>241</sup> For Cecil Coote, see 1911 Census, household record for 6 Neale Road, Halstead, Essex. For Alfred Harbert, see 1901 Census, household record for 128 Venner Road, Sydenham, and 1911 Census, household record for 43 Selby Road, Anerley, Croydon. For Sidney Crown, see 1901 Census, household record for 208 High Street, Walthamstow, and 1891 Census, household record for 109 Lambeth Walk, Lambeth. For Charles Pritchard, see 1901 Census, household record for 48 Grosvenor Park Road, Walthamstow; 1911 Census, household record for 51 Peterborough Road, Leyton; 1891 Census, household record for 57 Granville Road, Walthamstow; and 1881 Census, household record for 4 Hills Buildings, Bristol. For Ebe White, see 1901 Census, household record for 70 West Street, Brighton; 1891 Census, household record for 69 West Street, Brighton (I assume they are listed at number 69 in error. I assume the 'Eve' listed is Ebe. Based on the other censuses and a birth search, I believe her name was Ebe); and 1881 Census, household record for 70 West Street, Brighton.

<sup>242</sup> These cases are those of 'Miss Kingman' and 'Joseph Baxter'. In neither case is it entirely clear who the submitter was within the house. The submitter Miss Kingman was either retired teacher Mary Kingman, or her sister, greengrocer's assistant Ellen. (One assumes it was more likely to have been Mary, however.) Their father was a greengrocer. In the Baxter case, both father and son were called Joseph Baxter. The son was a schoolteacher, whilst the father appears to have had a bootmaker's shop. One assumes that the submitter was more likely to have been the son. See, respectively, 1891 Census, household record for 2a Lansdown Road, Bath, and 1901 Census, household record for 60 Barking Road, West Ham.

Several individuals in sectors such as clerical work and teaching were also geographically mobile. Johansen notes how many of the first senior librarians in London were not Londoners.<sup>243</sup> Many had migrated from areas across the country, including Wales, the Midlands, the North East, the North West, and the South West.<sup>244</sup> Two posts at Battersea library in 1887 and 1888 were filled by candidates originally from Dorset and the Shetland Islands.<sup>245</sup> Johansen explains how migrating to London ‘meant making it’, with the capital offering ‘an opportunity for self-reinvention, improved pay and conditions, and a chance to gain prominence in wider professional activity’.<sup>246</sup> Other librarians moved out of London, possibly knowing their experience would serve them well elsewhere. Chatto writer William Clay was first assistant at Stepney Public Libraries before winning his role at Southend.<sup>247</sup> The final three candidates for the Southend position were all from the wider London area – the other two men were from libraries in Hornsey and Highgate.<sup>248</sup>

There is also evidence that several other Macmillan/Chatto writers had moved at some point, either as youngsters with their parents, or as adults. Of the submitters living in London, teacher Marian Diamond and her family had moved from Wales; merchant’s clerk Charles Pritchard and his family had migrated from Bristol; artist Samuel Oakley was originally from Cheshire; retired clerk John Wilson had come from Kent; whilst future chemist John Mutch had been born in Scotland.<sup>249</sup> Others had moved out of London, or to and from other locations around the country. Former schoolmistress Sarah Wilcher had moved from London to Margate; chemist Ernest Ife had travelled from Wales to Pontefract; land agent and valuer’s assistant Reginald Taylor had migrated from Devon to Buckinghamshire, apparently via Cornwall; whilst

---

<sup>243</sup> Johansen, ‘Supposed Paradise’, p.48.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p.50.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.50–1.

<sup>247</sup> “Election of a Librarian.” [Under ‘Public Library’ section of ‘Southend Town Council’], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 22 March 1906, p.3.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> The Diamond family are in London for the 1911 Census and the 1901 Census, but according to the former, Marian was born in Wales. She is also back there in the 1939 Register. See 1911 Census, household record for 50 Crofton Road, Plaistow, London; 1901 Census, household record for 63 Ravenscroft Road, West Ham, London; and 1939 Register, record for Marion E. Diamond, Wales, b. 1877. The Pritchard family are in Bristol in the 1881 Census, but in London in all subsequent censuses. See 1901 Census, household record for 48 Grosvenor Park Road, Walthamstow; 1911 Census, household record for 51 Peterborough Road, Leyton; 1891 Census, household record for 57 Granville Road, Walthamstow; and 1881 Census, household record for 4 Hills Buildings, Bristol. Samuel Oakley is living in London at the time of his submission and in the 1911 Census, but the latter states he was born in Cheshire. See 1911 Census, household record for 29 Burlington Road, Paddington, London. John Wilson is in London in the 1881 Census, but it states he was born in Kent. See 1881 Census, household record for 69 Angell Road, Lambeth. (For his submission, see Macmillan RoM 56016, entry 3435.) John Mutch’s address in the Macmillan records is in London. Mutch’s family are also in London in the 1881, 1891, 1901, and 1911 Censuses. Both the 1881 and 1891 Censuses state he was born in Scotland. I say ‘future chemist’ as his submission was in 1879, but there is no proof of him being a chemist until the 1881 Census. (For his submission, see Macmillan RoM 56016, entry 2776.)

egg and butter merchant John Donnelly, born in Scotland, had ended up in Dewsbury.<sup>250</sup> Journalist and author Linda Gardiner, living in Winchester, meanwhile, had been born in Suffolk to a mother from Yorkshire and father from Ireland.<sup>251</sup> Whilst the reasons these individuals and families had moved remains unknown, it is perhaps probable that many of them, like Johansen's librarians, were chasing work opportunities.

## WRITING AS AN IMAGINATIVE OUTLET

White-collar occupations such as those already discussed might have also indirectly prompted a desire for self-expression. There is evidence to suggest that white-collar workers, such as teachers, may have been motivated to write by the demands of their work and home lives.

Teaching was the most common occupation in the Macmillan/Chatto sample, as noted earlier, with 10 of the 71 writers having been involved in the profession in some capacity. Both teacher training and education itself were in flux throughout this period. Whilst the 1870 Education Act brought about board schools (and school boards), there were still many voluntary schools; the pupil teacher system began to decline during this period; and whilst many teachers-to-be attended training colleges, such as women's residential college Whitelands in London, many did not.<sup>252</sup> The 1902 Education Act also ushered in changes to both education and teacher training, for example raising the starting age for training to 16.<sup>253</sup> Copelman also highlights several serious debates that played out in the London school system and beyond in this period, such as the extent to which education should be gender-specific, and whether, when, and how various domestic subjects should be taught.<sup>254</sup>

---

<sup>250</sup> Sarah Wilcher is in Margate at the time of her submission in 1910 and in the 1911 Census. In the 1901 and 1891 Censuses she is in London, and the 1911 Census states she was born in London. See 1911 Census, household record for 53 Thanet Road, Margate; 1901 Census, household record for 23 Gladstone Street, Southwark; and 1891 Census, records for Gladstone Street, Southwark (it is unclear which house Wilcher is in – possibly no. 52). Ernest Iffe is in Pontefract at the time of his submission in 1900 and in the 1901 Census, but the latter states he was born in Wales. See 1901 Census, records for Mayor's Walk, Pontefract – it is possible to find him searching on 'Ernest Iffe'. (For his submission, see Macmillan RoM 56019, entry 12629.) Reginald Taylor is in Buckinghamshire by the 1891 Census, appears to be in Cornwall in the 1881 Census, and both those censuses indicate he was born in Devon. See 1891 Census, household record for 7 Castle Terrace, High Wycombe, and 1881 Census, household record for 36 St Clement Street, St Clement, Truro. John Donnelly is in Dewsbury in the 1911 Census, and it states that he was born in Scotland. See 1911 Census, household record for John Donnelly, Ravens Street, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury.

<sup>251</sup> The 1881 Census gives the Gardiner family as living in Winchester, and states that Linda was born in Suffolk, her father in Ireland and her mother in Yorkshire. See 1891 Census, household record for 64 Parchment Street, Winchester.

<sup>252</sup> Copelman, *London's Women Teachers*, see, for example, pp.57–8, 65, 134–5, and 141–4. Helen Corke is one of those who does not attend a training college, admitting that the (relatively low) fees were too much for her. See Corke, *In Our Infancy*, p.132.

<sup>253</sup> Copelman, *London's Women Teachers*, pp.134–5.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.111 and 114–7.

Due to such changes, it must be acknowledged that the work lives of teachers in this period may have differed greatly according to individuals' specific roles, locations, and the time at which they were teaching. Twenty-five-year-old Edith Giles, for example, teaching at a school in Leeds in 1881, likely had a very different experience to 25-year-old Evelyn Spearing, lecturing in English at the female-only Bedford College in London three decades later.<sup>255</sup> Similarly, Agnes Holliday, an elementary teacher living in rural Berkshire, likely had a different experience to Marian Diamond, living in East London; whilst Sarah Wilcher, who likely started teaching prior to 1870, may have had a fairly different early career to individuals who trained later.<sup>256</sup> Teaching as a profession was respectable and relatively secure, however, and there was likely some similarity in experience.

Like many other white-collar occupations, it would have brought all individuals – equipped through their education and training with the tools to write – into a cultural and intellectual environment. Both the training and the job itself, though, with its long days and arduous work, may have been sufficiently demanding to necessitate the creation of a non-work self.

Copelman notes that pupil teachers – sometimes young teenagers – often had to arrive at school an hour before the children and had work to do in the evenings, with girls often having to fulfil domestic responsibilities as well.<sup>257</sup> From 1881, pupil teachers also had to attend training classes at pupil teacher centres, initially for two evenings a week, and on Saturday mornings.<sup>258</sup> Those who attended residential or day training colleges also often had hectic schedules, with the timetable at London college Southlands stretching from 6:30am to 10pm.<sup>259</sup>

Life did not necessarily improve after training. The image that sometimes arose of London elementary teaching, notes Copelman, was of an 'occupation that could very well kill its practitioners', with fictional stories and real-life claims of overwork and overpressure.<sup>260</sup> Helen Corke (b. 1882) noted how the school day at a school in South Croydon in her early 20s

---

<sup>255</sup> See 1881 Census, household record for 86 Victoria Road, Leeds (Headingley with Burley), and 1911 Census, household record for 9 Bateman Street, Cambridge.

<sup>256</sup> See 1911 Census, household record for Agnes Theresa Holliday, Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire (Croft Cottage); 1911 Census, household record for 50 Crofton Road, Plaistow, London, and 1901 Census, household record for 63 Ravenscroft Road, West Ham, London; and 1911 Census, household record for 53 Thanet Road, Margate, 1901 Census, household record for 23 Gladstone Street, Southwark, and 1891 Census, household records for Gladstone Street, Southwark (it is unclear which house Wilcher is in – possibly no. 52).

<sup>257</sup> Copelman, *London's Women Teachers*, p.130.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, p.138.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.109–10. See also p.105.

‘expended ... every volt’ of her energy.<sup>261</sup> Being a teacher could also involve more than just teaching. Copelman notes how one headmistress helped a parent to write a letter, a service that one contemporary noted was not uncommon.<sup>262</sup>

Although teachers were part of an intellectual profession, there are also hints that aspiration beyond teaching might not have been encouraged. The dense and detailed London monthly magazine the *Board Teacher*, established in 1883, gives the impression of a serious profession in which one was a cog in a much larger machine.<sup>263</sup> Copelman, meanwhile, describes how college life in London was ‘oriented toward turning young women into the kind of young ladies teachers were supposed to be – humble, educated but not overly intellectual, [and] upwardly mobile but not too ambitious’.<sup>264</sup> Helen Corke, who could not afford to attend a college, looked down on them as limiting institutions where students ‘will meet only the trainees of their own profession’ and where the lectures heard will only ‘relate to their work as elementary school teachers’.<sup>265</sup>

The degree to which teachers would have been able to gain much intellectual stimulation from their work day-to-day is also questionable. Whilst teaching would undoubtedly have been more intellectually rewarding than most other occupations, especially those open to women, elementary teachers naturally would have taught material at a relatively low level. Female teachers in London state schools, meanwhile, were generally charged with teaching female students, meaning that at least a proportion of time was devoted to teaching domestic subjects such as needlework.<sup>266</sup>

Opportunity for recreation and self-development outside of teaching also may have varied. Speaking of London, Copelman notes how ‘many teachers’ social activities were educational or uplifting in nature’, and mentions institutions such as Toynbee Hall, and the University of London, where many teachers studied for advanced degrees.<sup>267</sup> Such resources and opportunities would likely not have been as abundant or accessible for those in more rural areas, however, such as Chatto submitter Agnes Holliday, teaching in a village in Berkshire.

---

<sup>261</sup> Corke, *In Our Infancy*, p.133.

<sup>262</sup> Copelman, *London’s Women Teachers*, pp.159–60.

<sup>263</sup> See, for example *The Board Teacher*, for years 1883–1884, 1904, and (as *The London Teacher*) 1911. Helen Corke, as a pupil teacher in Croydon, also says she feels like ‘a cog in an instruction machine’. See Corke, *In Our Infancy*, pp.115–6.

<sup>264</sup> Copelman, *London’s Women Teachers*, p.147.

<sup>265</sup> Corke, *In Our Infancy*, p.132.

<sup>266</sup> Copelman, *London’s Women Teachers*, see, for example, pp.105–7, 110–1, and 114–5. Copelman notes that the London School Board employed ‘a relatively higher proportion of male teachers than England as a whole’ and ‘believ[ed] that boys should be taught by men’. (See p.70.)

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.171–2.

The home lives of some teachers may also not have provided a great deal of space or peace for relaxation and diversion, and so may have encouraged some sort of imaginative escape. Of the Macmillan/Chatto submitters who worked in schools, and were likely to have been teachers at the point they submitted, three were living with family members: 33-year-old Marian Diamond, in East London, was living with her mother, father, two teenage siblings, and another female relative in their five-roomed house; Agnes Holliday, 32, in rural Berkshire, was living with her elderly parents (and as one of two siblings, may well have been helping to support them); whilst 41-year-old Emily Roff, in Colchester was, two years before her submission, living with three of her sisters (all also schoolteachers).<sup>268</sup> Copelman notes that many young female teachers in London lived with their families, possibly because their families were dependent on them, or for reasons of cost, familial expectation, or domestic comfort.<sup>269</sup> Those who did not, often had ‘limited’ residential options.<sup>270</sup> Lodgings, such as those advertised in teachers’ magazines, could be ‘grim’ and insalubrious, and presumably would have offered no more peace and quiet than many family homes, if not much less.<sup>271</sup>

A teaching career did not always, though, prompt a flowering of creativity. For Helen Corke, teaching marked an end to literary efforts.<sup>272</sup> As a child, Corke had enjoyed composition classes, had had a small story printed in the children’s column of the *Christian Commonwealth*, and had seen verse she penned about a shipping disaster printed in a local paper.<sup>273</sup> She dreamt ‘of freedom to learn and to write’, ‘of authorship’, and ‘of recognition in a literary world’, and hoped that an editor might accept her stories.<sup>274</sup> After many months working first in a grocery firm’s office and then a post office shop, however, the need to earn a proper wage became more urgent, and she reluctantly became a pupil teacher, describing her earlier writerly ambitions as ‘illusions’ that were ‘unrealistic’.<sup>275</sup>

---

<sup>268</sup> See 1911 Census, household record for 50 Crofton Road, Plaistow, London; 1911 Census, household record for Agnes Theresa Holliday, Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire (Croft Cottage); and 1911 Census, household record for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester. Roff was aged 41 at the time of submission. NB: I have excluded Ebe White here, due to the fact that there is a four-year gap between the census where she is a schoolteacher and her submission, and because there are no definite indications that she remained a teacher (such as a 1939 Register entry listing that she was a retired teacher). I have also excluded the other teachers that don’t qualify, such as Mary Hullah, who was a governess, or Sarah Wilcher, who was likely retired at the time she submitted (she was aged approximately 67 at this point, and was definitely retired 10 months later, in the 1911 Census).

<sup>269</sup> Copelman, *London’s Women Teachers*, p.153.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p.154. Copelman provides one advert for lodgings on this page; for other examples, see the *Board Teacher* (later the *London Teacher*), for example the April 1 1904 issue, p.104 and back page.

<sup>272</sup> This end was temporary though – Helen Corke did go on to write several works later in life.

<sup>273</sup> Corke, *In Our Infancy*, pp.73–4 and 87.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.87, 98, and 135.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.98–102 and 135, and Copelman, *London’s Women Teachers*, p.128.

Although, for Corke, white-collar work was more of an end to literary ambition, though, there were clearly others for whom it was more of a beginning. Furthermore, the fact that at least some teachers (and other female white-collar workers) were attempting to write and publish alongside their day jobs also supports Copelman's suggestion – based on the busy life story of married mother and successful teacher/headteacher Emily Vesey – that Victorian women 'were able to do, think and feel more than conventional historical wisdom has allowed'.<sup>276</sup> Shining a light on aspirants and their circumstances indicates how writing may have been part of many working women's (and men's) lives in this period.

#### BURKE, BROWN, AND KEATING

For Thomas Burke, Edward Brown, and Joseph Keating, there is also some sort of link between their white-collar work and their move towards writing. At 18, and having already had some work accepted, Burke left his job – described as 'office drudgery' – and despite being in a modest situation with no one to help him, was 'well content', 'engaged' as he 'wished to be, working if not in the literary world[,] at least on its outskirts'.<sup>277</sup>

As Philip Waller notes, Burke harboured no illusions about the literary life – he had already suffered many rejections and had received clear warnings against writing full-time from several figures whose advice he had sought.<sup>278</sup> He gave up his job despite these warnings, and saw in the literary life benefits that far outweighed any insecurities. Indeed, a key benefit *was* the insecurity – security held 'no attractions' for him.<sup>279</sup> (Years later he himself advised young writers to 'plunge in', take risks, and not 'become a piece of office furniture'.)<sup>280</sup>

When his advisors 'spoke of the stress and anxiety' of the writing life, he said, he 'could only surmise that they had had no opportunity of comparing the literary life with life in a commercial office in Fenchurch Street'.<sup>281</sup> Indeed, they seemed to be living proof of his belief that it is only 'in danger' that we are 'fully alive'.<sup>282</sup> Despite their claims of poverty, none of them showed 'scars of what they presented as a harrowing struggle'.<sup>283</sup> On the contrary, they looked 'very easy and contented' and 'more cheerful ... and fully alive than any of the well-to-do and

---

<sup>276</sup> Copelman, *London's Women Teachers*, pp.xiii–xiv.

<sup>277</sup> Burke, *Son of London*, pp.169–70, and Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.406.

<sup>278</sup> Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, pp.406–7. Also see Burke, *Son of London*, p.156. These figures included Jack London and Morley Roberts.

<sup>279</sup> Burke, *Son of London*, pp.157–8.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, p.157. Also quoted in Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.407.

<sup>282</sup> Burke, *Son of London*, pp.157–8.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p.157.

secure' people he had come across.<sup>284</sup> 'Office drudgery' did not ignite a desire to write in the young Burke – as we saw earlier, he had that already – but it seemingly was what partly propelled him into full-time authorship. For him, writing was not just a temporary escape from Fenchurch Street, but a permanent one.

Like Burke, Edward Brown had also started in white-collar work as a teenager. At the point in his autobiography at which he mentions entering literary competitions and writing his short novel, he was working as a bookkeeper and secretary to the owner of a wine journal. Brown's literary efforts at that time do not appear to have been prompted by the stress of work but by a lack of it.<sup>285</sup> His employer, 'Mr L', had just become an MP in the 1905 election, and changes to Brown's role that he had expected as a result failed to materialise.<sup>286</sup> Far from needing his secretary's help with political admin, Mr L answered letters himself and rarely even visited the office.<sup>287</sup>

With insufficient work to occupy his time, Brown tried to do some more advertising work for the journal, but didn't enjoy it, so 'tried to fill in ... spare hours with literary work'.<sup>288</sup> 'The *Westminster Gazette* at that time in its heyday', he explains, 'had daily competitions for short poems, sketches, paragraphs on specified subjects, and so forth ... and I spent many hours composing efforts of various kinds, but was never fortunate – or skilful – enough to win a prize'.<sup>289</sup> He also wrote his short novel, which, as already noted, was 'politely but definitely declined' by several publishers.<sup>290</sup> He 'kept on trying ... with verses and short articles and sketches, but with very little result', before deciding to leave his job and get another one with a greater workload and more prospects.<sup>291</sup>

He did get into print, 'two or three years later', but with business writing rather than fiction.<sup>292</sup> He would contribute numerous articles to professional journals such as the *Secretary*, and had a book published on business management.<sup>293</sup> Unlike his more literary efforts, he 'had

---

<sup>284</sup> Ibid. Also partly quoted in Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.407.

<sup>285</sup> Brown, 'Untitled', pp.72–4.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., pp.71–2.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., p.72.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., p.73.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., pp.74–5.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p.74. See also p.135.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid., see pp.124 and 135. Brown not only wrote about business subjects but talked about them. He mentions in his autobiography that he has 'lectured regularly for the last twenty years or so on Secretarial Practice, and intermittently on Economics and other kindred topics'. (See p.135 and beyond.)

no difficulty whatever in obtaining acceptance' of these writings, with his book 'immediately accepted' by the first publisher he sent it to.<sup>294</sup>

For Joseph Keating, the link between white-collar work and fiction writing was more complex. When the impulse to write came to him, he was working at a newspaper office, though as a clerk and then a department head, rather than as a journalist.<sup>295</sup> His deep-seated need as a young man, though – which pre-dated this job – was to achieve in some significant way – to do more than just earn a living.<sup>296</sup> Avoiding a return to the pits was an implicit part of this, but being in white-collar work alone was clearly not enough.<sup>297</sup> (It is whilst working as a clerk and rent collector that he reports feeling suicidal.)<sup>298</sup> Keating, it seems, needed to fulfil some big ambition. (At one point he wants to be a 'great journalist'.)<sup>299</sup> The notion of fiction writing seems as if it might just be another big ambition for him, but it is the goal that sticks, and that dominates his life thereafter.

Nonetheless, it is clear that being in a white-collar literary environment at the point he starts writing is beneficial to Keating. His colleagues, for example, support his literary efforts. The newspaper's leader-writer reads and enjoys his novel manuscript; their editor speaks 'enthusiastically' about one of his stories; and both men encourage Keating to enter the 1898 National Eisteddfod competition, where a prize of £50 was on offer 'for an English novel of Welsh life'.<sup>300</sup> (Keating entered the competition, but failed to win, although he did receive a letter of praise from one of the judges, novelist William Edwards Tirebuck.<sup>301</sup> Keating's entry, a new novel, *Gwen Lloyd*, was later received and rejected by Macmillan in 1901.)<sup>302</sup> It is also through his

---

<sup>294</sup> Ibid., p.135.

<sup>295</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, pp.151–3, 158, and 161–6. Keating had, though, briefly worked as a junior reporter at his previous newspaper job. (See pp.121–2, 125–8, and 131–4.)

<sup>296</sup> He does not mention this need at the point at which he starts to write fiction, but it is touched on several times in the preceding chapters – see, for example, *ibid.*, pp.115–6, 119–20, 131, 139–40, and 145. Also see p.250. His ambitious thoughts seem to start when he gets a job as a post office assistant (see p.115). He is taken over by a desire to reach the top of anything he undertakes. He notes: 'Up to this period I had merely thought of getting a living. Now, living ... became of no account at all. I forgot it. I thought only of the glory of achievement' (p.115).

<sup>297</sup> For earlier references to his desire leave the mines, see, for example, *ibid.*, pp.87–8 and 105–6. The 'shadow of the pit' (p.105) does not disappear, however – even after publishing a considerable amount of literature, his destitution keeps it within arm's reach. Very late on, Keating is poor enough that his father thinks he 'ought to look for some sort of job about the colliery works' (see p.273).

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.143–5.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.119–20 and 131. See also p.115.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.188–90. Also see p.195.

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, p.189.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*; Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13369; and Macmillan RR Volume 55963, p.39.

work at newspaper the *Western Mail* that Keating meets the aspiring writer Patterson, and a few other literary individuals.<sup>303</sup>

In exploring evidence of writers and their motivations, this chapter has highlighted the extent to which the experiences of real-life aspirants may have differed from literary representations. These writers wrote alongside other jobs, were at different life stages, and may have been inspired to write for internal, personal, and non-commercial – or only partly commercial – reasons. Whilst some aspirants would undoubtedly have looked to famous authors and tried to emulate them, we can see how creative composition may simply have been an extension of many people’s existing and increasing engagement with the cultural world – a natural consequence of reading, education, and involvement in white-collar work.

W. J. Dawson, in the *Young Man*, occasionally pointed out the benefit and joy of writing, even ‘if no-one ever reads it’, twice quoting Coleridge on the ‘exceeding great reward’ that can come from composition alone, and advising one correspondent on the assumption that he already ‘feels that he has something in him that craves literary expression’.<sup>304</sup> This was, perhaps, a likely reason that many such aspirants put pen to paper, even if other motivations also played a part.

With Chapter 3 having offered a glimpse into who aspirants were and why they were writing, Chapter 4 will now explore the apparatus that existed to help these writers, focussing particularly on the role of print media, including correspondence columns such as Dawson’s.

---

<sup>303</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, pp.172–4 and, for example, see pp.182–4 and 186, where he meets a man named Purcell – an Irish Baron – who ends up writing stories for the *Western Mail*’s evening paper.

<sup>304</sup> *The Young Man*: September 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.323; September 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.324; and October 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.359.

## CHAPTER 4 – ADVICE TO ASPIRANTS

The late nineteenth century saw the emergence of a ‘battery of literary advice services’, as Christopher Hilliard has written.<sup>1</sup> There were literary agents, publishers’ readers, the Society of Authors (established in 1884), and an increasing array of literary manuals and other texts, whilst ‘developments in authorship and publishing were widely publicised in newspapers and magazines’.<sup>2</sup> The usefulness of and access to these things, as far as beginners were concerned, would have varied; as Hilliard notes, ‘aspirant writers were not a major part of the constituency of the agencies or the Society of Authors’.<sup>3</sup> Printed material would likely have been a more accessible form of help.

Focussing primarily on print media, this chapter chiefly aims to show how newspapers and magazines offered a significant space where individuals with literary ambitions could gain information and receive and request help, encouragement, and feedback, through articles, correspondence columns, literary competitions, and other pieces, such as book reviews.

Historians have touched on late Victorian print media’s enthusiasm for authorship as a subject. Philip Waller explains that it was a ‘recurrent feature of the late Victorian press to include some advice to the budding writer’, noting how ‘authors and authorship constituted prime human-interest material’, with New Journalism ‘revell[ing] in writers who wrote about writing’.<sup>4</sup> A more comprehensive look at the range and content of such material hints at the extent to which it offered a genuine avenue of assistance. This material can also offer greater insights into the roles aspirants played within a new print culture, as readers and consumers, and potential writers and contributors.

This chapter will be divided into three parts. The first will look at printed information, such as print media articles and literary manuals. Part II will examine dialogic avenues of advice, specifically correspondence columns and literary competitions. A brief third part will touch on the role of organisations and individuals, such as the Society of Authors and agents. The chapter will largely draw on evidence from a range of national and local newspapers, and a few main

---

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p.12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12, pp.13–15, and p.20, and Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875–1914* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd, 1989), pp.71–3.

<sup>3</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.14.

<sup>4</sup> Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.402 and 410.

magazines, namely *The Bookman* (est. 1891), *The Young Man* (est. 1887), *The Young Woman* (est. 1892), and *The Scribbler* (est. 1876).<sup>5</sup>

Intended for young men, but with a readership that included men and women and extended internationally, *The Young Man* was ‘conducted in a thoroughly Christian spirit’ but consisted of articles, interviews, and other pieces on a wide variety of topics.<sup>6</sup> This chapter will draw on evidence from the magazine’s first eight years. *The Young Woman* was its sister publication. From their establishment, both ran for the remainder of this period.<sup>7</sup>

*The Scribbler* was a monthly amateur writing magazine based in Newcastle that aimed to offer a ‘permanent medium’ for the work of amateurs in response to the failure of several other magazines and the resultant lack of a decent ‘channel through which the aspiring and often deserving tyro may seek to assure his credentials’.<sup>8</sup> It published stories, poems, articles, and other pieces for over a year and a half, before closing and being reinvented at a later date as *The Scribe* and then *The Northern Scribe*.<sup>9</sup>

Whilst these are only a few publications that engaged with aspirant writers and writing, they are useful examples which offer a relatively good amount of material. It is worth noting that several writing magazines in this period had short print runs, and therefore, likely, a limited reach and influence, rendering them less useful as sources. The *Boy Amateur: A Magazine for Encouraging Youthful Writers* (shortly after renamed the *British Amateur: A Magazine for Encouraging Amateur*

---

<sup>5</sup> For dates these publications were established, see: John S. North, (ed.), *The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals 1800–1900, Volume 1, A-B* (Waterloo, ON: North Waterloo Academic Press, 1997), p.544; John S. North, (ed.), *The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals 1800–1900, Volume 7, U-Z and Issuing Body Index* (Waterloo, ON: North Waterloo Academic Press, 1997), pp.5153 and 5160–1; and John S. North, (ed.), *The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals 1800–1900, Volume 6, S-T* (Waterloo, ON: North Waterloo Academic Press, 1997), p.4296. For the *Young Woman*, see also the announcement of its establishment in *The Young Man*, September 1892, Volume 6 (1892), p.301.

<sup>6</sup> “Our Raison D’Être.” *The Young Man*, January 1887, Volumes 1-2 (1887–1888), p.1. (Also see that page for evidence that young men were the intended audience.) There are several references to female readers – in June 1887 the magazine says they are ‘proud to know that we have lady readers’ (*The Young Man*, June 1887, Volumes 1-2 (1887–1888), p.72); in March 1891, the magazine ran a prize competition for women for written entries on the subject ‘The Ideal Husband’, noting ‘we are happy to know that this journal is very widely read by young women...’ (*The Young Man*, March 1891, Volume 5 (1891), p.91); and in June 1891, they mention having ‘received hundreds of communications from lady readers in all parts of the country’ in relation to the competition (*The Young Man*, June 1891, Volume 5 (1891), p.200). It is possible that the female readership declined once the magazine’s counterpart *The Young Woman* was started in 1892. In terms of older readers, W. J. Dawson discusses a 50-year-old male correspondent in May 1893 (“Echoes from the Study.” *The Young Man*, May 1893, Volume 7 (1893), p.176). In 1895, they mention how they receive letters from all over the world (*The Young Man*, December 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.417). The November 1892 issue also says that the magazine is already read in America, and is now being sold in Australia (*The Young Man*, November 1892, Volume 6 (1892), p.369).

<sup>7</sup> *The Young Woman* ceased in August 1915, being incorporated (at least in name) into the *Young Man*, which had become, in May 1915, the *Young Man and Woman*. In 1920, it briefly then became the *British Man and Woman*, before ending. See North, (ed.), *Waterloo Directory, Volume 7*, pp.5153 and 5160–1.

<sup>8</sup> “Editorial Notes.” *The Scribbler*, October 1876, Volume 1, p.3, and North, (ed.), *Waterloo Directory, Volume 6*, p.4296.

<sup>9</sup> North, (ed.), *Waterloo Directory, Volume 6*, pp.4296–7.

*Writers*) appears to have lasted for nine issues between 1882 and 1883.<sup>10</sup> *The Writer and Reader*, meanwhile, seems to have run for just three issues in 1888, whilst *The Amateur Authors' Review*, *The Young Authors' Journal*, *The Young Authors [sic] Gazette*, and *Underwood's Magazine for Amateur Authors* appear to have lasted for just one issue each (in 1886, 1887, 1892, and 1898 respectively).<sup>11</sup>

## PART I

### Print Media

In this period, there were numerous pieces in newspapers and magazines that offered advice or information to the aspirant writer. A piece by Walter Besant in the *Illustrated London News* in 1891 included advice on finding a subject to write about.<sup>12</sup> Noting how the novice was apt to think that 'everything's been taken' subject-wise, Besant reassured that this was not the case, advising the writer to look around himself for material, and recognise the 'gold that lies at his feet'.<sup>13</sup>

'A Word to the Aspiring' in *The Academy* used its criticisms of one book to illustrate what not to do when writing.<sup>14</sup> Articles entitled 'Advice to Literary Aspirants' and 'Hints to Literary Aspirants' in the *Woman's Herald* in 1893, meanwhile, gave tips on short story composition, manuscript presentation, and etiquette when dealing with publishers.<sup>15</sup> Regarding one's manuscript, the latter piece stated that 'the ink should be black; the paper white; the pages numbered; [and] the MS legible' before cautioning aspirants to send their work only to a publication that was suited to it, subject-wise.<sup>16</sup> They also suggested writing a 'courteous note' to a prospective publisher asking for permission to send work to them before doing so.<sup>17</sup> One local paper, in 1902, tackled the issue of work being received back from publishers covered in pencil marks.<sup>18</sup> It suggested simply rubbing the marks out, advising against following the actions of one

---

<sup>10</sup> See North, (ed.), *Waterloo Directory, Volume 1*, p.569. See also *The Boy Amateur* (1882) and *The British Amateur* (1883).

<sup>11</sup> See North, (ed.), *Waterloo Directory, Volume 1*, p.176, and North, *Waterloo Directory, Volume 7*, pp.4797, 5107, and 5139. The British Library Catalogue entries for the *Writer and Reader*, *Young Authors' Journal*, *Young Authors [sic] Gazette* and *Underwood's Magazine for Amateur Authors* say 'no more published'.

<sup>12</sup> "On Some Difficulties of the Young Author." *The Illustrated London News*, 7 February 1891, p.186. This piece was revealed at the end to be a plug for a new department at Besant's Society of Authors, to which writers could send manuscripts for criticism.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> "A Word to the Aspiring." *The Academy*, 6 October 1900, pp.283–4.

<sup>15</sup> "Advice to Literary Aspirants." *The Woman's Herald*, 7 September 1893, p.455, and "Hints to Literary Aspirants." *The Woman's Herald*, 24 August 1893, p.423.

<sup>16</sup> "Hints to Literary Aspirants." *Woman's Herald*, 24 August 1893, p.423.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "What a lot of petty grievances the would-be author has to put up with..." [Under 'Readers and Writers'], *The Banbury Beacon and District Intelligencer*, 1 March 1902, p.8.

individual who had taken to affixing his manuscripts with a printed note reminding publishers that his work was private property, and demanding that they treat it with respect.<sup>19</sup>

A London paper advised aspirants not to lose heart if composition was slow and difficult, saying: ‘be not discouraged, young writer, though at first your pen be restive and the sheet remain white after many hours of brain-beating’, and implying that easily written work was not always quality work.<sup>20</sup> ‘Rejected Manuscripts’, in journal *The Book World*, meanwhile, ‘urg[ed] a stiff upper lip in the face of this common fate’.<sup>21</sup>

A large anonymous piece in *The Scribbler*, entitled ‘Advice to Amateurs. By a Professional’, listed a series of writing-related errors apparently made by most aspirants.<sup>22</sup> These included ‘a stilted and artificial mode of composition’, a ‘general redundance of adjectives’, attempting to write a piece which is ‘too comprehensive’, encompassing ‘every subject under the sun’, and ‘persistent obtrusion’ of the author’s own thoughts when ‘the reader only desires to get on with the narrative’.<sup>23</sup> The piece told would-be authors instead to ‘select the one subject you are most at home in’ and ‘write as simply, as plainly, [and] as naturally as you possibly can’.<sup>24</sup>

Advice could also be found within more general pieces about authorship. Interviews with literary figures Annie Swan and John Strange Winter in the *Young Woman*, and Hall Caine and Walter Besant in the *Young Man*, all included snippets of advice for young writers.<sup>25</sup> Reports about lectures on fiction writing, meanwhile, often included detail on the content of such talks, which sometimes included advice to aspirants. The *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* noted how Percy Fitzgerald’s 1892 lecture, ‘The Art of Authorship’, included advice to keep a journal, to help improve one’s writing ability and observational skills.<sup>26</sup> A report of a lecture given by novelist Coulson Kernahan in Manchester in 1905, meanwhile, noted how Kernahan ‘advised the literary aspirant to cultivate the art of observation, and to be content with small beginnings’, adding that it was a grave error to attempt a three-volume novel before achieving success with

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> “Another novelist is being boomed by her publisher apparently because of her youth...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 18 September 1908, p.3.

<sup>21</sup> Robert A. Colby, ‘Authorship and the Book Trade’, in J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel, *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p.150.

<sup>22</sup> “Advice to Amateurs. By a Professional.” *The Scribbler*, December 1877, Volume 2, pp.212–3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.212.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.213.

<sup>25</sup> See “Annie S. Swan at Home.” *The Young Woman*, March 1893, Volume 1 (1892–1893), pp.183–7; “The Author of ‘Bootles’ Baby” At Home: An Interview with John Strange Winter.” *The Young Woman*, February 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), pp.159–62; “An Afternoon with Hall Caine.” *The Young Man*, November 1893, Volume 7 (1893), pp.363–9; and *The Young Man*, August 1893, Volume 7 (1893), pp.255–60.

<sup>26</sup> “Mr Percy Fitzgerald on Authorship.” *The Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 6 December 1892, p.8.

small magazine stories.<sup>27</sup> Lectures by Annie Swan (Glasgow, 1891), Andrew Lang (Edinburgh, 1892), Gilbert Parker (Manchester, 1898), and Judge Parry (Manchester, 1909), were also reported in newspapers during this period.<sup>28</sup>

Other print media articles included what might be termed 'life advice'. A piece in the *Manchester Guardian* offered advice from American author Rev. Edward Everett Hale on 'how a writer should live'.<sup>29</sup> Noting that there were 'always many literary aspirants ... anxious to learn the secret of success', it passed on his recommendations, such as to write in the morning, get sufficient sleep, eat well, and devote a period of the day to recreation.<sup>30</sup>

Other pieces warned aspirants of dangers within the literary profession. A September 1882 piece titled 'The Literary Aspirant' in the *Shields Daily Gazette* suggested that the many adverts published at that time of year asking for Christmas-related material were untrustworthy, explaining how Christmas editions of magazines were put together well in advance over the summer – not in the lead up to winter.<sup>31</sup> Hinting at other potential traps, it also noted how a considerable amount of money was annually 'drawn from the pockets' of those keen for literary success.<sup>32</sup> It warned that some publishers made 'very satisfactory incomes out of the vanity of young authors', for example, it was implied, by charging them for publication.<sup>33</sup>

Whilst obviously not written solely for the benefit of writers, newspaper reports of literary crimes also highlighted the vulnerability of aspirants. 'How Literary Aspirants are Swindled' in the *Illustrated Police News* reported the case of a man imprisoned for 'obtaining money by false pretences' after placing newspaper adverts to attract aspirants, charging them a fee, and then disappearing, a crime he appears to have repeated in different locations.<sup>34</sup> Other pieces detail cases of a man who sent work and £40 to a publisher in London and never heard

---

<sup>27</sup> "Mr Coulson Kernahan lectured..." *The Manchester Guardian*, 31 January 1905, p.8.

<sup>28</sup> See "Annie S. Swan on Fiction Writing as a Profession." *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 17 January 1891, 2<sup>nd</sup> page, "Lecture by Annie S. Swan. ..." *The Glasgow Herald*, 17 January 1891, p.7, "Annie S. Swan on Novel Writing." *Edinburgh Evening News*, 17 January 1891, 2<sup>nd</sup> page, and "Annie Swan on Writing as a Profession." *Glasgow Evening News*, 17 January 1891, p.3; "Mr Andrew Lang on Novel Writing." *The Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express*, 19 November 1892, p.7; "Royal Manchester Institution Lectures." *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 October 1898, p.10; and "Motives of Authorship. Judge Parry on Books and Their Writers." *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 April 1909, p.8.

<sup>29</sup> "There are always many literary aspirants..." *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 September 1885, p.7.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> "The Literary Aspirant." *North and South Shields Daily Gazette and Shipping Telegraph*, 18 September 1882, p.3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> "How Literary Aspirants are Swindled." *The Illustrated Police News, Law Courts and Weekly Record*, 7 April 1894, p.4.

back, an agent who failed to return three manuscripts, and a journalist and barrister charged with taking £200 from a woman who had responded to his offer to ‘train ladies for literary work’.<sup>35</sup>

Even if such dangers may have been exaggerated, author Joseph Keating’s autobiography offers proof that some individuals were indeed out to exploit the naivety and ignorance of hopeful aspirants. After nearly accepting a publication offer for his first novel in exchange for £75, Keating was cheated by his editor (who had been re-selling his work to America for four times what he had paid for it) before later discovering that his ‘dishonest agents’ had been ‘robbing’ him ‘from beginning to end’, a veneer of ‘apparent friendliness’ covering their ‘sheer deceit’.<sup>36</sup> He was ‘left penniless’ after being denied earnings of £200.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to carrying articles on writing and the business of authorship, newspapers also contained pieces that advertised or discussed other sources of help and advice. In this way, they also publicised and disseminated information that was potentially useful to aspirants, even if, following Hilliard’s argument, the collective visibility of these sources of help (i.e. the general message they sent out) was likely sometimes more significant than the assistance some of them actually offered.

Material of this sort includes adverts of various kinds, pieces discussing the role of literary agents, and reviews of literary manuals. Nigel Cross observes that many adverts posted by ‘a host of fringe literary figures’ appeared in the late nineteenth century offering similar services to those of the first professional literary agents.<sup>38</sup> Other adverts publicised or offered tuition. *McEwan’s Amateur Journalist and Literary Aspirant*, for example, included adverts for courses and services at the British School of Journalism, with which it was connected.<sup>39</sup> At least three adverts offering tuition by correspondence, meanwhile, appeared in the *Young Man* in the early 1890s; another appeared in the *Swindon Advertiser* in 1903; whilst three adverts from an unnamed ‘well-known author’ offering ‘postal lessons in the art of writing fiction’ appeared in the *Daily Mail* in

---

<sup>35</sup> “The Literary Aspirant and his Publishers. A Swindle Exposed.” *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 1892, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; “Literary Agent and his Clients. Curious Guildhall Story.” [Under ‘At the Police Courts’], *The Standard* [London], 11 December 1906, p.10; and “Literary Aspirant and Her Tutor. Serious Allegations of Fraud.” *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 22 April 1894, p.3. For more discussion of crime and fraud, see Walter Besant, *The Society of Authors. Record of its Action from its Foundation* (London: The Incorporated Society of Authors, 1893), pp.10, 20–1, and 29–31.

<sup>36</sup> Joseph Keating, *My Struggle for Life* (London: Simpkin, Marshall Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd., 1916), pp.181–2, 209–14, and 229–30.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.229–30.

<sup>38</sup> Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.211.

<sup>39</sup> See *McEwan’s Amateur Journalist and Literary Aspirant*, No. 1, Volume 1, January 1907.

1897.<sup>40</sup> An advert in the *Daily News* from a ‘Literary Advisor and Critic’, meanwhile, offered help making a ‘practical beginning’ in fiction writing, attracting aspirants with the claim that incomes of several hundred pounds were ‘being secured by many authors who make no pretence to more than average literary ability’.<sup>41</sup>

Other adverts were for manuals and guidebooks, or other texts and pamphlets offering assistance with composition. An advert for ‘would-be authors’ which appeared at least twice in the *Young Man* in 1893 offered a ‘vade mecum’ containing ‘a series of practical papers, giving hints, suggestions and outlines’ for one shilling, post-free.<sup>42</sup> Adverts for ‘How to Write Saleable Fiction’, apparently penned by a literary agent, appeared in the *Daily News* and the *Daily Mail* in 1910 and 1912, respectively, while adverts for a text called ‘The Author’s Handbook’ appeared in the *Daily Mail* in 1907 and 1908, with the former piece adding that the advertiser was ‘at all times open to consider MSS. of all descriptions’.<sup>43</sup>

Several print media pieces discussed the role and worth of literary agents. A column headed ‘The Literary Agent’ in the *Daily News* in 1904 made a clear and convincing case for the value of the agent in the present literary marketplace.<sup>44</sup> Noting how the agent ‘knows all the mediums of publication’ and can ‘safeguard the material interests of the writer’, it quoted a novelist who had told his agent that they had ‘opened new sources of income’ to him, and ‘multiplied’ his ‘professional opportunities’.<sup>45</sup> In 1902, meanwhile, the *Western Daily Press* quoted a ‘very well-known literary writer’ who had been ‘advocating the advantages of the literary agent’.<sup>46</sup> The unnamed author said how novelists who wanted to make money ‘should unquestionably cultivate the literary agent’, noting that if their books are good, the agent ‘will probably secure for them quite double the money they are really worth to an editor or a publisher’.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> “Tuition by correspondence in English composition...” *The Young Man*, April 1892, Volume 6 (1892), “Tuition by Correspondence in Literary Composition...” *The Young Man*, October 1893, Volume 7 (1893), and “Tuition by Correspondence in Literary Composition...” *The Young Man*, January 1894, Volume 8 (1894); “How to Write...” [advert], *The Swindon Advertiser, Wilts, Berks and Glo’ster Chronicle*, 10 April 1903, p.4; and “Well-known author...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 13 February 1897, p.8, “Well-known author...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 18 February 1897, p.1, and “Well-known author...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 1 April 1897, p.8.

<sup>41</sup> “Have You Any Literary Ambitions?...” [advert], *The Daily News* [London], 7 February 1906, p.2.

<sup>42</sup> “To Would-Be Authors...” *The Young Man*, April 1893, Volume 7 (1893), and “The Vade Mecum for Beginners in Composition and Would-Be Authors...” *The Young Man*, May 1893, Volume 7 (1893).

<sup>43</sup> “Authors. Study ‘How to Write Saleable Fiction’...” [advert], *The Daily News* [London], 5 January 1910, p.10; “How to Write Saleable Fiction’...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 4 October 1912, p.6; “How to Publish Quickly...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 2 February 1907, p.4; and “How to Publish...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 1 August 1908, p.8.

<sup>44</sup> “The Literary Agent.” [Under ‘Books and Booksellers’], *The Daily News* [London], 25 November 1904, p.4.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> “A very well known [sic] literary writer who has written novels himself...” [Under ‘Literary Notes’], *The Western Daily Press*, 18 April 1902, p.7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

Contemporary debates about agents were also reported as news items. A long piece in the *Globe* in 1895 quoted from Walter Besant's response in the *Nineteenth Century* to publisher T. Werner Laurie's verbal assault on agents the previous month.<sup>48</sup> It stated Besant's belief that the agent was 'now a necessity' to compensate for most writers' lack of financial and business acumen, before quoting at length from Besant's reply about why this was the case.<sup>49</sup> The *Yorkshire Evening Post*, meanwhile, touched on Besant's disagreement about agents with female novelist Ouida, detailing his enthusiastic defence of the agent, and admitting that overall he made 'a very good case'.<sup>50</sup>

Reviews of literary manuals and reference books would also, naturally, have alerted aspirants to their existence as a form of help. A review of Leopold Wagner's *How to Publish...* (1898) in the *Bookman* praised it as a 'valuable little book' containing 'excellent suggestions' and 'an unusual amount of really useful information'.<sup>51</sup> The *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book*, meanwhile, was commended by one local paper as 'a publication which the aspiring writer or artist will find invaluable'.<sup>52</sup> Even wholly or partially critical reviews of such texts (either individual texts or the genre generally) would have drawn attention to them as a potential source of information.<sup>53</sup>

## Literary Manuals

Literary manuals themselves, of course, offered various advice and information to would-be writers about both composition and the publishing industry. As noted in Chapter 2, opinions about literary manuals and the information they contained were mixed. Nevertheless, there were many such guides in this period, as well as reference works and other kinds of interest books relating to authorship.

Previous historians have referred to handbooks including Arnold Bennett's *How to Become an Author* (1903), Percy Russell's *The Author's Manual* (1890), Leopold Wagner's *How to Publish...* (1898), and Barry Pain's *First Lessons in Story-Writing* (1907); reference works, such as the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book* (first published as the *Literary Year-Book* in 1897, then as the *Writers' Year-Book* in 1902, and as the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book* from 1906); and several other writing-

---

<sup>48</sup> "Sir Walter Besant on Literary Agents." *The Globe and Traveller*, 4 December 1895, p.3.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> "Mr Walter Besant has stepped forward as the champion of the literary agent..." *The Yorkshire Evening Post*, 26 May 1891, p.2.

<sup>51</sup> "Two Guides for Young Authors." *The Bookman*, May 1898, pp.47–8.

<sup>52</sup> "'The Writer's [sic] and Artists' Year-Book' is a publication which the aspiring writer..." [Under 'Books and Magazines. Some Useful Annuals'], *The Mid-Sussex Times*, 30 December 1913, p.5.

<sup>53</sup> See, for example, "The Ineffectual How." *The Academy*, 13 April 1901, pp.327–8; "Guides to Authorship." *The Globe and Traveller*, 14 May 1886, 1<sup>st</sup> page; and "In this connection it is amusing to note..." [Under 'Readers and Writers'], *The Banbury Advertiser*, 25 April 1901, p.8.

related titles, from George Bainton's compilation *The Art of Authorship* (1890) and *Homes and Haunts of Famous Authors* (1906), to *My First Book* (1894), described at the time as 'an autobiographical account of the beginnings in literature of modern writers of fame'.<sup>54</sup>

Searches in newspapers from the period uncover other manuals and guidebooks, such as the anonymous *How to Write Fiction* (c.1895), *How to Write a Novel: A Practical Guide to the Art of Fiction* (c.1901), and the anonymous *How to Write a Novel* (1910), as do literary publications and adverts within them.<sup>55</sup> Adverts within two early-twentieth-century editions of the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book*, for example, mention titles by children's author R. A. H. Goodyear, including 'What Shall I Write About?' *New Plots and How to Find Them* (1908), 'Tale-Writing for Money'. *Bright Stories: How to Write and Where to Sell Them at Best Prices* (1908), and the edited *Writers' Brain Book: An Album of Inspiration for Authors, Journalists and Competition Entrants* (1911).<sup>56</sup>

Not all manuals were created equal, and some would clearly have proved more useful to aspirants than others. Peter Keating considers that some – such as Wagner's and Bennett's – 'did provide useful information' but claims that 'much of the advice being offered was little more than belletristic chat'.<sup>57</sup> There is also almost no evidence of aspirants' opinions of manuals, besides printed endorsements (on adverts), such as that of Mrs Blundell from Oldham, who, according to one 1913 advert, allegedly found that Goodyear's guides offered 'infinitely more practical information than a Ten-Guinea Course on Authorship' which she was 'beguiled into buying'.<sup>58</sup>

The availability, spread, and use of literary guidebooks as this period progressed is also relatively unclear. In the aforementioned advert, other endorsements of Goodyear's guides (available only from the publisher in Scarborough) are from readers as far away as Plymouth,

---

<sup>54</sup> See Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.15 and 20; Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, pp.401–3 and 409; Keating, *The Haunted Study*, pp.71–3; and "First Steps in Literature." *The Daily News* [London], 25 September 1894, p.4. For mentions of these books in newspapers, see, for example, "It may seem hardly necessary to encourage people to become novelists..." *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 November 1903, p.6 (Bennett); "Two Guides for Young Authors." *Bookman*, May 1898, pp.47–8 (Wagner); "First Steps in Literature." *The Daily News* [London], 25 September 1894, p.4 (My First Book); and "What a wonderful age we live in..." [Under 'Readers and Writers'], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 5 July 1907, p.3 (Pain).

<sup>55</sup> See "The young author has found a friend in the anonymous gentleman who has written 'How to Write Fiction'..." *The Sketch*, 6 November 1895, p.86; "In this connection it is amusing to note..." *Banbury Advertiser*, 25 April 1901, p.8; and "Although we have it on authority that no one thinks of questioning that poets are born and not made..." [Under 'Miscellaneous Works'], *The Scotsman*, 8 December 1910, p.4.

<sup>56</sup> *The Writers' and Artists' Year-Book, 1909*, Advertisements, p.vi, and the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book, 1913*, Advertisements, p.i. NB: 'For authors, journalists and competition entrants' did not appear in the 1913 *Year-Book's* advert for the *Writers' Brain Book*, but this appears to have been part of the title on the book itself. (See British Library Catalogue entry for R. A. H. Goodyear, *The Writers' Brain Book. An Album of Inspiration for Authors, Journalists and Competition Entrants* (Scarborough: A. Acklande, 1911).)

<sup>57</sup> Keating, *The Haunted Study*, p.71.

<sup>58</sup> *The Writers' and Artists' Year-Book, 1913*, Advertisements, p.i.

Glasgow, and Edinburgh.<sup>59</sup> In 1906, though, an anonymous reader who had already ‘had some success in writing’ wrote to the *Islington Daily Gazette* after feeling ‘at a loss where to send her stories’, and asked whether there was ‘a market for them in magazines and newspapers’.<sup>60</sup> The columnist, a little surprised at the question, went on to recommend literary manuals and the information they offered, listing six he had to hand (including Bennett’s, Russell’s, Wagner’s, and the *Writers’ Year-Book*).<sup>61</sup> He questioned ‘how many amateurs’ owned such ‘helpful’ books – ‘even one of them’ – politely suggesting that if his correspondent used such volumes, she would not need to consult him.<sup>62</sup>

The variety of manuals across this period, as well as the number of editions some went through, however, are indicative of a certain degree of demand, and suggest that aspirants were not only buying such guides, but gaining something from them, whether information, inspiration, or both. Russell’s *Authors’ Manual* went to at least eight editions, and Peter Keating notes how its ‘general uselessness ... as a practical guide’ and criticisms of it from the *Author* could not stop it ‘from being reprinted throughout the period, so great was the demand from literary aspirants for any kind of advice’.<sup>63</sup> Regarding the wider genre of titles featuring words from, or information on, writers, Keating also points out that such works provided not just information but support.<sup>64</sup> ‘By their very nature’, he notes, ‘these books not only satisfied a public interest in the views of authors, but also provided advice, example and indirect encouragement to anyone ambitious for literary fame’.<sup>65</sup>

### Other Printed Material

Fiction could also be used as a form of advice. The young Thomas Burke, and a correspondent in the *Young Woman*, were both advised to read Gissing’s *New Grub Street*, the former as a warning about the literary profession, and the latter, it seems, for a flavour of ‘the life of a large section of the literary world’.<sup>66</sup> Whilst it is not known what the correspondent thought of the novel (if, indeed, they read it), Burke, at least, does not seem to have been fazed by its pessimistic vision,

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> “Now here is a case in point...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 23 February 1906, p.3.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Keating, *The Haunted Study*, p.71. For proof Russell’s manual went to eight editions, see “17. The Author’s Manual by Percy Russell...” [advert, under ‘Digby, Long, & Co.’s New Books’, under ‘Publishers’ Column’], *The Dundee Advertiser*, 21 November 1895, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

<sup>64</sup> Keating, *The Haunted Study*, pp.72–3.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.73.

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Burke, *Son of London* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1946), p.157, (see also Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.407); and see reply to ‘Blossom’, “Between Ourselves.” *The Young Woman*, April 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.249.

seeing the literary life, despite its pitfalls, as still far superior to the mental and physical prison of an office job.<sup>67</sup>

It is, by and large, impossible to gauge the effect of printed advice and information, namely the extent to which it was read by, and helped, aspirants. Print media and printed materials were clearly, though, an important way in which information, advice, and encouragement about authorship could be transmitted. Continuing this theme, Part II will examine correspondence columns and literary competitions, two-way avenues of advice, encouragement, and feedback, that – unlike printed material such as print media pieces and literary manuals – offer direct evidence of aspirants themselves.

## PART II

### Correspondence Columns

Correspondence pages were a significant way through which some aspirant writers in this period obtained advice about the literary profession and feedback about their work. Columns offering literary criticism were not new. Kirstie Blair, for example, has written on the poetic feedback offered in the correspondence columns of Scottish newspapers from the late 1850s and 1860s.<sup>68</sup> They were clearly, though, not widespread. As Blair observes, the publication of poetry in newspapers was very common, and correspondence columns in newspapers were very popular, but the use of columns for feedback on literary submissions was much more unusual.<sup>69</sup> Largely focussing on columns in magazines, however, this part will illustrate how considered literary advice and useful feedback were both offered to some aspirants through such columns during this period.

### ADVICE

General interest magazines, the *Young Man* and *Young Woman*, both gave advice to aspirants in this period through their respective correspondence sections. As one might expect, some of the questions aspirants asked related to the business and practical aspects of trying to forge a literary career. The *Young Man*'s 'Echoes from the Study' column was described as 'a sort of secular

---

<sup>67</sup> Burke, *Son of London*, p.157.

<sup>68</sup> See Kirstie Blair, 'Let the Nightingales Alone': Correspondence Columns, the Scottish Press, and the Making of the Working-Class Poet.' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 47.2 (2014), especially pp.190–1 and 194.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190. (See also Virginia Berridge, "Popular Sunday Papers and Mid-Victorian Society." in Boyce, Curran, Wingate (eds.), *Newspaper History, from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (1978), p.252, also cited by Blair).

pulpit, where all sorts of subjects may be discussed'.<sup>70</sup> Although readers' letters were never printed, their reasons for writing are fairly clear from the replies offered.

Some writers sought advice on the journey from writing to publication. In 1894, 'G. L.', from Scotland, was told: 'when a young writer has written a story, the first thing he should do is to write it again, carefully cutting out every redundance, every unnecessary adjective ... He should then get it typewritten, and keep half a dozen copies. Then ask, what magazine is likeliest to print this? Send it, with stamps for its return in the very probable case of its rejection. If it is accepted, he should have a written understanding that he has the right of republication in book form, if that is his intention'.<sup>71</sup> A reply the previous year noted that 'the only course' the correspondent 'can take is to send his MSS. to a publisher, and if rejected, send it to another, and go on sending till some one [sic] accepts it, or he himself discovers that it isn't worth printing after all. This is the way' they noted, 'all authors, small and great, have had to tread'.<sup>72</sup> An aspirant who had seemingly only been met with rejection, meanwhile, was told: 'there is really no other way but to go on sending your ... stories to the editors until some one of them relents and gives you a trial. Be sure of it, every editor is on the look-out, and is only too glad to find a new writer of promise; and as soon as you write a really good story, you will find your market'.<sup>73</sup>

Correspondence to do with questions of writing and publishing can also be found in some newspapers' literary columns. In 1906, as already noted, a female reader of the *Islington Daily Gazette* explained that she had 'had some success in writing' but did not know where to send her stories.<sup>74</sup> As well as asking if magazines and newspapers might provide a market for them, she asked if it was 'desirable or of any use to have a literary agent', and if 'study, practice, and perseverance' were 'great helps to success'.<sup>75</sup> She was advised to make her stories as good as possible before sending them out to editors, and was told that there was 'really no need to employ a literary agent' until she had become 'very famous'.<sup>76</sup> The columnist also noted how amateurs often failed to 'see the bulk of the regular publications in which their work might find a possible "home"'.<sup>77</sup> A reader of the *Clifton and Redland Free Press*, meanwhile, asked about the cost of producing a six-shilling novel.<sup>78</sup> The columnist replied that they hoped the reader was 'not

---

<sup>70</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, January 1892, Volume 6 (1892), p.29.

<sup>71</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, October 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.359.

<sup>72</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, November 1893, Volume 7 (1893), p.391.

<sup>73</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, March 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.99.

<sup>74</sup> "Now here is a case in point..." *Islington Daily Gazette*, 23 February 1906, p.3.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> "A correspondent writes asking..." [Under 'Readers and Writers'], *The Clifton and Redland Free Press*, 13 February 1903, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

going to throw away his money in the almost certain vain hope of making a profit out of his story'.<sup>79</sup>

Significantly, advice was also sought from correspondence columns by aspirants who had apparently not even yet put pen to paper. In 1895, a reader of the *Young Man* wrote in, asking 'What am I to do to be an author?'<sup>80</sup> W. J. Dawson, creator of the magazine's 'Echoes' section, noted it was a 'familiar' question, and offered a lengthy reply, advising the reader to study literature and study words, and also warning him that no profession was 'so laborious ... so uncertain, and so ill-paid as the literary'.<sup>81</sup> Another reader, who was clearly considering starting to write, was encouraged in his literary ambitions, and given ideas on what to write about.<sup>82</sup> The *Young Man* told him: 'there is no reason why you should not cultivate your power of writing; rather there is every reason why you should. To do so will be a delight in itself ... Nor is there any reason why you should not write something that may some day [sic] be worth publishing. But, if I may advise further, I should say, Write of something you thoroughly know. Write a story of a working man's life. We have had many stories written about workmen, but never by workmen – always by those who have studied the question from the outside. Here, then, is a chance for you ... a true novel of the workman's life has yet to be written'.<sup>83</sup>

Reader 'Young Buff', meanwhile, expressed concern that their lack of musical ability would mean they also lacked a facility for language.<sup>84</sup> The magazine reassured them that the two skills were separate, noting that there were 'a good many cases of great authors who have been entirely indifferent to music', and that they 'need not therefore be deterred from the pursuit of literature'.<sup>85</sup> Another correspondent, 'Limestone', had asked 'many questions about the best way of writing tales, etc., with a view to editorial acceptance', and was anxious about what type of paper to write on.<sup>86</sup> They were told: 'write good tales, and write them legibly. It does not in the least matter what sort of paper they are written on ... Nowadays most editors prefer a typewritten MS., for time is short ... and it is of supreme moment that an editor should be able to discover without delay or difficulty what a[n] MS. is about'.<sup>87</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, October 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.359.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, September 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.324.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, August 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.286.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, July 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.252.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

A few responses to speculative queries can also be found in the correspondence section of the *Young Man's* counterpart, the *Young Woman*. One reader, who had clearly asked a basic question about pursuing a literary career, was told: 'to become a novelist[,] the first step is to write the novel: if the novel is a good one it will find a publisher'.<sup>88</sup> Another was given a reply of over 500 words, which included basic advice about writing, revising, and submitting work to magazines, as well as explanations of the various types of publishing agreements.<sup>89</sup>

There is also evidence that such questions were more common than these replies alone suggest. Whilst short replies to correspondents often formed part of the *Young Man's* 'Echoes from the Study' section once it had become established, the bulk of the section often consisted of a substantial piece of text, penned by Dawson. Usually prompted by common issues raised in the substantial correspondence he had received, Dawson would often write at length on one or more of a spectrum of subjects.

In 1894 and 1895, the topic of literary ambition came up several times in the 'Echoes' column, and was discussed by Dawson at significant length on more than one occasion.<sup>90</sup> In February 1894, he noted a recent influx of queries about literary matters, and talked at length about the common feelings and experiences of young people with literary aspirations.<sup>91</sup> 'Among the letters which reach me', he said, 'there have been a considerable number during the last few months which have requested counsel on matters connected with literature'.<sup>92</sup> This prompted him to devote over 1100 words to the topic of literary ambition in that issue, offering his advice to aspirants, and sharing his own past experiences of literary effort and disappointment.<sup>93</sup> 'Literary ambitions', he explained, were 'not uncommon in youth'.<sup>94</sup> He continued:

Most youths with a taste for literature are pretty sure to try their hands on original production, and to become enamoured of their own muse. Then there comes an ecstatic moment when we really believe ourselves possessed of literary genius, and foresee the hour when our works will pass through many editions, and our names will become household words. We regret that our names ... are not more euphonious ... We regret still more deeply that our friends do not appear to share our belief in ourselves. But we console ourselves that a day will come. At length circumstances arise which shake our confidence cruelly. We find that editors are

---

<sup>88</sup> "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, August 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.394.

<sup>89</sup> "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, February 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.179.

<sup>90</sup> See, especially, "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, February 1894, Volume 8 (1894), pp.66–7; "Echoes from the Study." June 1894, Volume 8 (1894), pp.213–5; and "Echoes from the Study." October 1895, Volume 9 (1895), pp.359–60.

<sup>91</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, February 1894, Volume 8 (1894), pp.66–7.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.66–7.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.66.

consistently blind to our merits. Our soiled little bundle of MSS. comes back to us with painful regularity. Let no one suppose that I am laughing at the misfortune; on the contrary, I have suffered it, and still feel the pang. For one whole year, a tale I wrote some fifteen years ago came back to me with insulting persistence. I used to ask my landlady every morning whether there were any letters, and about once a fortnight she would reply: 'No sir; there are no letters, but there's a *Thing*.'...<sup>95</sup>

In another lengthy piece, in June 1894, Dawson offered further literary advice in lieu of the fact that he was unable to 'answer, with any definiteness, questions which arise out of the supposed fitness for literary production in my correspondents' – questions he presumably had been asked.<sup>96</sup> He noted that the 'one binding rule for the literary aspirant' was 'to write and re-write'; listed questions that aspirants should ask themselves; and reiterated the folly of giving up stable employment in order to write.<sup>97</sup> He also discussed the importance of persistence, and stressed the years of hard work, discipline, and self-sacrifice that a famous author would have put in, even if they appeared, at a glance, to be disappointingly ordinary and unimpressive.<sup>98</sup> He also stressed the importance of character over talent, and offered Coleridge as an example of how genius and ambition could be ruined by a lack of will, patience, and persistence.<sup>99</sup>

In September 1894, meanwhile, Dawson cautioned his readers against viewing the profession of journalism through rose-tinted spectacles. Calling it 'probably the hardest and most over-crowded of all professions', he warned the youth not to be deceived that he was a 'heaven-born journalist' just because he loved books and could easily write.<sup>100</sup> 'Tens of thousands of persons can do these things' he noted, a figure he said would 'be indefinitely multiplied' as education advanced further.<sup>101</sup> His advice for journalistic aspirants was to diligently cultivate any talent, and not to give up a secure job under any circumstances until 'the call is unmistakably clear, and the way distinctly open'.<sup>102</sup>

Whilst we do not know exactly how many letters Dawson at the *Young Man* received about authorship, he did state that he did not respond to issues that did not have general

---

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.66. Part of Dawson's text from this 'Echoes' (which was much longer than that copied here) was reprinted in the *Manchester Courier* the following month. (See "The Art of Authorship." *The Manchester Courier Weekly Supplement*, 3 March 1894, p.1.) Some of this text also appeared as part of Chapter IX, 'To a Youth with Literary Tastes', in W. J. Dawson's *Table Talk with Young Men* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1898), see pp.62–3.

<sup>96</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, June 1894, Volume 8 (1894), pp.213–5.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.213.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp.213–4.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, September 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.322.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

applicability to the magazine's readership, suggesting he expected his responses to be of interest and use to many readers beyond those who had written in.<sup>103</sup>

Literary monthly *The Bookman* also, for at least some months, ran a series of pieces titled 'He Would be an Author: Letters to a Young Writer', which appeared alongside their literary feedback page (to be discussed in the next section).<sup>104</sup> Obviously intended for general consumption, but apparently written in reply to an anonymous – possibly imagined – aspirant or aspirants, these pieces are in a similar vein to Dawson's, and indicate the extent to which this magazine, too, was receiving work from aspirants and was adopting a mentor-type role.

One piece noted that 'many young writers send me stories, essays, translations, sermons, sonnets, reviews, dramas, odes, descriptions of tours, satires, epics, songs, and biographies. Some adventurous souls have experimented so widely, that I verily believe they have sent me samples of each of these'.<sup>105</sup> Another referred to 'the shoals of young writers' MSS which pass through my hands'.<sup>106</sup> The first instalment, meanwhile, was written as a reply to a 20-year-old male aspirant who had seemingly written in.<sup>107</sup> (The piece reads as if real, although the anonymous addressee may, possibly, have been an imagined, representative aspirant.)

The reply is lengthy, sympathetic, and detailed, picking up on several points in the correspondent's situation and history, and referring to the 'great many' young writers who are 'kicking' their 'heels impatiently'.<sup>108</sup> Whether genuine or not, it would clearly have been read as such, and likely would have encouraged other aspirants to share their hopes, fears, and circumstances, as well as their work. A small section also suggests the importance to some writers of correspondence columns and their editors as a source of help:

---

<sup>103</sup> See "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, January 1891, Volume 5 (1891), p.16. The fact they only dealt with subjects of general interest in 'Echoes' is also mentioned by Frederick A. Atkins when he covers the column for Dawson in November 1891, while the latter is in America. (See "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, November 1891, Volume 5, (1891), p.385). It must also be remembered that the *Young Man* was a general interest magazine, not a writing magazine, although Dawson, and the magazine as a whole, were incredibly encouraging of reading and self-culture (in many ways the magazine was a child of Smiles' *Self-Help*). See, for example, "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, January 1892, Volume 6 (1892), p.30; "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, May 1893, Volume 7 (1893), p.176; and "Echoes from the Study." July 1893, Volume 7 (1893), pp.244–5. Dawson also often gave book recommendations to correspondents in 'Echoes', and the magazine had a regular 'Reading Circle' feature from 1893 which looked at a different (often non-fiction) book each month.

<sup>104</sup> Four pieces in this series were found during research for this study: 'He Would be an Author: Letters to a Young Writer. I', *The Bookman*, October 1893 (No. 25, Volume V), pp.28–9; 'He Would be an Author: Letters to a Young Writer. II', *The Bookman*, December 1893 (No. 27, Volume V), pp.91–2; 'He Would be an Author: Letters to a Young Writer. III', *The Bookman*, January 1894 (No. 28, Volume V), pp.129–30; and 'He Would be an Author: Letters to a Young Writer. IV', *The Bookman*, April 1894 (No. 31, Volume VI), pp.27–8.

<sup>105</sup> 'He Would be an Author: Letters to a Young Writer. III', *The Bookman*, January 1894, p.130.

<sup>106</sup> 'He Would be an Author: Letters to a Young Writer. IV', *The Bookman*, April 1894, p.27.

<sup>107</sup> 'He Would be an Author: Letters to a Young Writer. I', *The Bookman*, October 1893, pp.28–9.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28.

Your father, you say, is not very encouraging ... while your other relatives, on the rare occasions you have alluded to your possible future career, have treated the project in the light of a joke. A friend, an Oxford undergraduate, to whom you confided some manuscripts, has urged you to persevere, and he is the only person, you say, besides myself, in touch with the literary world to whom you can hope to appeal with any hope of your case being carefully considered.<sup>109</sup>

The reply also encourages further correspondence from the writer, suggesting that they send in their writing ('I must have in my hand some of your best work'; 'when I see the manuscript you are to send me') and prompting them to 'answer ... the question, confiding the answer to me, if possible, What is the end you are aiming at? Is it literature, or making a living by your pen? Both careers may be honourable'.<sup>110</sup> 'Your attitude on this point', it continues, 'your worldly prospects, [and] some indications of your powers of endurance, must be known to any one [sic] who would undertake to be your critic and adviser'.<sup>111</sup> (The implication surely being that this editor might fulfil that role.)

## FEEDBACK

Significantly, correspondence pages were a key way through which some aspirant writers could also obtain feedback about their work. Several magazines offered opinion and criticism on submitted prose and poetry. The *Bookman*, established in 1891, included in many of its issues a 'Young Author's Page', 'notes on manuscripts submitted for advice, a feature continued until the turn of the century'.<sup>112</sup> Over a five-year period in the 1890s, the Page printed over 1000 replies to correspondents, the majority offering feedback on poetry, stories, essays, and other writing submitted by readers.<sup>113</sup>

These hundreds of individuals received considered, concise, and undoubtedly very valuable criticism of their work. Turnaround was timely, with manuscripts 'received before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month' commented on, where possible, in the following issue, perhaps no mean feat when the average number of replies in each issue was approximately 28.<sup>114</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p.29.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Colby, 'Authorship and the Book Trade', p.149. The 'Young Author's Page' did not appear in every single issue, and the months it did not appear varied. In 1897, to take one example, it did not appear in the March, April, June, September, November, or December issues.

<sup>113</sup> From April 1893 to March 1898, there are approximately 1024 replies to correspondents overall, averaging approximately 28 each month that the Young Author's Page appears. See *The Bookman*, April 1893 (No. 19, Volume IV) to March 1898 (No. 78, Volume VIII).

<sup>114</sup> See printed rules, for example, 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, February 1897 (No. 65, Volume XI), p.156. The figure of 28 is based on a rough analysis of Volume IV to Volume VIII of *The Bookman*, covering the

In the issues examined for this study, the quality of feedback from the (apparently anonymous) editor of the page was invariably high. The comments given displayed knowledge, experience, intelligence, and expertise. Feedback was usually several lines long, sometimes longer, and was honest, well-written, and to the point. Often included within this feedback were general judgements ('You describe the episode brightly enough, but the child-heroine is so detestable that you cannot win sympathy for your work') and specific suggestions for improvement ('"Waked" is the simple word you want on p.5'; 'The funny incident (pp.13–18) interrupts the narrative... Omit it ... Use it elsewhere if you can'; 'If you can draw, you might offer serio-comic illustrations, which would add greatly to [the story's] attractions').<sup>115</sup> Where applicable, advice was given on which types of publication to submit to ('You might offer some tales to a girls' magazine. You would have a better chance there than anywhere else').<sup>116</sup> Replies were truthful and never sugar-coated, with criticism ('I cannot conscientiously encourage you to write stories') given, where merited, as much as praise ('A touching story excellently told').<sup>117</sup>

Encouragement was also given whenever warranted, and several replies show a good deal of care for these young writers, and a desire for them to succeed, as well as a belief in the possibility of improvement and development. Example comments from the late 1890s include 'I think you have talent, and should succeed' and 'It is quite worth while [sic] your going on'.<sup>118</sup> Other writers were told 'There is great promise in your work. You should certainly persevere, for I have no doubt you will do well' and 'You have a decided faculty for stories of adventure, and your style will become more fluent with practice'.<sup>119</sup> Despite having penned a 'commonplace' story, one writer was told: 'still, you write fairly well, and may do better another time'.<sup>120</sup> Another, clearly a repeat submitter, was told: '... you are really overcoming some faults of style. This is brisker, and more business-like than anything I have yet seen of yours'.<sup>121</sup>

---

period from April 1893 to March 1898. Replies most often numbered in the 20s or 30s. The highest number was approximately 57 (January 1898), whilst the lowest was 16 (August 1894 and March 1898).

<sup>115</sup> See replies to 'E. J. T.': 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, August 1897 (No. 71, Volume XII), p.133; 'Hammon Tardy': 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, May 1897 (No. 68, Volume XII), p.49; 'W. W.': 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, July 1897 (No. 70, Volume XII), p.104; and 'Norma': 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, October 1897 (No. 73, Volume XIII), p.25.

<sup>116</sup> See reply to 'Nellie Grey': 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, July 1897 (No. 70, Volume XII), p.104.

<sup>117</sup> See replies to 'Ruby': 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, July 1897, (No. 70, Volume XII), p.104, and 'Bouvardia': 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, January 1898, (No. 76, Volume XIII) p.135.

<sup>118</sup> See replies to 'E. S. (Olga)': 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, May 1897 (No. 68, Volume XII), p.48, and 'Jan': 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, January 1898 (No. 76, Volume XIII), p.136.

<sup>119</sup> See replies to 'E. B. B. (Essex)' and 'J. M. (Church Orme)', 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, March 1898 (No. 78, Volume XIII), p.194.

<sup>120</sup> See reply to 'A. B.', 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, March 1898 (No. 78, Volume XIII), p.194.

<sup>121</sup> See reply to 'Francis Villon', 'The Young Author's Page', *The Bookman*, January 1895 (No. 40, Volume VII), p.125.

Even unfinished and sub-standard work could merit encouragement. ‘A. H. C.’, whose partially illegible 1897 submission included ‘half-finished lines’, some ‘nonsense’, and some ‘grave faults in ... execution’, displayed promise enough for the editor to agree to look again at a ‘fair copy’ of one passage, once it had been ‘revised’.<sup>122</sup> Another writer, who had apparently just sent in an outline, was told: ‘The scheme is good. But I cannot give a helpful opinion on a mere skeleton ... The wicked woman might so easily become absurdly melodramatic ... The denouement is really original. But now write the story’.<sup>123</sup> Multiple young authors were also praised for the standard of work they were sending in, given their age.<sup>124</sup>

From the feedback given through the page, and the numbers submitting to it over several years, it is clear that many aspirants used this column as a way of ascertaining the standard of their work, improving it, and gaining advice about which publications to submit to. Several individuals submitted writing at least two, three, or four times.<sup>125</sup> One writer sent in prose or verse at least five times between 1894 and 1896.<sup>126</sup> In 1898, more unusually, two friends appear to have sent in several ‘verses and papers’, composed separately, including poems, a ghost story, several ‘studies’, and a ‘descriptive sketch’.<sup>127</sup> It is also worth noting that the printed rules on the Page stated that ‘terms for fuller opinions on MSS. may be had on application’, showing that an

---

<sup>122</sup> See reply to ‘A. H. C.’, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, August 1897 (No. 71, Volume XII), p.132.

<sup>123</sup> See reply to ‘F. Y.’, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, October 1897 (No. 73, Volume XIII), p.25.

<sup>124</sup> See, for example, replies to ‘Quasimodo’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, June 1896 (No. 57, Volume X), pp.91–2; ‘Roncœl’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, July 1896 (No. 58, Volume X), pp.124–5; ‘W. G.’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, December 1895 (No. 51, Volume IX), pp.102–3; ‘Postia’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, May 1897 (No. 68, Volume XII), pp.48–9; ‘J. M. A.’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, February 1896, (No. 53, Volume IX), p.167; ‘A. M. S.’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, January 1894 (No 27, Volume V), p.130; ‘Bramble’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, January 1895 (No. 40, Volume VII), p.125; and ‘Enis’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, May 1893 (No. 20, Volume IV), p.60.

<sup>125</sup> See, for example, replies to ‘J. M. A.’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, February 1896, (No. 53, Volume IX), p.167, and ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, April 1896 (No. 55, Volume X), p.28; replies to ‘Alan Mar’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, August 1894 (No. 35, Volume VI) p.156, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, April 1896 (No. 55, Volume X), p.28, and ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, July 1896 (No. 58, Volume X), p.124; replies to ‘Everett Arnold’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, July 1897 (No. 70, Volume XII), p.104, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, August 1897 (No. 71, Volume XII), p.133, and ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, January 1898 (No. 76, Volume XIII), p.135; replies to ‘Carabinier’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, June 1895 (No. 45, Volume VIII), p.92, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, August 1895 (No. 47, Volume VIII), p.152, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, October 1895 (No. 49, Volume IX), p.34, and ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, February 1896 (No. 53, Volume IX), p.167; and replies to ‘Adam MacAdam’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, January 1894 (No. 27, Volume V), p.130, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, February 1894 (No. 28, Volume V), p.163, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, April 1895 (No. 43, Volume VIII), p.28, and ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, August 1895 (No. 47, Volume VIII), p.153.

<sup>126</sup> See replies to ‘Tancred Tancred’: ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, August 1894 (No. 35, Volume VI), p.156, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, November 1894 (No. 38, Volume VII), p.60, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, January 1895 (No. 40, Volume VII), p.125, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, April 1895 (No. 43, Volume VIII), p.28, and ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, April 1896 (No. 55, Volume X), p.28.

<sup>127</sup> See ‘Two Friends’, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, (No. 76, Volume XIII), January 1898, p.136. This presumably flouted the stated rule that ‘not more than one contribution may be sent by any one contributor in one month’. See, for example, *ibid*, p.135.

even more substantial form of feedback was also available from the magazine, presumably for a fee.<sup>128</sup>

The correspondence section of the *Young Man* also occasionally gave short feedback to writers who had submitted material. Dawson gave several would-be writers feedback on their work in the mid-1890s. Four correspondents in 1895 were encouraged in their story- and poetry-writing. To ‘Aspirant’ in Hawick, Dawson wrote: ‘I read the first story in your book with pleasure. It is not brilliant or striking; but it shows a clear conception of character and some power of narrative. Certainly I should say, persevere’.<sup>129</sup> ‘Strother’ in Gateshead was told their verses had ‘considerable merit’, whilst young ‘H. F. A.’ in Liverpool received the reply ‘Yes; your verses encourage me to say “Persevere”’. They are correct, clear and sweet. To merit these adjectives at fifteen is an achievement’.<sup>130</sup> To ‘Villager’, meanwhile, Dawson gave a highly enthusiastic reply of over 200 words, impressed not only by his literary ability, but by the fact that his story had been written alongside an arduous manual day job. Dawson wrote:

It has been a real pleasure to me to read your ... beautiful little story. I would ask readers of this magazine to note your case, as one of the finest instances of self-culture that has come under my notice for a long time. Here is a ‘pit laddie’, working ten hours a day in a coal-mine, coming home after this long spell of labour to sit at his desk and write an excellent story which deserves a far better fate than the corner of the local paper. The merit of the tale is its simplicity. You have written of the life you know best. Believe me, that is the wisest thing you can do. The best novels ever written have been autobiographical. I should like to see a really fine novel of a workman’s life written by a workman; and with the growth of education and the diffusion of the literary instinct, I expect such books to be written before long. Make this your mission, and if you can accomplish it you will not only win a reputation for yourself, but will do a real service to literature. You have begun in the right vein; you have only to follow it and persevere.<sup>131</sup>

The magazine also praised the thought in one correspondent’s sonnet, but felt the expression needed improvement, telling them to ‘re-write it, and go on re-writing it for a month’ as ‘something may come of it’.<sup>132</sup> As in the *Bookman*, feedback was critical where warranted, however. The poems of ‘K. O’B.’, from Accrington, were described as ‘excessively trivial and weak’, with the author told that they clearly ‘were never meant for a poet’.<sup>133</sup> Another writer’s efforts were described as ‘doggerel’ that did ‘not even rise to the level of bad verse’, while the

---

<sup>128</sup> See, for example, ‘The Young Author’s Page’, *The Bookman*, February 1897 (No. 65, Volume XI), p.156. This note seems to have been printed in the rules throughout the period examined for this study (April 1893 – March 1898).

<sup>129</sup> “Echoes from the Study.” *The Young Man*, November 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.395.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, and *The Young Man*, September 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.324.

<sup>131</sup> “Echoes from the Study.” *The Young Man*, November 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.395.

<sup>132</sup> “Echoes from the Study.” *The Young Man*, September 1893, Volume 7 (1893), p.319.

<sup>133</sup> “Echoes from the Study.” *The Young Man*, October 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.360.

first two lines of another reader's poem were called an 'excruciating attempt at rhyme', with Dawson claiming that he 'couldn't read any more'.<sup>134</sup>

In 1894, Dawson said that it was his 'misfortune to be appealed to pretty frequently for a verdict' on manuscripts.<sup>135</sup> He added that if he praised them, he received more, which he had 'no time to read', but if he was critical, was sent 'letters expressing the view that my judgment is infirm'.<sup>136</sup> This suggests, though, that he received more written work than that which is referred to in 'Echoes', and therefore that the demand for such feedback from him was greater than indicated from the replies issued. Nearly all of the approximately 110 writing-related replies printed by the *Young Woman* in its first three years, meanwhile, were feedback on submissions, largely poetry.<sup>137</sup>

Amateur writing magazine *The Scribbler* also offered comments on rejected work. (Unlike the *Young Man* and *Young Woman*, which do not appear to have printed work from unknown writers, the *Scribbler* was made up of amateur contributions, so correspondents presumably sent in stories and poems with the hope of them being printed.) In 1876, A. O. Lionel Sedley, a sometime contributor, was told of his story 'Tiny Toddle', that 'the second part is excellently written, and in some parts the pathos almost rivals that of our great Dickens' but that 'the introduction is too long and mars the effect of what would otherwise be a most interesting tale'.<sup>138</sup> Wordiness was also the main fault of 'Geordie', whose story, 'Four Hours in a Durham Coal Pit', included 'some very interesting matter', but needed 'condensing and better

---

<sup>134</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, November 1895, Volume 9 (1895) p.395, and "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, December 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.428.

<sup>135</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, February 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.66.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid. NB: These lines are quoted in "The Art of Authorship." *Manchester Courier Weekly Supplement*, 3 March 1894, p.1, and also in Chapter IX, 'To a Youth with Literary Tastes', in W. J. Dawson's *Table Talk with Young Men* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1898), p.63.

<sup>137</sup> These replies largely fall near the end of this three-year period. For some examples, see, for instance: "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, September 1894, Volume 2 (1893-1894), p.426, replies to 'Clan Alpine', 'Admirer', 'Snowdrop' and 'Nurse'; "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, October 1894, Volume 3 (1894-1895), p.35, replies to 'Nolton', 'E. W.', 'Erato', and 'Queenie'; "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, November 1894, Volume 3 (1894-1895), p.70, replies to 'Florence', 'Pearl Winter', 'L. J. S.' and 'Agnes'; "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, December 1894, Volume 3 (1894-1895), p.108, replies to 'E. S.', 'B. M. P.', 'Young Woman' and 'Old Woman'; "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, January 1895, Volume 3 (1894-1895), pp.141-2, replies to 'Hopeful', 'L. R. A. M.', 'Mignonette', 'Voisy' and 'Erato'; "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, February 1895, Volume 3 (1894-1895), p.178, replies to 'E. M. H.', 'Gertrude', 'Anxious', 'Marie Treseder' and 'Ballywhin'; "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, March 1895, Volume 3 (1894-1895), pp.215-6, replies to 'Would-Be Poet', 'M. M. P.', 'Red Lilac', 'Young Aspirant', 'Struggling Author', 'Faith', 'Oswald', 'Blanche' and 'Patrick Foyle'; "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, April 1895, Volume 3 (1894-1895), pp.250-1, replies to 'A. M. M.', 'Ignoramus', 'F. A.', 'Two Lasses', 'Lilianetta', 'Mignonette', 'George Garrick', 'S. D. F.', 'M. A. C.', 'Dalleth Reed' and 'M. Y.'; and "Between Ourselves." *The Young Woman*, May 1895, Volume 3 (1894-1895), p.286, replies to 'Rachel', 'John Dacre', 'K. K.', 'Ivy', 'Dorothy X. B.', 'E. P. S.', 'Eve', 'Jean', 'Welsh Violet', 'F.', 'J. A. R. S.', 'Ruby Lynn' and 'Mab'.

<sup>138</sup> *The Scribbler*, December 1876, Volume 1, p.117.

arrangement' with several sentences being too long and the author sometimes 'get[ting] out of his depth, finding it hard to return to the drift of the sentence'.<sup>139</sup>

Another contribution, story 'The London Cousin', had a commendable plot, but 'abrupt' sentences, and throughout showed 'evident marks of carelessness ... the prevailing faults being a great disregard of grammatical rules, and a continual dropping into orthographical errors'.<sup>140</sup> F. C. Finch's 'Our Boy', meanwhile, was too long, not consistently absorbing, and had a 'disappointing' ending, but the magazine stated they would be 'glad to receive it again' if the author shortened and revised it.<sup>141</sup> 'Fleur de Lys', whose story 'Dead or Alive' was a marked improvement on their previous submission, was told that more improvement was needed; whilst the introduction was 'exceedingly good', the plot was weak and the characters artificial.<sup>142</sup>

Again, feedback was, at times, negative, even blunt. One poet was berated for sending in his 'second-rate efforts', whilst another was told: 'Poetry is not your *forte*, besides it is not written "Pottery"'.<sup>143</sup> 'Alphonz', meanwhile, was asked, 'Is there *nothing* except love about which you can write[?]; try and compose some more sensible lines next time'.<sup>144</sup>

The *Scribbler* also made general comments pushing correspondents to improve the quality of their writing. One piece in 1877 stressed that the magazine was 'obliged to cull the best pieces only', reminding members that they were writing 'not for the perusal of a few friends, but for the general public'.<sup>145</sup> They went on to express their hope that their words would 'act as a stimulant to more careful study and preparation', noting how some rejected contributions were so 'carelessly and thoughtlessly' thrown together that they felt their writers would be 'ashamed to own' them, were they printed.<sup>146</sup>

A piece later the same year was more severe, describing some of the worst contributions as 'a disgrace to their composers', pleading with members to 'take more pains' with their writing, and attempting to educate the worst of them as to why their work was being rejected.<sup>147</sup> 'Write poetry', they pleaded, 'and not unscannable nonsense ... Write tales in a sprightly manner, so as to captivate your readers' attention, and not send prosy narratives of impossible events, strung

---

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> *The Scribbler*, January 1877, Volume 1, p.152.

<sup>141</sup> *The Scribbler*, December 1876, Volume 1, p.117.

<sup>142</sup> *The Scribbler*, April 1877, Volume 1, p.245.

<sup>143</sup> *The Scribbler*, February 1877, Volume 1, p.184, and *The Scribbler*, October 1877, Volume 2, p.162.

<sup>144</sup> *The Scribbler*, July 1877, Volume 2, p.42.

<sup>145</sup> *The Scribbler*, March 1877, Volume 1, p.216. For another comment, see, for example, *The Scribbler*, September 1877, Volume 2, p.120.

<sup>146</sup> *The Scribbler*, March 1877, Volume 1, p.216.

<sup>147</sup> *The Scribbler*, August 1877, Volume 2, p.81.

together without end, aim, or grammar...'.<sup>148</sup> On other occasions contributors were berated for semi-illegible handwriting, and for failing to adhere to rules about the presentation of material; offences included crossing writing out, or sticking new lines over the original work.<sup>149</sup>

There are also occasional instances of newspaper columnists in this period offering to read work. In 1905, a correspondence section in the *Leeds Mercury* told 'Quill Pen': 'By all means send your MS. to me. I will give it a reading and advise you through this column as to its merits'.<sup>150</sup> Even in these few publications, we can see how some aspirants were using magazines to ask a variety of questions about writing and the literary profession, and to obtain feedback, tips, and advice about their work. Correspondence columns could be a source of information and education.

They also show a more positive side to the editor/aspirant relationship than the traditional image of the beginner as the bane of the editor's life, flooding him with unsolicited contributions and requests for help in getting published. Not that this image was unjustified. As an essay to aspirants by Mark Twain, reprinted in one publication, noted, 'every man who becomes editor of a newspaper or magazine straightaway begins to receive MSS. from literary aspirants, together with requests that he will deliver judgement'.<sup>151</sup> Both Andrew Lang and Annie Swan (who had their own correspondence columns, in *Longman's Magazine* and *Woman at Home*, respectively) repeatedly complained that correspondents badgered them for help in getting published.<sup>152</sup> As already noted, Dawson also considered the frequent receipt of manuscripts a 'misfortune'.<sup>153</sup> Correspondence column editors could also, though, be mentors, and clearly offered some aspirants a great deal of help and encouragement. Regardless of magazines' underlying motives for engaging with aspirants in this way – such as a desire to increase subscriptions – aspirants were clearly benefitting. The help given through such columns also offered a counterpoint to those who publicly sneered at the idea that writing could be taught.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid. For another example of a complaint, see *The Scribbler*, December 1877, Volume 2, p.242.

<sup>149</sup> *The Scribbler*, February 1878, Volume 2, p.322.

<sup>150</sup> "Literary Advice." [Under 'With the Editor in Council'], *Weekly Supplement to the Leeds Mercury*, 9 December 1905, p.11.

<sup>151</sup> "Mark Twain to Literary Aspirants." *Young Folks Paper. For Old and Young Boys and Girls*, 17 April 1886, pp.246–7.

<sup>152</sup> Margaret Beetham, 'The Agony Aunt, the Romancing Uncle and the Family of Empire: Defining the Sixpenny Reading Public in the 1890s', in Laurel Brake, Bill Bell and David Finkelstein (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp.254–5 and 257–8.

<sup>153</sup> "Echoes from the Study." *The Young Man*, February 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.66.

<sup>154</sup> One journalist, for example, expressed sarcasm and amusement at the maiden issue of *Amateur Journalist and Literary Aspirant*, saying he now 'tremble[d]' for his position, and advising anyone who wished to do him out of his job to give the 'comic' paper a read. (See "For threepence a month it will be possible (more or less) for the literary aspirant to learn how to become a journalist...", *Daily Mail, Hull Packet and East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Courier*, 18 December 1906, p.3.)

## Literary Competitions

Literary competitions offered another method through which aspirants could obtain feedback, encouragement, and support. Competitions were a prominent part of late-nineteenth-century print media. Philip Waller notes how, by the 1890s, ‘competition gimmickry had ... reached around the newspaper world, from *Tit-Bits* to *The Times*’, whilst Jonathan Rose writes that it is hard to think of a popular paper in the late Victorian period that did not run literary contests.<sup>155</sup>

At the most basic level, the fact that newspapers established and ran literary competitions at all demonstrates a level of support for aspirants. Even if Linda K. Hughes’ brief claim that story contests in provincial newspapers were ‘designed to enhance subscriptions’ is true, these publications were nonetheless creating space for amateur writers.<sup>156</sup> Comments given by newspapers when starting new competitions also indicate a clear interest in showcasing and judging new literary talent. Announcing the start of their weekly short story competition in 1883, the *Hampshire Telegraph* said it invited contributions from the public for a section of the paper which would henceforth ‘be devoted to an exposition of the literary merits of ... the readers of [the] paper and the *Evening News* who may be willing to enter into friendly competition with one another’.<sup>157</sup> A competition started in Bristol’s *Observer* the same year, meanwhile, was specifically aimed at ‘authors and amateur writers’, whilst a contest in the *Gloucester Citizen* to finish an incomplete narrative in under 50 words promised to reward the story endings ‘possess[ing] the greatest ingenuity and literary merit’.<sup>158</sup>

The regularity and longevity of some competitions, meanwhile, shows both the continued support of newspapers in providing this space for writers, and indicates the popularity of competitions amongst them as a tool to practice their craft. Both the *Hampshire Telegraph* and *Manchester Times* competitions were weekly, with the former running for over a decade in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>159</sup> By the 1890s, the *Telegraph* were not always printing their full competition

---

<sup>155</sup> Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.677 (and also see pp.100–1), and Jonathan Rose, ‘Education, Literacy, and the Victorian Reader’, in Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (eds.), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), p.45.

<sup>156</sup> Linda K. Hughes, ‘Review: Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press by Graham Law.’ *Victorian Studies* 44.4 (2002), p.688.

<sup>157</sup> “‘Hampshire Telegraph’ Literary Competition.” *The Evening News* [Portsmouth], 28 November 1883, p.2.

<sup>158</sup> “Prize Local Stories for the ‘Observer.’” *The Western Daily Press*, 14 July 1883, p.5, and “Literary Competition. For Readers of ‘The Citizen.’” *The Citizen* [Gloucester], 5 August 1907, 5<sup>th</sup> page.

<sup>159</sup> The main *Hampshire Telegraph* competition pieces researched for this project have dates from every year between 1883 and 1895 – see bibliography.

rules and/or terms and conditions, suggesting that the competition was, by then, well-established and well-known amongst its readers.<sup>160</sup>

Whilst the paper accepted both ‘selected’ (non-original) entries and original stories, it often awarded two or three of its normally five weekly prizes to new fiction – meaning that between 1883 and 1895, it could have awarded prizes to over 1000 writers.<sup>161</sup> If one also considers the potential number of unsuccessful competitors entering original content over that time, it is clear that hundreds of aspirants could have been using this one competition alone as a way to improve. Furthermore, an apparently aborted effort by the *Telegraph* in 1884 to split ‘original’ entries and ‘selected’ entries into two separate competitions (with the former being the main one, and having a £3 weekly prize total) suggests a preference for original entries, as does their stated desire to award the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prizes to original stories.<sup>162</sup>

All the competitions examined for this study also offered monetary prizes.<sup>163</sup> While this could be interpreted as a way of increasing sales, it can also be seen as another form of encouragement and support for writers. The *Hampshire Telegraph* began with a total weekly prize offering of £1 (with 10s for the first prize) ‘in order to encourage contributions’.<sup>164</sup> By July 1884, this had been raised to £1 2s 6d per week, and by May 1885, had been increased again, to £2, the level it was still at 10 years later.<sup>165</sup> In the 1890s, a first prize of 15s, or even a fourth prize of 5s, was arguably not inconsiderable, especially given that the winning *Telegraph* stories were

---

<sup>160</sup> See, for example, “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 5 May 1894, p.10, and “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 November 1894, p.10, and compare to, for example, “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 19 July 1884, p.10.

<sup>161</sup> As a very rough estimate, if we assume that the competition was run weekly for these 12 years, with (as a conservative guess) two writers per week being given prizes, this gives a figure of 1248 individuals. Although, while a writer could not win twice in one week, the possibility must of course be considered that many writers competed regularly, i.e. there may not have been as many as 1248 separate entrants.

<sup>162</sup> For evidence of the *Telegraph*’s attempt to split the prizes, see “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 August 1884, p.10. For evidence of the paper stating they wanted to give 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prizes to original entries, see, for example: “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 May 1886, p.10; “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 June 1886, p.10; and “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 December 1887, p.10. They did, however, sometimes give out 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> prizes to ‘selected’ (non-original) entries, presumably because of a lack of quality entries on those occasions.

<sup>163</sup> For the *Hampshire Telegraph*, see, for example, “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 December 1883, p.10; for the *Manchester Times*, see, for example, “Our Weekly Literary Competitions.” *Manchester Weekly Times – Supplement*, 18 November 1892, p.5; for the *Bristol Observer*, see “Prize Local Stories for the ‘Observer’.” *Western Daily Press*, 14 July 1883, p.5; and for the *Gloucester Citizen*, see “Literary Competition. For Readers of ‘The Citizen’.” *Citizen* [Gloucester], 5 August 1907, 5<sup>th</sup> page.

<sup>164</sup> “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 December 1883, p.10.

<sup>165</sup> See “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 19 July 1884, p.10; “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 9 May 1885, p.10; and “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 23 February 1895, p.10.

sometimes as short as one-and-a-half columns long.<sup>166</sup> The seriousness with which the paper took the competition and the distribution of prize money, meanwhile, is shown by their warning that ‘original’ stories found not to be original would not be paid prize money, whilst any person who brought such deception to light would be offered half the prize money for that story.<sup>167</sup> (In 1884, distribution of payment for winning stories was altered from the day of publication to a week after publication, presumably to allow any such claims to be made).<sup>168</sup>

A more explicit way in which literary competitions supported amateur writing was in the feedback that was sometimes offered to unsuccessful entrants. This ranged from short, blunt comments to lengthier judgements on matters such as writing style. In 1892, the *Manchester Weekly Times* printed a small note to unsuccessful entrant, ‘Saxon’.<sup>169</sup> After noting that two of the three stories they had submitted were ‘far too long’, the paper added that the third, while of an acceptable length and dealing with a ‘good’ subject, had a ‘faulty’ style, advising its writer ‘to cultivate a smoother, less jerky style’.<sup>170</sup> Advice on the intricacies of plot was also given. Another entrant received the feedback: ‘Awkward, no doubt, but more awkward for the hostess than for the guest. The rudeness of the butler would overshadow the insinuation against the visitor. Try again’.<sup>171</sup> A fellow entrant, ‘J. H.’, was informed that the point of his or her story was not clear, whilst another was simply told, ‘Hardly good enough. Persevere’.<sup>172</sup>

The *Hampshire Telegraph* sometimes included a ‘Notices to contributors’ section, which regularly contained comments regarding excessive story length. In 1884, two entrants were told, respectively, ‘good, but too long’ and ‘rather too lengthy’, while other competitors in 1887 were told ‘much too long’ and ‘the story is a very good one, but far too long for publication’.<sup>173</sup> That

---

<sup>166</sup> For prizes of this amount, see “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 23 February 1895, p.10. For examples of winning *Hampshire Telegraph* stories that were around one-and-a-half columns long (or shorter), see entry ‘Kathleen’, “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 15 November 1890, p.10, or entry ‘The Aasvogels’, “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 7 October 1893, p.10.

<sup>167</sup> For an example of this rule being printed, see “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 June 1886, p.10.

<sup>168</sup> On 14 June 1884, post office orders for winners were being sent out on the date of publication (see “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 14 June 1884, p.10); by 2 August 1884, they were being sent out seven days after publication (see “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 August 1884, p.10). At some point, this was changed so that only post office orders for original contributions were sent out seven days after publication – orders for selected contributions were again sent out on the day of publication. See, for example, “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 25 November 1893, p.10.

<sup>169</sup> “Our Weekly Literary Competitions.” *Manchester Weekly Times – Supplement*, 18 November 1892, p.5.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 14 June 1884, p.10; “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 16 July 1887, p.10; and “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 December 1887, p.10. It is important to note that, as the paper accepted ‘selected’ contributions as well

such comments were sometimes made – despite the fact that the paper regularly printed a general warning about length – indicates a desire to still give individual feedback where possible, and to give entrants praise when an oversized story was otherwise good.

Feedback was also given where simple competition regulations had not been followed. Even though the *Telegraph's* rules – such as to write on one side of the paper only, and to provide one's full name and address – were, generally, printed on the competition page, the paper's feedback sometimes included comments such as 'you have written on both sides of the paper', 'send your full address', and 'you should write on paper about the size of ordinary note paper, and not across an open sheet of foolscap'.<sup>174</sup> That the paper did not just discard such entries, but informed the entrants so that they could rectify their error, again shows a degree of consideration and encouragement for the writers taking part.

The *Telegraph* also tried, whenever possible it seems, to send rejected pieces back to entrants. While in December 1887 they were stating that 'rejected communications cannot be returned', in the mid-1890s there are assurances that 'every effort will be made to return rejected contributions', as long as a stamped addressed envelope was provided.<sup>175</sup> In her discussion of *Tit-Bits'* correspondence columns, Kate Jackson notes how the magazine's founder, George Newnes, believed that 'all answers [in the columns] should be given in a manner which would make each correspondent feel he was being treated with special consideration'.<sup>176</sup> Newspapers such as the *Hampshire Telegraph* seem to have shown a similar level of consideration in their dealings with competition entrants.

It is unknown whether any literary competition entrants went on to become published authors, but a crossover between amateurs and professionals was possible. In 1896, the *Hampshire Telegraph* mentioned a recently published book of short stories, written by a local Southsea woman, now 'quite a familiar traveller' in the 'realms of fiction', whose 'contributions',

---

as original stories, some of the length comments given by the paper could refer to selected entries. However, given the balance of probability, some at least would have been referring to original stories, and it is perhaps safe to assume that far more were referring to original stories, if only because selected stories would have been printed elsewhere, and therefore the word count would have been more apparent to the entrant than it would have been for a handwritten, original story.

<sup>174</sup> All these quotes appeared on 16 July 1887 (see "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph*, 16 July 1887, p.10). Other occasions when contributors were informed they had written on both sides of the paper include 27 August 1887 and 17 December 1887 (see "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 27 August 1887, p.10, and "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 December 1887, p.10).

<sup>175</sup> See "Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 December 1887, p.10; "Our Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 June 1894, p.10; and "Our Literary Competition." *Hampshire Telegraph*, 23 February 1895, p.10.

<sup>176</sup> Kate Jackson, 'George Newnes and the 'Loyal Tit-Bitites': Editorial Identity and Textual Interaction in *Tit-Bits'*, in Laurel Brake, Bill Bell and David Finkelstein (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp.14–15.

they noted, 'have found an honoured place from time to time in our weekly Literary Competition'.<sup>177</sup> Whether entrants had commercial aspirations or not, however, seeing one's work and name in print – possibly for the first time – would undoubtedly also have given encouragement to competition winners.

It is also briefly worth noting how newspapers indirectly supported amateur writing by reporting on other local, national, and international literary competitions. The Amateurs' Literary and Painting Prize Competition, run for at least two consecutive years in the 1890s by fine art publisher Raphael Tuck and Co., was the subject of pieces printed in numerous publications, including the *York Herald*, *Aberdeen Journal*, *Portsmouth Evening News*, *Edinburgh Evening News*, *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, *Morning Post*, *Cheltenham Chronicle*, and *Berrow's Worcester Journal*.<sup>178</sup> Similarly, the Vere Foster prize, a writing and drawing contest for school pupils which ran annually from 1870, was mentioned in papers including the *Belfast News-Letter*, *Edinburgh Evening News*, and *Dundee Courier*.<sup>179</sup> In 1896, meanwhile, the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* reported on an 'immense' story competition (\$30,000 total prize money) that had recently been run by the *Chicago Record* in America, while an 1888 *Leeds Times* piece announced a local competition being run by a Leeds tailor for schoolboys after they had been unable to recruit a youngster with good enough writing skills to help with their bookkeeping.<sup>180</sup>

At a very basic level, such pieces supported amateur writing simply by publicising the competitions they talked about and providing their readers with information about how to enter them, where applicable.<sup>181</sup> Reporting on the Tuck competition in 1893, the *Portsmouth Evening*

---

<sup>177</sup> "A good shillingsworth of short stories..." [Under 'Books and Bookmen'], *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle Literary Supplement*, 22 August 1896, p.12.

<sup>178</sup> See "Literary and Fine Art Competitions." *The Yorkshire Herald, and the York Herald*, 16 November 1894, p.6; "Amateurs' Literary and Painting Prize Competition." *Aberdeen Journal. And Daily Advertiser for the North of Scotland*, 23 September 1893, p.7; "A Literary and Artistic Competition." *The Evening News* [Portsmouth], 1 September 1893, p.2; "Amateurs' Literary and Painting Prize Competition." *Edinburgh Evening News*, 25 September 1893, 2<sup>nd</sup> page; "Literary & Art Competitions. Local Prize-Winners." *The Daily Gazette* [Exeter], 14 June 1894, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; "In connection with their Christmas publications this year Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons have arranged a literary and artistic competition..." *The Morning Post* [London], 2 November 1893, p.2; "Amateurs' Literary and Painting Prize Competition. Local Winners." *Cheltenham Chronicle. And General Advertiser for Gloucestershire and the Adjoining Counties*, 24 August 1895, p.2; and "Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons' Competitions." *Berrow's Worcester Journal*, 23 June 1894, p.4.

<sup>179</sup> See "National Competition in Writing and Drawing." *The Belfast News-Letter*, 21 July 1875, 3<sup>rd</sup> page; "National Competition in Writing and Drawing." *Edinburgh Evening News*, 27 June 1879, p.3; and "National Competition in Writing." *The Dundee Courier and Argus*, 7 September 1888, p.5.

<sup>180</sup> See "An Immense Literary Competition." *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 18 April 1896, p.8, and "A Writing Competition." *The Leeds Times*, 8 December 1888, p.8.

<sup>181</sup> For discussion of the entry details for the Tuck competition in 1893, for example, see "A Literary and Artistic Competition." *The Evening News* [Portsmouth], 1 September 1893, p.2; "In connection with their Christmas publications this year Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons have arranged a literary and artistic competition..." *The Morning Post* [London], 2 November 1893, p.2; "Amateurs' Literary and Painting Prize Competition." *Aberdeen Journal*, 23 September 1893, p.7; and "Amateurs' Literary and Painting Prize Competition." *Edinburgh Evening News*, 25 September 1893, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

*News*, *Edinburgh Evening News*, *Morning Post*, and *Aberdeen Journal* all explained how one had to buy one of 30 Tuck books (all containing a competition coupon), before embarking on a writing/drawing task connected to the book. ‘The task to be accomplished ... by the amateur author’, the *Portsmouth Evening News* noted, was ‘to write a short story or description concerning one of the pictures’, or else to find a good text or quote to accompany one of the pictures from well-known literature or poetry.<sup>182</sup> All also noted that the contest was aimed at non-professionals, with the *Portsmouth Evening News* emphasising that ‘only bona-fide amateurs will be permitted to take part’.<sup>183</sup>

Newspapers also alerted their readers to competitions being run by other papers. Quoting from another publication in 1903, Dundee’s *Evening Telegraph* notified its readers that the *People’s Friend* would contain a competition the following week ‘for the benefit of literary aspirants’ with ‘prizes being offered for the best stories or sketches in imitation of Mr W. W. Jacobs or Mr Pett Ridge’.<sup>184</sup>

Newspapers also expressed enthusiasm for local literary competition winners. An 1888 *Dundee Courier* piece about the Vere Foster prize, subtitled ‘Victory of a Perthshire Boy’, noted how the top prize in one of the two branches of the contest had been won by a 16-year-old pupil from Dunkeld.<sup>185</sup> The paper went on to state, proudly, that this was ‘the third year in succession in which a Scottish boy has won the first prize’, a pride no doubt increased by the fact that the competition had now been extended to Australia, New Zealand, Malta, and Rangoon.<sup>186</sup> A *Berrow’s Worcester Journal* piece on the Tuck prize in 1894 noted that ‘in the list of prize winners’ they had found ‘a large number of Worcestershire names’.<sup>187</sup> Reporting on the Tuck prize in 1894 and 1895, respectively, Exeter’s *Daily Gazette* and the *Cheltenham Chronicle* listed all the winners local to them in the competition’s numerous categories.<sup>188</sup> The latter piece listed 24 local

---

<sup>182</sup> “A Literary and Artistic Competition.” *The Evening News* [Portsmouth], 1 September 1893, p.2.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. See also “In connection with their Christmas publications this year Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons have arranged a literary and artistic competition...” *The Morning Post* [London], 2 November 1893, p.2; “Amateurs’ Literary and Painting Prize Competition.” *Aberdeen Journal*, 23 September 1893, p.7; and “Amateurs’ Literary and Painting Prize Competition.” *Edinburgh Evening News*, 25 September 1893, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

<sup>184</sup> “A Novel Literary Competition.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 6 February 1903, p.4.

<sup>185</sup> “National Competition in Writing.” *Dundee Courier*, 7 September 1888, p.5.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> “Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons’ Competitions.” *Berrow’s Worcester Journal*, 23 June 1894, p.4.

<sup>188</sup> “Literary & Art Competitions. Local Prize-Winners.” *The Daily Gazette* [Exeter], 14 June 1894, 3<sup>rd</sup> page, and “Amateurs’ Literary and Painting Prize Competition. Local Winners.” *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 24 August 1895, p.2. As the Tuck competition had a painting side as well as a literary side, several of the winners listed in these papers won in the painting categories.

winners from the literary categories of the competition alone.<sup>189</sup> The style of this piece is also worth noting. Written in full sentences, it noted how each individual had, for example, ‘gain[ed]’, ‘secured’, ‘take[n]’, or been ‘awarded’ a prize, or had ‘come out first’, suggesting a greater sense of pride in the entrants’ achievements than the simple presentation of the information in a list format.<sup>190</sup>

Pride would also likely have been felt by these individuals themselves, on seeing their names printed, just as competition winners would likely have been proud to see their entries printed in their local papers. Siân Pooley’s work on children’s columns in this period illustrates how deeply felt such pride could be, not just amongst correspondents themselves, but amongst those around them. She notes how youngsters ‘expressed their anxious aspirations to see their writings published and reported on parental pride in seeing their children’s words in print’.<sup>191</sup> ‘After her name was listed as a member of the Manchester children’s [column] society’, notes Pooley, one 11-year-old ‘reported that ... “Ma bought two *Weekly Times* and [so did] all our friends, and they saw all our names in”’.<sup>192</sup>

Children were, also, of course, encouraged to write directly by newspapers, through correspondence columns, as noted earlier.<sup>193</sup> From at least 1883 to 1914, the *Hampshire Telegraph* also ran a children’s column, which for some years printed children’s contributions, chiefly letters.<sup>194</sup> From 1886 to at least 1910, the column was named the ‘Children’s Hour’, and for the

---

<sup>189</sup> “Amateurs’ Literary and Painting Prize Competition. Local Winners.” *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 24 August 1895, p.2. To reiterate, not all categories in the literary branch of the competition involved creative writing – some, for example, involved picking quotations from literature.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Siân Pooley, ‘Children’s Writing and the Popular Press in England, 1876–1914.’ *History Workshop Journal* 80.1 (2015), p.80.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> See Pooley, ‘Children’s Writing and the Popular Press.’

<sup>194</sup> For evidence of the children’s column existing between 1883 and 1914, see bibliography, which lists at least one piece for each of these years, except 1911. (No evidence for 1911 was found as the *Hampshire Telegraph* for 1911 does not appear to be available through the British Newspaper Archive.) For some examples of issues that printed children’s letters/contributions, see: “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 9 October 1886, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 1 December 1888, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 November 1892, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 February 1894, p.12; “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 August 1895, p.12; “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 25 June 1898, p.12; and “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 23 January 1904, p.12. For instances of contributions other than letters being asked for, announced, or referred to, see, for example: “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 9 October 1886, p.12 (poetry, fables, and writing on natural history), and “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 21 November 1903, p.12 (puzzles). NB: The children’s contributions printed in the *Hampshire Telegraph* were, it seems, more often original, but could at times be selected (i.e. taken from another publication). These rules clearly varied – in December 1888, it is clear a rule had recently been introduced that all letter prize entries must be original (see “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 1 December 1888, p.12, bottom of first column), whilst by August 1895, Grandpa Grimm was telling children that they should choose selected pieces for themselves, i.e. go through the

bulk of that time was ‘run’ by a character called Grandpa Grimm.<sup>195</sup> In the late 1880s and the 1890s, the column appears to have regularly offered two weekly monetary prizes for the best letters received.<sup>196</sup> These were printed, as sometimes were a few of the other letters received, in addition to a list (consisting of names, ages, and addresses) of other children who had sent letters in.<sup>197</sup> Whilst this column was clearly not as extensive – in terms of content or children’s involvement – as some of those discussed by Pooley, it undoubtedly encouraged many local Hampshire children, particularly between the ages of eight and 13, to pick up their pens.<sup>198</sup> A few children were also from much further afield.<sup>199</sup>

---

process of finding something, rather than submit a piece suggested to them by a parent (see “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 August 1895, p.12).

<sup>195</sup> For evidence of the column being called the ‘Children’s Hour’ from 1886 to 1910, see bibliography. From 1883 to 1886, and from 1912 to 1914, it appears the column was known as either the Children’s Column or Children’s Corner (see bibliography). For evidence of the column being run by Grandpa Grimm, see, for example: “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 9 October 1886, p.12 (when the Grandpa character was started); “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 26 October 1889, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 29 March 1890, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 12 November 1892, p.12; “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 August 1895, p.12; “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 18 September 1897, p.12; “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 25 June 1898, p.12; “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 25 February 1899, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle* [in supplement], 10 February 1900, p.11; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 28 September 1901, p.11; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 28 June 1902, p.11; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 21 November 1903, p.12; and “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 23 January 1904, p.12. By 1912 and 1913, Grandpa Grimm had become ‘Uncle Ben’, and by 1914, ‘Uncle Phil’. (See “Our Children’s Column.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 23 August 1912, p.12; “Our Children’s Column.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 5 September 1913, p.14; and “Our Children’s Corner.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Post and Naval Chronicle*, 3 July 1914, p.16). All these characters fit with Pooley’s research – she notes how the editors of the participatory children’s columns she analysed were ‘gendered as male’ and ‘wrote under familial noms-de-plume’ such as ‘Uncle’ or ‘Daddy’. See Pooley, ‘Children’s Writing and the Popular Press’, pp.79–80 (and also, for example, pp.76, 81–2, 85–6, and 90).

<sup>196</sup> See, for example: “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 9 October 1886, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 1 December 1888, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 12 November 1892, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 February 1894, p.12; “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 18 September 1897, p.12; “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 25 June 1898, p.12; and “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 25 February 1899, p.12. NB: This was not the only period during which prizes for correspondence were offered – in one example from 1914, the column (run at that time by ‘Uncle Phil’) was again offering prizes for letters. See “Our Children’s Corner.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 3 July 1914, p.16.

<sup>197</sup> See, for example, “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 1 December 1888, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 12 November 1892, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 February 1894, p.12; and “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 18 September 1897, p.12.

<sup>198</sup> See Pooley, ‘Children’s Writing and the Popular Press’, p.79. Judging from the handful of *Hampshire Telegraph* issues examples examined, the children’s column was never lengthy, and, at various points, did not include contributions from children (just pieces for them to read). The ages of eight to 13 are the ones overwhelming seen in the sample pieces examined for this study, with ages 10 to 13 the most common. For an example, see “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 1 December 1888, p.12: 34 children are listed (three with no ages), and out of the remaining 31, only three children are outside the eight to 13 age bracket (all of them aged 14). All 34 children are also from Hampshire, with the vast majority from Portsmouth (largely Southsea). NB: At times, the rules stated that prize entrants must be under the age of 14 – see, for example, “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 18 September 1897, p.12. (This was clearly not always the case, however, as the example just cited shows. In July 1914, entrants had to be under the age of 16. See “Our Children’s Corner.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 3 July 1914, p.16.)

<sup>199</sup> For instances of correspondents from Cornwall, Kent, Glasgow and Weymouth, see, respectively: “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 1 August 1896, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 30 May 1891, p.12; “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 26 October 1889, p.12; and “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 12 November 1892, p.12.

Moving away from print media, Part III will now briefly consider other avenues of literary advice in this period, and the extent to which they helped and engaged with the late-nineteenth-century literary aspirant.

### **PART III**

The Society of Authors, established in 1884, is an organisation that was not chiefly concerned with aspirants, as noted earlier.<sup>200</sup> Like the Royal Literary Fund, another organisation that, on the face of it, might be assumed to have had some relevance for beginners, membership of the Society of Authors was only available to writers of published works.<sup>201</sup> There is, however, evidence that the Society offered assistance and advice to aspirants and non-members in some circumstances.

Firstly, they offered feedback on manuscripts, for a charge. An 1891 issue of the Society's monthly journal, *The Author* – started the previous year – notes that 'with regard to the reading of MSS. for young writers, the fee for this service is one guinea. MSS will be read and reported upon for others than members...'.<sup>202</sup> Two-and-a-half years later, in an interview with the *Young Man*, Walter Besant made another mention of the Society's willingness to offer an opinion of the 'artistic and literary' worth of manuscripts, noting that the 'young writer may come to us for a lesson'.<sup>203</sup> (A statement which, one imagines, could have left them inundated with submitted work.)

Hilliard mentions the Society's 'efforts to defend authors against the depredations of other actors in the literary marketplace', noting how Besant and his secretary 'enthusiastically hunted literary frauds and exploitative publishers'.<sup>204</sup> Occasionally, youngsters and non-members were assisted in this respect too. In July 1890, *The Author* stated that 'the Society does not, as a rule, work for people who are not members, but there are occasions on which it is necessary to break this rule'.<sup>205</sup> It went on to mention an instance in which they had intervened to help a young writer (a non-member) receive fair payment from a firm he had been writing for.<sup>206</sup> Joseph Keating also mentions how the 'Authors' Society' – presumably the Society of Authors – 'tried

---

<sup>200</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.14.

<sup>201</sup> The January 1891 issue of *The Author* states that 'Authors of published works alone are eligible for membership' of the Society (See *The Author*, 15 January 1891, Volume 1, No. 9, p.223). See also Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.14.

<sup>202</sup> *The Author*, 15 January 1891, Volume 1, No. 9, p.223.

<sup>203</sup> *The Young Man*, August 1893, Volume 7 (1893), p.258.

<sup>204</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.13.

<sup>205</sup> *The Author*, 15 July 1890, Volume 1, No. 3, p.63.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

to do what it could to protect' his 'interests' after he was cheated out of money by his agents, although 'its efforts were of no value'.<sup>207</sup>

It is also worth noting that *The Author*, started in 1890, contained advice that would have been useful to aspirants, even if the journal was pitched at a relatively high level and was 'devoted especially to the protection and maintenance of literary property'.<sup>208</sup> Across the first few issues, for example, one can find a regularly reprinted list of rules for dealing with publishers; a warning not to respond to adverts asking for manuscripts, even if such adverts appeared 'in the most respectable papers'; a piece, 'The Troubles of a Beginner', detailing the thoughts and experiences of a writer who, in his ignorance, paid a magazine editor twice to amend and publish his story; and a lesson on perseverance in the form of a brief discussion of a young writer who had his first story accepted after 36 rejections, and a subsequent story accepted after 42.<sup>209</sup> The extent to which aspirants got hold of and read *The Author* is unclear. (Whilst it was obtainable through newsagents and its publisher, it was intended for, and issued to, members of the Society of Authors, who received it free for a year.)<sup>210</sup> This evidence does show a degree of concern for beginners, though, even if they were not the Society's main focus.

Offering further indications that Besant's interest in helping some aspirants would have been genuine, Peter Keating notes how he was 'known as someone who was... deeply concerned about the quality of working-class life', and also establishing – as part of his involvement with educational centre the People's Palace in Mile End – its organ the *Palace Journal* 'to encourage working-class literary talent'.<sup>211</sup> (Whilst chiefly, it appears, an informational publication, the *Journal*, which ran from 1887 to 1895, included in its early issues, for example, a range of little competitions, which sometimes involved small amounts of writing.)<sup>212</sup>

---

<sup>207</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.230.

<sup>208</sup> See Besant, *Society of Authors*, back page. An example of the magazine's high-level content is its attention to, and treatment of, the American Copyright Act in the 15 January 1891 issue (see *The Author*, 15 January 1891, Volume 1, No. 9, pp.229–35) – the Act itself appears to be printed verbatim, and this is preceded by several pages of high-level discussion.

<sup>209</sup> See *The Author*: 15 May 1890, Volume 1, No. 1, p.24 and 15 January 1891, Volume 1, No. 9, p.223 (for example); 15 November 1890, Volume 1, No. 7, p.163; 16 June 1890, Volume 1, No. 2, pp.35–7; and 15 September 1890, Volume 1, No. 5, p.109.

<sup>210</sup> See *The Author*, 15 December 1890, Volume 1, No. 8, p.199; Besant, *Society of Authors*, back page; and *The Author*, 15 May 1890, Volume 1, No. 1, pp.1–2. The readership figures generally for *The Author* do not seem to have been large: Robert A. Colby writes that in 1895, Besant 'claimed a readership of just under 2000' – '1300 members' and around '600 outside subscribers'. (See Colby, 'Authorship and the Book Trade', p.149.)

<sup>211</sup> Keating, *The Haunted Study*, pp.28–9.

<sup>212</sup> See, for example, *The Palace Journal*, 18 April 1888, Volume 1, Issue 23, p.362. See also, in the inaugural issue, the explanation of what the competitions will involve, and the intention for 'original papers' in the journal to soon be penned chiefly by Palace Members (see *The Palace Journal*, 16 November 1887, Volume 1, Issue 1, pp.1–2). For mention of print run of the *Journal*, see Queen Mary University of London, 'The Palace Journal.' Undated. [library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/digitised-records/the-palace-journal](http://library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/digitised-records/the-palace-journal).

## Agents and Editors

The number of literary agents rose gradually throughout this period. Hilliard notes how the first, A. P. Watt, started up in the mid-1870s, with 19 individuals listed in the *Post Office Directory* over the next two decades, although no more than six at one time.<sup>213</sup> ‘By the turn of the century’, as Mary Ann Gillies notes, ‘the ranks of literary agents had grown considerably’.<sup>214</sup> The numbers continued to increase. The *Writers’ and Artists’ Year-Book* lists seven agents and agencies in 1906 (all in London), and 21 in 1913 (all in London bar two).<sup>215</sup>

Hilliard writes that agents did not ‘have much truck with beginners’, noting that their significance for aspirants was more in terms of the ‘message their appearance sent to the public’.<sup>216</sup> Whilst this is undoubtedly true, not all agents were anti-aspirant. An advert for the Wiener Literary Agency in the 1913 *Writers’ and Artists’ Year-Book* stated: ‘New authors and artists are invited to send us their work, and to get in personal touch with us’, adding: ‘the initial difficulties of the literary calling are great enough without the additional drawbacks incident to inexperience. Frank criticism and candid advice for those who desire it’.<sup>217</sup> Such invitations are not necessarily, of course, representative of a genuine desire to help aspirants – Gillies suggests that, due to the position of the three main players, Watt, Pinker, and Brown, newer agencies would have had to ‘seek out their clients in the ranks of authors who were not yet established’ – but it nonetheless suggests that there would have been a degree of interaction between some agencies and some aspirants.<sup>218</sup>

Gillies also emphasises how Pinker, who came from a working-class background and established his agency in 1896, was much more interested in newer writers than Watt had been.<sup>219</sup> Pinker, she says, ‘entered the publishing world intent on redefining the role of literary agents – making them the champions of young, unproven authors’.<sup>220</sup> He ‘position[ed] ... himself as the agent of emerging literary talent’, deliberately seeking out younger writers, and ‘always presented himself as the champion of new authors and new literature’ in print media pieces.<sup>221</sup> Whilst ‘emerging literary talent’ was not necessarily synonymous with aspirants – two

---

<sup>213</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.13–14.

<sup>214</sup> Mary Ann Gillies, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880–1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p.108.

<sup>215</sup> *The Writers’ and Artists’ Year-Book, 1906*, p.67, and the *Writers’ and Artists’ Year-Book, 1913*, p.75.

<sup>216</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.14–15.

<sup>217</sup> *Writers’ and Artists’ Year-Book, 1913*, Advertisements, p.vi.

<sup>218</sup> Gillies, *Professional Literary Agent in Britain*, pp.108–9.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.90–3.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p.171.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.91 and 93.

of Pinker's new clients were Joseph Conrad and D. H. Lawrence – his words would undoubtedly have drawn aspirants to him.<sup>222</sup> In a *Bookman* interview in 1898, notes Gillies, Pinker claimed that he did not just plan to assist those with an 'established reputation', but 'to take up the unknown man, the youngster struggling for reputation and bread and butter, and help him to build his reputation'.<sup>223</sup> He went on to state that there was 'some fun in singling out a youngster from the crowd of unknowns and pushing him to the top'.<sup>224</sup> His 'ambition' was 'to have a few clients, and add to the list each year some of the young writers who want help'.<sup>225</sup> Gillies notes, further, that 'the most frequently told stories about Pinker revolve around the money he advanced or loaned to struggling writers'.<sup>226</sup>

Joseph Keating offers evidence that at least some new writers were using agents. Macmillan records show that in March 1901 his manuscript *Gwen Lloyd* was sent to them by the Literary Agency of London in Covent Garden.<sup>227</sup> (He had just become a published novelist by this point, however – his first published novel, *Son of Judith*, had appeared some months previously.)<sup>228</sup> With his first novel manuscript, *Merva Brully*, his 'agent' had been 'the General Post Office'.<sup>229</sup> He had obtained publishers' addresses from the London Directory, sending *Merva* to 'every publisher' that was printed.<sup>230</sup>

As has already been glimpsed, editors could also prove useful sources of support to writers who were unpublished or unknown. Thomas Burke notes that when earning money as a young man through 'casual journalism' for several well-known publications, he 'was constantly surprised by the kindness of editors, and the trouble they took in showing me where and why my

---

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., see, for example, mention on pp.99–100.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p.90.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., p.91.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p.99. Also see p.100.

<sup>227</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13369. *Gwen Lloyd* was written by Keating for a competition in 1898 (see Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.189). The fact that it turns up at Macmillan in 1901 suggests that the publication of *Son of Judith* (his first published novel) in late 1900 prompted him to try again to get it accepted.

<sup>228</sup> See Joseph Keating, *Son of Judith: A Tale of the Welsh Mining Valleys* (London: George Allen, 1900). Keating mentions finishing *Son of Judith* in the spring of 1900. (See Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.193.) It was then rejected by seven publishers (see *ibid.*, pp.193–4). It appears to have been published in the autumn – a small notice announcing it by the publisher appears in several newspapers in October (see, for example, "Mr George Allen announces..." [Under 'Literary Notes'], *The Midlothian Journal, Musselburgh, Portobello, Loanhead, Penicuik, Lassvade, Bonnyrigg and Gorebridge Weekly News*, 12 October 1900, p.2, and the *Westminster Gazette* has it amongst their 'books received' in November (see "Keating, Joseph..." [Under 'Books Received on Saturday'], *The Westminster Gazette*, 26 November 1900, p.12).

<sup>229</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.181.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid. Interestingly, it does not seem to have been sent to Macmillan – there appears to be no record of *Merva Brully* having been received by Macmillan between 1895 and 1899.

work was wrong, and how it might be made right, and in generally encouraging me', despite him being 'quite unknown' and having had 'no introductions to editors'.<sup>231</sup>

## Clubs and Schools

One organisation deliberately geared towards the neophyte was the Quill Club. In a period when there were several high-end clubs connected with literature (the 18 clubs for authors and artists listed in the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book* for 1913 include, for example, the Athenaeum, the Ladies' Athenaeum, the Garrick, and the Lyceum), the Quill Club, as Philip Waller notes, 'sought to encourage literary beginners'.<sup>232</sup> A 'co-operative organisation', started in 1898, and led by novelist Max Pemberton, the Club appears to have aimed to be an amalgam of different services – part advisor, part social club, part library, and part Society of Authors.<sup>233</sup> An advert from 1909 states that 'LITERARY ASPIRANTS' and 'those interested in the study and practice of Literature are invited to join' for an annual fee of ten shillings.<sup>234</sup> 'The Club', it notes:

supplies wants of the unfledged author and literary student not met by any other society. It furnishes aspirants with criticism of their articles, short stories, etc., and disinterested advice in all dealings with publishers, editors and agents. It protects members against fraud by means of its private record of agents, literary tutors, publishers etc., who should be avoided. The Club provides a postal lending library of selected volumes containing instruction in literary and journalistic matters. Monthly meetings for social intercourse, literary discussions, and mutual aid and criticism are held at The Bedford Hotel, London, and at other centres having a sufficient number of local members. The printed Circular of the Club is issued every month, and contains current Q.C. news, special warnings to members, collaboration wants, etc.  
...<sup>235</sup>

A prospectus could be obtained by writing to the Chairman.<sup>236</sup> The usefulness to aspirants of other institutions, such as Florence Marryat's School of Literary Art, are unclear. Waller is dismissive of Marryat's venture, saying it 'contained little by way of instruction' and citing an anecdote that she sent her first student away because he had not been in love, claiming

---

<sup>231</sup> Burke, *Son of London*, pp.177–8.

<sup>232</sup> *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book*, 1913, p.131, and Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.402.

<sup>233</sup> See, for example, adverts in the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book*, 1908 (see Advertisements, p.vii), the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book*, 1909 (see Advertisements, p.iii), and the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book*, 1913 (see page following Advertisements, p.iii – the page in question is not numbered).

<sup>234</sup> *The Writers' and Artists' Year-Book*, 1909, Advertisements, p.iii.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid. NB: The 1908 *Year-Book* advert only mentions meetings at the Bedford Hotel, London, so it is possible these meetings had expanded between 1908 and 1909. The lending library is also not mentioned in the 1908 advert (which is smaller than that for 1909). Waller's book includes a Quill Club advert from *T.P.'s Weekly* – see Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.403. For a mention of the Quill Club in later decades, see Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.60.

it was impossible to write fiction until one had.<sup>237</sup> ‘None of these schools of journalism [such as David Anderson’s London School of Journalism, established in 1887] or of fiction’, he notes, ‘was a means of popular access to the profession of letters’.<sup>238</sup> Whilst this may be true of Anderson’s School – which, Waller writes, occupied ‘two upstairs rooms off Fleet Street’ and offered classes ‘consist[ing] largely of talk’ for an exorbitant fee, proving that ‘the awakening of raw talent from humble circumstances’ was not his aim – there is perhaps too little evidence to claim that Marryat’s School, or any other institutions, such as the Literary Correspondence College, the London Correspondence College, or the School of Journalism, Art, and Secretarial Training for Women, provided no benefit to aspirant writers who came into contact with them.<sup>239</sup>

Through examining different avenues of advice this chapter has aimed to show how print media, especially, offered some beginning writers an important channel through which to gain information, support, and feedback. Newspapers and magazines were a space in which authorship was discussed, debated, advertised, and encouraged. As well as offering articles and other pieces, they were a vehicle through which literary advice was actively sought. At least some correspondence sections in this period were used by aspirants to ask for and receive advice, encouragement, and useful criticism of their work.

As with figures such as publishers’ readers and agents, and literature such as guidebooks, we can see how correspondence columns, newspaper competitions, and the editors that ran them – some of whom evidently took a clear interest in the development of literary talent – were intermediaries that also offered a bridge between publishers and authors, and would also have helped give the impression that fiction and non-fiction writing could be learned.<sup>240</sup> As has been illustrated, correspondence columns also clearly had, for some aspirants, an importance in the pre-writing stage, providing a space where they could ask general questions about the writing life, even before they had put pen to paper. Columns could perhaps accommodate these queries in a way that output-focused channels of advice, such as literary agents and publishers’ readers, could not.

---

<sup>237</sup> Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.401.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> See Ibid., pp.399 and 402–3; Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.23; and, for example, an advert in the *Writers’ and Artists’ Year-Book, 1908* (Advertisements, p.v). The advert states that the School of Journalism, Art, and Secretarial Training for Women was run by the editress of *Home Life* and offered ‘story and article writing’, lessons by correspondence, and manuscript criticism, amongst other services.

<sup>240</sup> See Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.12 and 15.

As has already been noted with respect to children's columns, correspondence sections also helped to turn readers into writers. Speaking of Andrew Lang's and Annie Swan's columns (in *Longman's Magazine* and *Woman at Home*, respectively), Margaret Beetham notes how such pages were 'a space in which readers [were] invited to become writers'.<sup>241</sup> The growth of many columns in this period is also, in part, a sign that readers were being drawn into writing, both as correspondents and as aspiring fiction writers.

Of children's columns in provincial newspapers, Siân Pooley notes that 'low expectations of children's responses were typical' early on.<sup>242</sup> 'It was only', she says, 'when editors received bulging postbags that they realised the scale of demand and the diversity of topics about which young correspondents were keen to write. As newspapers grew in size in the decades before the First World War and as the successful model was copied across publications, columns expanded to meet writers' enthusiasms'.<sup>243</sup> On a small scale, this can be seen in the *Young Woman*, for example, where the correspondence column grew markedly during the few issues consulted for this study, perhaps due to some of its 60,000-plus readers being inspired to write in by the replies given to earlier correspondents.<sup>244</sup>

The general coverage of authorship in newspapers and magazines likely also helped swell the number of aspirants. Aside from articles already mentioned in this chapter, pieces such as 'How I Began to Write' in the *Young Woman*, detailing one aspirant's journey to authorship; a *Daily Mail* piece claiming that publishers were 'cry[ing] aloud for good MSS'; and a long piece on literary ambition in the *Shields Daily News*, clearly could have prompted readers to give writing a try.<sup>245</sup> Even the pessimistic pieces about authorship could have planted the idea of writing in readers' minds. A small piece of text which appeared in at least six publications and mentioned how publishers Macmillan had read and rejected 293 manuscripts the previous year (with only 15% of their published output coming from 'new or unestablished authors') is one example.<sup>246</sup>

---

<sup>241</sup> Beetham, 'The Agony Aunt, the Romancing Uncle and the Family of Empire', pp.254–5.

<sup>242</sup> Pooley, 'Children's Writing and the Popular Press', p.79.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Compare, for example, replies in *The Young Woman*, December 1892, Volume 1 (1892–1893), p.106, with replies in issues from 1894, for example, *The Young Woman*, May 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), pp.285–8. The *Young Man* mentioned in 1893 that the *Young Woman's* circulation had reached almost 60,000 – see the *Young Man*, January 1893, Volume 7 (1893), p.14.

<sup>245</sup> "How I Began to Write: The Story of a Struggle. With Letters from A. K. H. B. and Dr George Macdonald." *The Young Woman*, January 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), pp.120–2; "Publishers Cry Aloud for Good MSS." [Under 'Gossip about Books'], *Daily Mail*, 8 September 1899, p.3; and "Literary Ambitions." *The Shields Daily News*, 22 September 1892, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

<sup>246</sup> See "Of the facts about the publishing business..." [Under 'Occasional Notes'], *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 March 1892, p.2; "Authors and Publishers." *The Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald*, 26 March 1892, 2<sup>nd</sup> page; "Authors and Publishers." *The Congleton & Macclesfield Mercury and Cheshire General Advertiser*, 26 March 1892, 6<sup>th</sup> page; "Authors and Publishers." *The Canterbury Journal and Farmers' Gazette*, 26 March 1892, 2<sup>nd</sup> page; "Authors and Publishers." *East*

Newspaper reading itself could also lead to writing. David Vincent has noted how ‘increasing access to provincial newspapers’ acted as an ‘incentive ... to composition’, and we have already seen how the writings of two aspirants drew – or appear to have drawn – on newspaper reports.<sup>247</sup>

This chapter and the previous chapter have both indirectly touched on what aspirants were writing. Chapter 5 will now look at this in more detail, examining what aspirants were submitting to literary competitions, correspondence columns, and publishers, and what more that can tell us about who they were and why they were writing.

---

*London Advertiser*, *Tower Hamlets Independent*, *Essex & Middlesex Guardian*, 26 March 1892, p.5; and “Authors and Publishers.” *The Hants & Berks Gazette and Middlesex and Surrey Journal*, 26 March 1892, p.6.

<sup>247</sup> David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.216, and see Edward Brown, ‘Untitled’, Burnett Archive of Working-Class Autobiographies, Brunel University, p.73, and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17842.

## CHAPTER 5 – THE WRITINGS OF ASPIRANTS

The evidence of what most aspiring writers wrote is understandably limited. If evidence of aspirants themselves is scarce, evidence of the writing they produced is even more so. Publishers such as Macmillan returned rejected work to writers, and many other fictional contributions, even many that were published, were undoubtedly destroyed or lost. Whilst rejected novels and much other writing has not survived, however, several sources offer glimpses into the work aspirants produced.

Aside from a handful of works by those who did publish, literary competitions in newspapers are one type of writing that survives. Details about other writings exist in autobiographies, correspondence column replies in print media, and publishers' archives (in publishers' comments, readers' reports, and the recorded titles of submitted works). What aspirants were trying to write is important for several reasons. The genre and content of work can, for example, offer indications as to writers' reading, motivations, and ambitions.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first will examine evidence about what aspirants wrote. The available evidence for the writers already discussed indicates that aspirants in this period were trying their hand at all types of literature, from fiction and poetry, to essays, articles, and autobiography. The second part will consider what more this information reveals about these aspirants, including about their reading and their use of place in their writing. Continuing the theme of place, Part III will look further at how writing may have fitted into aspirants' lives, in terms of work and ambition, but also physically in terms of spaces to write.

### PART I

#### Macmillan/Chatto Writers

At least seven of the Macmillan/Chatto writers saw their submissions to these companies published at some point later.<sup>1</sup> In most of the remaining cases, the title of the writer's submission

---

<sup>1</sup> These are: Doris Wheler, Sarah Wilcher, Sarah Cooper, Annie Gertrude Letch, Ellen Cloke, Stephen Springall, and John Wrigglesworth. For submission details, see: Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13783 (Doris Wheler); Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20179 (Sarah Wilcher); Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20143 (Sarah Cooper); Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 19927 (Annie Gertrude Letch); Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26042 (Ellen Cloke); Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17842 (Stephen Springall); and Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7294 (John Wrigglesworth). Their published submissions were as follows: Doris L. Wheler, *The Treasure of the Castle: A Story for Children* (London: Grant Richards, 1902); Sarah A. Wilcher, *A Chance in Life. A Novel* (London, A. H. Stockwell, 1921); S. A. Cooper, *Links in Life* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1933); Gertrude Letch, *Joan Harcourt: The Story of a Plain Woman* (London: Henry J. Drane, 1910); Paul De Musset, *Mister Wind and Mistress Rain*, translated by Ellen E. Cloke (London, George G. Harrap & Co., 1923); and Stephen Springall, *That Indomitable Old Lady. A Romance of Fitzroy Square* (London: Henry J. Drane, 1908). John Wrigglesworth's 1891 submission was serialised in a local newspaper in 1894. See, for example, "A Yorkshire

is known. In around 60% of cases, there is also a small descriptive comment (with Chatto) or a separate readers' report (Macmillan). It is therefore possible to deduce, in many cases, whether a writer had submitted prose or poetry, as well as the rough subject they had written about.

As touched on in Chapter 3, a small proportion of the writers, several of them teachers, either submitted, or appear to have submitted, stories relating to education or children, or intended for children.<sup>2</sup> As already noted, a writer assumed to be teacher (or former teacher) Ebe White submitted a novel titled 'Minnie's Views', 'chiefly for older schoolgirls', but containing 'touches on present-day secondary education'.<sup>3</sup> Teacher Edith Giles' story 'Dorothy: A Tale of Some Old-Fashioned Girl', dealt with 'nursery and school-room life about fifty years ago'; kindergarten principal Louisa Simmons wrote a 'children's story'; whilst teachers Emily Roff and Marian Diamond also appear to have written for youngsters, with stories entitled 'The Boy Who Ran Away' and 'Dolly and the Teddy Bear', respectively.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, typist Rhoda Meyer's submission was recorded as 'Fairy Stories'; typist and author Gladys Davidson sent in nursery tales as well as pieces titled 'The Butterflies' Ball' and 'The Bad Puppy Book' (detailing 'the adventures of three puppies' and intended to be illustrated); teenager Doris Wheler sent in an impressive 'story for children' called 'The Treasure of the Castle' (about four young siblings who travel to their historic ancestral home in the country); and merchant Edward Jacobson submitted a 'Story of Three Pussy Cats'.<sup>5</sup> Lady's maid (or former lady's maid) Ellen Cloke, meanwhile, translated a children's story by French writer Paul de Musset.<sup>6</sup>

---

Story..." [advert], *The Halifax Guardian*, 10 March 1894, p.5; "The Sweetest Maid in Glowton." *The Halifax Guardian*, 17 March 1894, p.3; and "The Sweetest Maid in Glowton." *The Halifax Guardian*, 21 April 1894, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> These writers are: Marian Diamond (teacher), Emily Roff (teacher), Gladys Davidson, Louisa Simmons (kindergarten principal), Edith Giles (teacher), Rhoda Meyer, Edward Jacobson, Doris Wheler, and Ebe White.

<sup>3</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20475; 1901 Census, household record for 70 West Street, Brighton; 1891 Census, household record for 69 West Street, Brighton; and 1881 Census, household record for 70 West Street, Brighton.

<sup>4</sup> For Edith Giles, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13416; Macmillan RR Volume 55963, p.50; and 1901 Census, household record for Stafford Villa, Paignton; 1891 Census, household record for 235 Hyde Park Road, Leeds; 1881 Census, household record for 86 Victoria Road, Leeds (Headingley with Burley); 1939 Register, record for Edith J. F. Giles, Malvern, Worcestershire, b. 1856; and 1911 Census, household record for 6 Westgate Road, Beckenham, Kent. For Louisa Simmons, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7601; Macmillan RR Volume 55946, pp.5–6; and 1891 Census, household record for Louisa Simmons, Wellington Road, Enfield, Edmonton, Middlesex (Rosebank). For Emily Roff, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22605; 1911 Census, household record for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester; 1901 Census, household records for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester (Roff is absent) and 8 Toronto Road, Tilbury, Chadwell St Mary, Essex (the Emily Roff present here is likely our Emily Roff, despite the incorrect age – birthplace and occupation fit); and 1939 Register, record for Emily Roff, Colchester, b. 1872. For Marian Diamond, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20878; and 1911 Census, household record for 50 Crofton Road, Plaistow, London; 1901 Census, household record for 63 Ravenscroft Road, West Ham, London; and 1939 Register, record for Marion E. Diamond, Wales, b. 1877.

<sup>5</sup> For Rhoda Meyer, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13883, and 1901 Census, household record for 31 Fountain Street, Hull. For Gladys Davidson, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24405, 24406, and 24731; Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20854; and 1911 Census, household record for 78 Glen Road, Sheffield. For Doris Wheler, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13783; Macmillan RR Volume 55964, p.47;

Six writers submitted a manuscript described as melodramatic or sensational by the publishers. Reginald Taylor's 'Lot Fifty' was, according to Macmillan, 'a domestic melodrama of the old Adelphi pattern, showing virtuous poverty kept out of its rightful inheritance by dishonest wealth, but in the end of course triumphant', with an 'interlude dealing with the ill-starred [love] of a popular actor and an Earl's daughter, which results in the death of the girl's brother by the hand of her lover'.<sup>7</sup> William Bryant's 'An Evil Life' was described as a 'crude little story of 'villainy, murder, forgery, suicide, [and] other pleasantries', which 'might almost pass for a caricature of sensation stories', whilst the plot of Joseph Orme's 'The Kirklands of Kirkland' appeared 'to be sensational, about a hero convicted of killing his rival', with the former 'naturally proved innocent in the end'.<sup>8</sup> Cecil Coote's 'The Honeymoon', meanwhile, was judged 'melodramatic' and 'improbable'; Hamilton Seymour's 'The Outrage' was 'unconvincing and melodramatic', whilst 'The Valley of Death' – assumed to be by John Leonard Nutty – was described as 'twelve chapters of a commonplace sensation novel'.<sup>9</sup> (Nor were such descriptions unusual in this period – one Macmillan reader report volume, for example, describes three different submissions from late 1887 and early 1888 as 'highly melodramatic', a 'melodramatic novel of a very crude sort', and a 'melodramatic ... second-rate sensation novel'.)<sup>10</sup>

A further two submitters had written historical stories – Charles Montague Clark a 'tale of the [seventeenth] century, beginning at the time of the Dutch war of Charles II', and Emily Kornitzer a 'story of the [fifteenth] century'.<sup>11</sup> Four more submissions either dealt with, or appear to have dealt with, love and relationships. Thomas Clarke's 'Wife and No Wife' was 'about two young people who marry in London, and who part hastily' after 'the husband, a naval

---

1901 Census, household record for 114 Lansdowne Place, Hove; 1911 Census, household record for 114 Lansdowne Place, Hove; 1939 Register, record for Doris L. Wheler, London, b. 1886; and Doris L. Wheler, *The Treasure of the Castle: A Story for Children* (London: Grant Richards, 1902). For Edward Jacobson, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 21284, and 1911 Census, household record for 41 The Avenue, West Ealing, London.

<sup>6</sup> See De Musset, *Mister Wind and Mistress Rain*, translated by Ellen E. Cloke; Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26042; and 1911 Census, household record for Colne Place, Earls Colne, Essex. Cloke was, at least, likely still working as a lady's maid at the point of submission – she is listed in the 1911 Census as a servant (lady's maid) and the address at which she was working then is the same address, it seems, given to Chatto in 1914 when she submitted.

<sup>7</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7813, and Macmillan RR Volume 55946, p.140.

<sup>8</sup> For William Bryant, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56016, entry 3335, and Macmillan RR Volume 55935, entry for 'An Evil Life (William Bryant) 3335'. For Joseph Orme, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26095.

<sup>9</sup> For Cecil Coote, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25945. For Hamilton Seymour, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24268. For John Leonard Nutty, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26103, and see also 1911 Census, household record for 64 Hunger Hill Road, Nottingham, and 1939 Register, record for John L. Nutty, b. 1892.

<sup>10</sup> See Macmillan RR Volume 55941, entries 5619 (pp.17–18), 5696 (p.42), and 5711 (pp.44–5).

<sup>11</sup> For Charles Montague Clark, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26011, and 1911 Census, household record for 27 Holford Square, London. For Emily Kornitzer, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24370 (Kornitzer submitted under Elliott, her maiden name), and 1911 Census, household record for 19 Kenilworth Gardens, Seven Kings, Essex.

man, is ordered to Hong Kong'.<sup>12</sup> Richard Goddard's 'Marian Francis' was 'the story of an engagement' (potentially his own – his wife's name was Frances Marian), whilst John Rumfitt's 'The Bookworm' was a tale about a 'studious' man, 'who is infatuated with a girl of the lower class, and marries her'.<sup>13</sup> John Donnelly and Sidney Crown submitted contributions called, respectively, 'The Perfect Lover' and 'The Lust of Man' (a title Chatto rated 'unattractive').<sup>14</sup>

Several submissions bore fairly conventional-sounding titles. These include 'The Golden Quest' (a writer assumed to be William Pimblett), 'Daughter of the Devil' (Jessie Krikorian), 'The Blacksmith of Barford', described by Chatto as 'a highfalutin story of past days' (Herbert Rowland Walker), and 'The Sweetest Maid in Glowton' (John Wrigglesworth).<sup>15</sup>

A few other submissions were deemed outdated, old-fashioned, and unoriginal or overdone in theme or subject. 'Transition', by Cyril Silverston, was described as having a 'rather worn' subject, with Chatto noting they had had 'a number of 'Bohemian' novels in the last [twenty] years'.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, Ralph Roberts' short story (title not recorded) exhibited a 'worn out conventional theme'.<sup>17</sup> Chatto noted of Hamilton Seymour's effort 'To the Manor Born', meanwhile, that they 'could not want such a story unless we were suddenly transported back into the days of [thirty] years ago'.<sup>18</sup> Linda Gardiner's story, 'Monty Churchill's Daughter', was dismissed as 'a lady's novel ... of the usual sort: love-making, misunderstanding, reparations etc', whilst Maysel Jenkinson's 'little stories' were praised but deemed not 'strong enough to make a place for themselves in a market ... already so overcrowded'.<sup>19</sup> Richard Goddard's 'The Worldly Hope', meanwhile, was 'an old-fashioned story, in which the author seems to mix up Dickens and Tom Robertson'.<sup>20</sup> A small, negative review of Annie Gertrude Letch's *Joan Harcourt: The*

---

<sup>12</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24150, and 1911 Census, household record for 14 Ruskin Walk, Herne Hill, London.

<sup>13</sup> For Richard Goddard, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24407. For John Rumfitt, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24884, and 1911 Census, household record for 2 Grosvenor Terrace, Bootham, York.

<sup>14</sup> For John Donnelly, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24305. For Sidney Crown, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17918.

<sup>15</sup> For William Pimblett, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22645, and 1911 Census, household record for 563 Chorley Old Road, Bolton. For Jessie Krikorian, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/3, entry 11186. For Herbert Rowland Walker, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25917, and 1911 Census, household record for Ryburne, Rosslyn Avenue, East Barnet. For John Wrigglesworth, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7294.

<sup>16</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23857.

<sup>17</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/3, entry 10943, and 1891 Census, household record for 142 Elgin Avenue, Paddington, London.

<sup>18</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24260.

<sup>19</sup> For Linda Gardiner, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7597, and Macmillan RR Volume 55945, p.144. For Maysel Jenkinson, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25541.

<sup>20</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24720 (under R. Hazlewood, his wife's maiden name), and 1911 Census, household record for 7 Ranelagh Gardens, Fulham, London.

*Story of a Plain Woman* (1910) – apparently the published version of her 1904 Chatto submission – describes it as having a ‘hackneyed’ plot.<sup>21</sup>

Other submissions, such as ‘Lu Elliot’ by Millicent Burbridge, ‘The Tragedy of Eileen’ by Ethel Hanna, ‘Audrey’s Story’ by John Wilson, and ‘Nancy Maguire’, assumed to be by Frederick Stevens, were presumably character studies.<sup>22</sup> Burbridge appeared to Chatto to be ‘highly pleased with her heroine’; Chatto disagreed, guessing ‘that most readers would be offended by the preposterousness of the girl’s actions, and the absurdity of her mental attitude’.<sup>23</sup>

Further comments left by the publishers offer details about several other submissions. Joseph Baxter’s story was about ‘a young girl who serves in a café in a provincial town and who despises the lowly condition of her life’.<sup>24</sup> (This story seems to have been offered rather than submitted, so this, presumably, was Baxter’s own synopsis of his work.)<sup>25</sup> Alfred Harbert’s ‘Into the Arms of Johanna’ ‘turn[ed] on a murder mystery in a tunnel on the Brighton railway’; ‘Shadows’, thought to be by Alfred Gregory, was ‘a tale of modern domestic life’, with characters including ‘a young clergyman in love with a young lady’; while ‘Tommy’s Folly’ by Charles Ely was ‘apparently the story of a Syndicate, most of the members of which are rogues and the others fools’ with Tommy ‘the principal dupe’.<sup>26</sup>

‘Waiting’, by Miss Hogg, was a ‘well-intentioned’ but ‘childish story’ that read ‘like the attempt of an elderly schoolgirl to imitate the superficial shortcomings of Jane Austen’.<sup>27</sup> ‘The Master Confidence’, assumed to be by Katherine Widdup, described ‘the characters, rather than the lives, of three village children and an aristocratic villain’ and had a ‘lovely heroine’ who was a nurse.<sup>28</sup> Sarah Wilcher’s ‘A Chance in Life’, according to a review at the time of its eventual

---

<sup>21</sup> See ‘Joan Harcourt, by Gertrude Letch.’ [Under ‘Books and their Publishers’], *The Courier* [Dundee], 30 March 1910, p.7. As already noted, her Chatto submission was called ‘Consequences: The Story of a Plain [?]’ [word unclear]. See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 19927.

<sup>22</sup> For Millicent Burbridge, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23852, and 1911 Census, household record for 51 Coventry Road, Ilford. For Ethel Hanna, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24488. For John Wilson, see Macmillan RoM 56016, entry 3435. For Frederick Stevens, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25206, and 1911 Census, household record for 8 Belgrave Terrace, Wakefield.

<sup>23</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23852.

<sup>24</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20112.

<sup>25</sup> See *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> For Alfred Harbert, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20858. For Alfred Gregory, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20840, and 1911 Census, household record for 20 Guildford Place, Heaton, Newcastle on Tyne. For Charles Ely, see Macmillan RoM 56019, entry 13334, and Macmillan RR Volume 55962, pp.275–6.

<sup>27</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24344. (The ‘Miss Hogg’ here is likely to have been one of the three eldest Hogg daughters – Ann (aged 33), teacher Susan (aged 30), or Eliza (aged 27). See 1911 Census, household record for 58 Streathbourne Road, Upper Tooting.)

<sup>28</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13349; Macmillan RR Volume 55962, pp.276–7; 1901 Census, household record for 12 Merlin Road, Blackburn; and 1911 Census, household record for Katherine Widdup, Merlin Road, Blackburn.

publication in 1921 (11 years after Wilcher submitted it to Macmillan), ‘circles round a girl of poor parentage who is educated by a rich aunt, makes good as a teacher, and finally wins the man she loves’.<sup>29</sup> Stephen Springall’s 1901 submission, published in 1908 as *That Indomitable Old Lady. A Romance of Fitzroy Square*, was described in a newspaper review as ‘a romance’ and ‘a simple narrative of a good life’.<sup>30</sup> The lady ‘around whose life the incidents of the story are woven’ was a real-life woman ‘of great literary attainment’, and ‘her husband ... a great figure in the art world of his day’.<sup>31</sup>

Of the remaining writers, William Clay wrote a story about ‘wicked trades-union organisers’, Sidney Durston a love story and a tale about dukes and duchesses.<sup>32</sup> Titles of other submissions include ‘In the Morning’ (Evelyn Spearing), ‘Time Will Show’ (Miss Kingman), ‘The Trail of Trespass’ (a writer assumed to be Ernest Estcourt Hayward), and ‘Songs of Sorrow’ (Regina Bloch).<sup>33</sup>

As touched on in Chapter 3, some of the submissions were also of significant length although not, perhaps, an unusual length for fiction of the period. The unidentified Miss Hogg had written between 50,000 and 60,000 words; merchant John Donnelly 65,000 words; and journalist Charles Montague Clark 96,000 words.<sup>34</sup> Journalist and apparent author, Hamilton Seymour, submitted one story of 70,000 words and another of 110 pages within days of each other, whilst a writer assumed to be druggist’s warehouse worker Daniel O’Brien offered – rather than submitted – a novel of 170,000 words, and short stories ‘totalling in all about 100,000 words’.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20179, and “Other Fiction.” *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 15 December 1921, p.3.

<sup>30</sup> See Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17842, and “Reviews.” *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser, Uxbridge, Harrow, and Watford Journal*, 19 December 1908, p.6.

<sup>31</sup> “Reviews.” *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser*, 19 December 1908, p.6.

<sup>32</sup> For William Clay, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26045. For Sidney Durston, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24112, and Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25980.

<sup>33</sup> For Evelyn Spearing, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20858; 1911 Census, household records for 6 Parkside, Cambridge (Spearing absent) and 9 Bateman Street, Cambridge; 1901 Census, household record for 4 Park Terrace, Cambridge (on transcript as Emmanuel House, 4 Parker Street, Park Terrace); and 1891 Census, household record for 12 Warkworth Street, Cambridge. For Miss Kingman, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7492. (It is unclear if the writer was Mary or Ellen Kingman. See 1891 Census, household record for 2a Lansdown Road, Bath.) For Ernest Hayward, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26031, and 1911 Census, household record for 32 Oakington Road, Paddington, London. For Regina Bloch, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25824.

<sup>34</sup> For Miss Hogg, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24344, and 1911 Census, household record for 58 Streathbourne Road, Upper Tooting. (As already noted, it is unclear which female family member is the Miss Hogg in question.) For John Donnelly, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24305. For Charles Montague Clark, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26011, and 1911 Census, household record for 27 Holford Square, London.

<sup>35</sup> For Hamilton Seymour, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24260 and 24268. For Daniel O’Brien, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 19884; 1901 Census, household record for 14 Great Maze Court,

Nine of the Macmillan/Chatto writers submitted verse.<sup>36</sup> Of the submissions for which there are additional details, Ernest Ife submitted a poem about the Boer War, Georgina Lovesey work titled ‘The Cottage in the Glen and Other Poems’, artist Samuel Oakley verse titled ‘The Artist and Other Poems’, and Wallace Nichols, as we have seen, ‘a volume of verse of juvenile melodramatic despair’.<sup>37</sup>

Some of the Macmillan/Chatto writers who published crossed between different genres at different times. John Wrigglesworth submitted a novel to Macmillan in 1891, but at other points published poetry (on general topics and ‘private interests, such as the marriages and deaths of friends’) and a book of essays ‘on such subjects as the Rights and Wrongs of Women’, which he sent to William Gladstone, and which elicited a letter of praise back.<sup>38</sup> Stephen Springall, in addition to his *That Indomitable Old Lady. A Romance of Fitzroy Square* (1908), authored two non-fiction titles related to walking, *Country Rambles round Uxbridge: A Descriptive Guide to the Neighbourhood* (1907) and *Mr Springall’s New Series of Right-o’-Way Leaflets* (1910), a short booklet describing three walks around the Uxbridge area.<sup>39</sup> Nor were these, it seems, as insignificant as they first appear; a copy of the former was accepted by King Edward VII.<sup>40</sup>

---

Southwark; and 1911 Census, household record for 14 Great Maze Court, Southwark. The length of O’Brien’s novel – if it *was* genuinely 170,000 words long – is perhaps interesting, given that he offered it to Chatto as late as 1904. According to a 1957 analysis of 105 three-volume novels, 158,000 to 200,000 words was the usual length range of such texts, meaning O’Brien’s manuscript would have been firmly in three-volume novel length territory. See Troy J. Bassett, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Three-Volume Novel* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), p.4.

<sup>36</sup> The nine Macmillan/Chatto poets are: Georgina Lovesey (Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7173); Charles Pritchard (Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13708); Claude Greening (Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13558); George Walkington (Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13822, and see also 1901 Census, household record for 25 Taylor Street, Birkenhead); Ernest Ife (Macmillan RoM 56019, entry 12629); Samuel Oakley (Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20499); George Wilson (Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13444, and see also 1901 Census, record for George F. Wilson, 11B Featherstone Buildings, Holborn); Alfred Macey (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24162); and Wallace Nichols (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20481).

<sup>37</sup> For Ernest Ife, see Macmillan RoM 56019, entry 12629. For Georgina Lovesey, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7173. For Samuel Oakley, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20499, and 1911 Census, household record for 29 Burlington Road, Paddington, London. For Wallace Nichols, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20481.

<sup>38</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7294; Macmillan RR Volume 55944, p.181; “Minor Poetry.” *The Dundee Advertiser*, 19 August 1897, p.2; John Wrigglesworth, *Grass from a Yorkshire Village* (London: Roxburghe Press, 1897); Hubert Cloudesley [pseud. John Wrigglesworth], *Passing Thoughts of a Working Man* (London: Elliot Stock, 1890); “To-Day’s New Books.” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 2 June 1890, p.3; and “Letter from Mr Gladstone.” *The Manchester Weekly Times and Salford Weekly News*, 5 September 1890, p.4.

<sup>39</sup> See Stephen Springall, *Country Rambles round Uxbridge: A Descriptive Guide to the Neighbourhood* (Uxbridge: Lucy & Birch, 1907), and Stephen Springall, *Mr Springall’s New Series of Right-o’-Way Leaflets* (Uxbridge: publisher unknown, 1910).

<sup>40</sup> “Mr Stephen Springall, of the Greenway, Uxbridge...” *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser, Uxbridge, Harrow, and Watford Journal*, 18 July 1908, p.7.

## Joseph Keating

On paper a successful writer, ex-miner Joseph Keating (b. 1871) published numerous books and stories during this period, as noted earlier.<sup>41</sup> In reality, however, his successes failed to translate into financial rewards; often miserable and destitute, he was still very much an aspirant in terms of his outlook, his perpetual struggle to survive by writing, and the gulf between where he was and where he wished to be (seemingly sometimes just solvent).<sup>42</sup> Keating notes in his autobiography that he had produced all types of writing – ‘short stories, articles, essays, novels, newspaper serials, and plays’, everything bar poetry, which he considered ‘sacred, and beyond me’.<sup>43</sup> Of his books, he noted that all had been created from what he ‘had seen, thought, and felt’.<sup>44</sup>

A good proportion of Keating’s fiction in this period, including three of his novels, and over 100 of his stories, drew on his Welsh mining background. *Son of Judith* (1900), subtitled *A Tale of the Welsh Mining Valleys*, is set in a mining community, and it is safe to assume that many of its descriptions and details of mining life are at least partly based on the author’s first-hand knowledge and experience. In his autobiography, Keating states that one chapter in the novel was based on his frightening experience as a youngster of falling asleep deep in a mine and waking to find himself alone in the dark after everyone else had gone home.<sup>45</sup> The opening of the book, where a young boy is gravely ill, is also perhaps based on his own near death from scarlet fever as a child.<sup>46</sup>

Keating describes his book *Maurice* (1905) as being ‘all about deep mines and high mountains – a vision of my boyhood’, noting that he ‘could not help feeling the romance of our hills and the mystery of the pits’.<sup>47</sup> (*Maurice* was also the name of one of his siblings.)<sup>48</sup> A chapter of the novel was also created out of another childhood experience, of encountering a

---

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, *Son of Judith: A Tale of the Welsh Mining Valleys* (London: George Allen, 1900), *Maurice: A Romance of Light and Darkness* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1905), *The Queen of Swords: The Story of a Woman and an Extraordinary Duel* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1906), and *The Great Appeal* (London: Everett & Co., 1909). (Story collection *Adventures in the Dark*, apparently first published in 1906, is mentioned in Keating’s autobiography, but does not appear to be available.)

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, his circumstances around 1911. See Joseph Keating, *My Struggle for Life* (London: Simpkin, Marshall Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd., 1916), pp.271 and 273.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.278.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.228.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.63–5.

<sup>46</sup> See Joseph Keating, *Son of Judith: A Tale of the Welsh Mining Valleys* (London: George Allen, 1900), chapters 1 and 2, and Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, pp.31–2.

<sup>47</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.227.

<sup>48</sup> See *ibid.*, for example, pp.7 and 31.

travelling circus and its animals whilst on a ‘tramp up the valley’.<sup>49</sup> The unpublished *Gwen Lloyd*, was also, he notes, a ‘novel of the mines’, which contained ‘pictures of mining life’.<sup>50</sup> (Macmillan’s uncomplimentary readers’ report from 1901 describes it as ‘a series of scenes in the lives of ... Welsh colliers’, and refers to a ‘colliery accident and strike’).<sup>51</sup> Keating also penned at least a hundred short stories about mining, which had appeared in the *Daily Mail* and other publications in Britain and America.<sup>52</sup> A collection of them, entitled *Adventures in the Dark*, appeared in 1906.<sup>53</sup>

His first novel attempt, *Merva Brully*, was inspired by a servant girl he saw on a daily basis scrubbing steps for her disreputable mistress.<sup>54</sup> Keating had correctly predicted that the girl would soon turn to vice herself.<sup>55</sup> The story he wrote envisioned a different ending for her, one in which she was spared ‘the evil which, in actual life, had overtaken her’, leading her to stand in the streets ‘under the electric lamps ... doing her best to ruin herself, body and soul’.<sup>56</sup> His novel *The Great Appeal* (1909), meanwhile, came out of his beliefs about the injustices suffered by the working man as a result of immoral employers and landowners, or ‘slave-drivers’ and ‘earth-stealers’.<sup>57</sup> But it was the fiction written from life which Keating apparently felt was most successful. He put the defects of his ‘first two attempts at fashioning a publishable novel’, writes Paul O’Leary, down ‘to his use of material from outside his personal experience’.<sup>58</sup>

## Literary Competitions

Literary competitions in this period were far from unusual, as already noted. Taking one newspaper as a case study, the *Hampshire Telegraph*’s contest began in 1883 and appears to have continued in various guises until at least the late 1890s.<sup>59</sup> The competition was weekly and

---

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.189. There is no indication *Gwen Lloyd* was published. Jonathan Evans, in his PhD thesis ‘Bibliography of Joseph Keating’ also refers to Gwen Lloyd as unpublished. See Jonathan Evans, ‘People, Politics, and Print: Notes Towards a History of the English-Language Book in Industrial South Wales up to 1900.’ (Unpublished PhD thesis), Cardiff University, 2010, p.253.

<sup>51</sup> Macmillan RR Volume 55963. (See also Macmillan RoM 56019, entry 13369.)

<sup>52</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.244. See also p.298.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp.244–5. (See p.242 for the fact Keating is talking about 1906.) See also Paul O’Leary, “Keating, Joseph (1871-1934), novelist.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 19 May 2011.

<sup>54</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, pp.164–5 and 174–5.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.165.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp.174–5.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., pp.242–4.

<sup>58</sup> See O’Leary, “Keating, Joseph...” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>59</sup> See “‘Hampshire Telegraph’ Literary Competition.” *The Evening News* [Portsmouth], 28 November 1883, p.2; “‘Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.’” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 December 1883, p.10; and “‘To Contributors. Original Stories and Sketches.’” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 7 May 1898, p.10. (For evidence of the competition running between 1883 and 1895, the years considered here, see bibliography.) Andrew Hobbs and Claire Januszewski note that the newspaper was bought by the Carnegie-Storey syndicate (Andrew Carnegie and Samuel Storey) in 1883 who ‘added a magazine-style

generally offered up to five small monetary prizes, with winning entries printed in the paper.<sup>60</sup> The *Telegraph* accepted both prose and poetry, and both original content and ‘selected’ entries – pieces taken from other publications.<sup>61</sup> In one typical competition page from 1893, the paper stated that contributions should be either ‘witty, wise or entertaining’ but considered ‘this classification ... sufficiently wide to include every kind of contribution which varied reading, observation of life, knowledge of Folk Lore, Old Superstitions, Quaint Customs, &c, may enable competitors to send in’.<sup>62</sup>

For the purposes of this study, a total of 40 winning entries to the *Hampshire Telegraph*’s competition were analysed. These were all original contributions that won either 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> prize in the competition, and all were stories, as opposed to verse. They were selected randomly and are drawn from across a 12-year span from 1883 to 1895. This sample naturally represents only a fraction of the entries that would have been printed in the paper in the 1880s and 1890s. It must also be acknowledged that the content of the winning stories may, in part, be a reflection of the judges’ preferences, and of what entrants believed the judges were looking for, as much as of what entrants wished to write. Nonetheless, the stories offer a useful insight into what aspirants were trying to write.

In terms of subject matter, around 14 of the 40 stories deal, chiefly, with love and romantic relationships. Examples include ‘Margery’s Tryst’ (1888), about a young girl who waits her whole life for the return of her lover (who went abroad to seek his fortune and was wrongly imprisoned) and ‘Autobiography of a Flirt’ (1892), in which an ageing, regretful, and friendless woman looks back on the youth she spent mistreating men.<sup>63</sup> Around 11 stories (a few of which

---

supplement to the Saturday edition’. (See Andrew Hobbs and Claire Januszewski, ‘How Local Newspapers Came to Dominate Victorian Poetry Publishing’. *Victorian Poetry*, 52.1 (2014), p.70.) The literary competition was part of this supplement.

<sup>60</sup> For a typical example, with five prizes being offered, and a breakdown of the prize money, see “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 27 August 1887, p.10. NB: The prize money was increased over time. Compare, for example, “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 December 1883, p.10; “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 19 July 1884, p.10; “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 9 May 1885, p.10; and “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 23 February 1895, p.10.

<sup>61</sup> For an explanation of this, see, for example, “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 May 1886, p.10. (See Terms and Conditions, point 1.)

<sup>62</sup> See “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 6 May 1893, p.10.

<sup>63</sup> “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 20 October 1888, p.10 (2<sup>nd</sup> prize), and “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 26 November 1892, p.10 (2<sup>nd</sup> prize). The other examples are: “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 27 August 1887, p.10 (“Love’s Sacrifice”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 August 1884, p.10 (“A Modern Circe”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 June 1886, p.10 (“Beauty Loses the Prize”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 5 May 1894, p.10 (“Not Quite Like Other Men”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize and “The Disappointment of Miss Caroline”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 6 May 1893, p.10

overlap with the previous group) include a death, and at least five more involve a near death. Amongst the former, ‘The Story of a Dream’ (1890) sees a girl foresee her own death, whilst ‘Michael Romanoff’ (1889) recounts the assassination of a famous singer.<sup>64</sup> Amongst the latter, ‘A Terrible Encounter’ (1886) sees a knife-wielding madwoman attempt to murder a young woman, whilst in ‘Alive or Dead? A Doctor’s Story’ (1885), a medic recalls saving the life of a woman in a cataleptic state.<sup>65</sup>

Many of the stories tell of, or involve, a noteworthy incident or accident. ‘A Black Diamond’ (1892) features a pit explosion in a Welsh village; ‘A Lunatic’s Retaliation’ (1884) sees a patient with a grudge shut a staff member in a hospital mortuary; whilst the eponymous ‘Catherine’ (1886) falls over some railings in her sleep.<sup>66</sup> Some of the incidents are crimes or suspected crimes. A coastguard is captured by smugglers in ‘A Strange Predicament’ (1894), whilst a suspicious ticking bag left on a train in ‘My Anarchist Experience’ (1895) turns out to contain a clock and sandwiches.<sup>67</sup>

Several stories are written in the first person with the (usually fictional) narrator either recalling a first-hand experience, or telling a story passed down from a family member. The

---

(“Our Head Clerk”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 9 May 1885, p.10 (“Sylvia”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 December 1887, p.10 (“For the First Time of Asking”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 November 1894, p.10 (“Monica’s Spell”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 23 February 1895, p.10 (“How We Eloped From Southsea”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 24 April 1886, p.10 (“A Primrose Scandal”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); and “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 15 November 1890, p.10 (“Kathleen”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize).

<sup>64</sup> See “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 26 July 1890, p.10 (2<sup>nd</sup> prize), and “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 27 July 1889, p.10 (1<sup>st</sup> prize).

<sup>65</sup> “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 12 June 1886, p.10 (1<sup>st</sup> prize), and “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 9 May 1885, p.10 (1<sup>st</sup> prize). The other stories are: (deaths): “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 2 August 1884, p.10 (“A Modern Circe”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 7 October 1893, p.10 (“A Riviera Visit”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 December 1887, p.10 (“William O’Meara”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 29 August 1891, p.10 (“Three Meetings”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 November 1892, p.10 (“Sergeant Delaney’s Wife”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 October 1892, p.10 (“A Black Diamond”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 15 November 1890, p.10 (“Kathleen”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 22 June 1895, p.10 (“His Story – And Mine!”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 5 May 1894, p.10 (“Not Quite Like Other Men”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); and (near-deaths): “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 June 1894, p.10 (“A Strange Predicament”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 May 1886, p.10 (“Catherine”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); and “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 May 1891, p.10 (“A Night of Peril”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize).

<sup>66</sup> See “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 October 1892, p.10 (1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 2 August 1884, p.10 (3<sup>rd</sup> prize); and “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 May 1886, p.10 (2<sup>nd</sup> prize).

<sup>67</sup> See “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 2 June 1894, p.10 (1<sup>st</sup> prize), and “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 23 February 1895, p.10 (2<sup>nd</sup> prize).

majority of these may well have been entirely make-believe, but a few appear to have been either straight accounts or at least based on real-life events. An 1887 story about a mix-up between two couples with identical names has ‘Founded on Fact’ written in brackets at the end of its title, whilst ‘A Night of Peril’ (1891), in which a rancher and a youngster in Mexico narrowly escape a gang of violent Indians, ends with the note ‘This incident is true, having occurred to the brother of the writer’.<sup>68</sup>

The *Hampshire Telegraph*’s office was in Portsmouth, and many of the competition’s entrants lived in the local Portsmouth and Southsea area.<sup>69</sup> Four of the stories in question make reference to Southsea or Portsmouth.<sup>70</sup> ‘Catherine’ (1886), by a Southsea resident, begins with descriptions and recollections of Portsmouth and Southsea, whilst another story by a local writer, about a young man’s failed pursuit of a well-off young woman, is entitled ‘How We Eloped from Southsea’.<sup>71</sup>

### Correspondence Columns

The correspondence sections of several magazines in this period, such as the *Young Man*, the *Young Woman*, and the *Bookman*, show evidence of aspirants writing both stories and poetry, as well as, occasionally, other types of literature, such as essays.<sup>72</sup> Poetry, in particular, features fairly

---

<sup>68</sup> See “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 December 1887, p.10 (“For the First Time of Asking”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); and “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 2 May 1891, p.10 (“A Night of Peril”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize).

<sup>69</sup> For instances where entrants came from the Portsmouth/Southsea area, see, for example: “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 2 June 1894, p.10 (“A Strange Predicament”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 5 May 1894, p.10 (“Not Quite Like Other Men”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 9 May 1885, p.10 (“Sylvia”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); and “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 20 October 1888, p.10 (“The Sergt.-Major’s Batman”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize). For evidence of the *Hampshire Telegraph*’s office being in Portsmouth, see, for example, “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 December 1883, p.10.

<sup>70</sup> The four stories which refer to Southsea and Portsmouth are: “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 7 October 1893, p.10 (“A Riviera Visit”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 May 1886, p.10 (“Catherine”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize); “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 23 February 1895, p.10 (“How We Eloped From Southsea”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize); and “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 22 June 1895, p.10 (“His Story – And Mine!”, 1<sup>st</sup> prize).

<sup>71</sup> See “Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 8 May 1886, p.10 (2<sup>nd</sup> prize), and “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 23 February 1895, p.10 (1<sup>st</sup> prize).

<sup>72</sup> In the *Young Man*, see, for example: September 1892, Volume 6 (1892), p.320; September 1893, Volume 7 (1893), p.319; November 1893, Volume 7 (1893), p.391; March 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.99; September 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.323; October 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.359; December 1894, Volume 8 (1894), p.428; September 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.324; October 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.360 and November 1895, Volume 9 (1895), p.395. In the *Young Woman*, see, for example: January 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.142; May 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.286; June 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.321; July 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.358; August 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), pp.393–4; September 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.426; October 1894, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.35; November 1894, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.70; December 1894, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.108; January 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), pp.141–2; February 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.178; March 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), pp.215–6; April 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), pp.250–1; and May 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.286. In the *Bookman* see, for example: April 1896 (Volume 10, No. 55), p.28; June 1896 (Volume 10, No. 57), pp.91–2; and July 1896 (Volume 10, No. 58), pp.124–5.

heavily. As already noted, the *Bookman*, founded in 1891, ran a ‘Young Author’s Page’, in which writers were given feedback on submitted work. Over the 18-month period between September 1896 and March 1898, at least a quarter of the replies given in the column were for poetry submissions, or submissions that included poetry.<sup>73</sup>

Of the *Young Woman* correspondents who had sent work to the magazine for feedback in the mid-1890s, the majority had written poetry. In 1894 – a couple of years after the magazine was founded – at least 20 readers had sent in verse, whilst a handful had submitted stories or other prose.<sup>74</sup> In 1895 (up to the autumn), at least 59 writers had composed poetry, whilst at least 20 had written, or hoped to write, prose of some sort.<sup>75</sup> (A few of these had written both poetry and prose.)<sup>76</sup> In March 1895, the editor of the correspondence section expressed surprise at the amount of poetry she was receiving, wondering what she had done to prompt (or perhaps deserve) ‘such a grievous flood of verse’.<sup>77</sup>

The subject matter of the poetical submissions to the *Young Woman* is not often mentioned. In the instances where it is, however, nature appears to have been a relatively common theme. Three would-be poets were told they were clearly fond or observant of nature; another had written some of their verses about ‘changing foliage’; whilst another, calling themselves ‘Young Aspirant’, had penned verses titled ‘Voices of Nature’, ‘Spring Showers’, and

---

<sup>73</sup> This is a very rough estimate – looking at the nine issues in this time period in which the column appeared (by this time it was not appearing in each issue as it was initially) – approximately 26% of the replies relate to poetry. (There were approximately 276 replies in all, and roughly 72 (at least) relating to poetry.) Replies that appeared to be about songs were ignored here, as were replies that were unclear in terms of what type of writing they were referring to.

<sup>74</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 2 (1893–1894): January 1894, p.142 (‘Nil Desperandum’ and ‘Mona’); April 1894, p.249 (‘L. M.’); May 1894, p.286 (‘Clive Assheton’); June 1894, p.321 (‘F. A. W.’); July 1894, p.358 (‘Douglas’); August 1894, p.393 (‘Viga’) and p.394 (‘Eventide’); September 1894, p.426 (‘Clan Alpine’, ‘Admirer’, ‘Snowdrop’ and ‘Nurse’); and Volume 3 (1894–1895): October 1894, p.35 (‘Nolton’, ‘E. W.’, ‘Erato’, and ‘Queenie’); November 1894, p.70 (‘Florence’, ‘Pearl Winter’, ‘L. J. S.’, and ‘Agnes’); and December 1894, p.108 (‘E. S.’, ‘B. M. P., Newport’, ‘Young Woman’, and ‘Old Woman’). One of the (at least) 20 who submitted verse also submitted prose (see ‘Eventide’, August 1894, p.394).

<sup>75</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 3 (1894–1895): January 1895, pp.141–2 (‘Hopeful’, ‘L. R. A. M.’, ‘Mignonette’, ‘Voisy’, and ‘Erato’); February 1895, p.178 (‘E. M. H.’, ‘Gertrude’, ‘Hopeful’, ‘Margery R.’, ‘Anxious’, and ‘Ballywhin’); March 1895, pp.215–6 (‘Would-Be Poet’, ‘M. M. P.’, ‘Lassie’, ‘Red Lilac’, ‘Young Aspirant’, ‘Struggling Author’, ‘Faith’, ‘Oswald’, ‘Blanche’ and ‘Patrick Foyle’); April 1895, pp.250–1 (‘A. M. M.’, ‘Ignoramus’, ‘F. A.’, ‘Two Lassies’, ‘Lilianetta’, ‘Mignonette’, ‘George Garrick’, ‘S. D. F.’, ‘M. A. C.’, ‘Dalleth Reed’ and ‘M. Y.’); May 1895, p.286 (‘Rachel’, ‘K. K.’, ‘Ivy’, ‘Dorothy X. B.’, ‘E. P. S.’, ‘Eve’, ‘Jean’, ‘Welsh Violet’, ‘J. A. R. S.’, ‘Ruby Lynn’ and ‘Mab’); June 1895, p.321 (‘Worcestershire Reader’, ‘E. L. P.’, ‘Alpha and Omega’, ‘Lily of the Valley’, ‘Willing Learner’, ‘M. M. P.’, ‘Turnet’, ‘M. L. D.’, ‘Alethes’, ‘Naomi’, ‘Marjorie Messenger’ and ‘Perseverance, Shrewsbury’); July 1895, pp.356–7 (‘Daisy’, ‘S. J. B.’, ‘Dell’, ‘Bereaved’, ‘Penelope’, ‘Pansy E.’ and ‘M. E. C.’); August 1895, p.395 (‘M. S.’, ‘Thistle’, ‘Irish Fairy’, ‘Trix’, ‘Welsh Lassie’, ‘Young Schoolgirl’, ‘Mary’, ‘Doubtful’, ‘M. E. W.’, ‘L. P.’); and September 1895, p.426 (‘Complete Story’, ‘Mortimer’, ‘Emil E.’, ‘Daphne’). A few additional replies were ignored as it was unclear whether prose or verse had been written.

<sup>76</sup> See, for example, *Young Woman*, August 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.395 (‘Thistle’).

<sup>77</sup> *Young Woman*, March 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.215 (see reply to ‘Young Aspirant’).

‘Odes to Spring’.<sup>78</sup> Another was told that their verses were ‘not without promise’ but that nature was ‘not the best subject for a beginner to grapple with’.<sup>79</sup> Other correspondents appear to have penned prose pieces relating to nature.<sup>80</sup>

These correspondents were not unique. In March 1903, the *Warrington Guardian* complained that ‘the worst thing connected with life in a newspaper office at this time of year’ was the insistence of the ‘spring poet’ on ‘pushing himself – or herself – to the front’.<sup>81</sup> Forced to consign ‘seasonable effusions to the waste paper basket’, the paper’s staff was only able to note ‘quickly’ that ‘the birds are carolling, the primroses peeping, the lambkins skipping, and that Nature generally is bubbling over with renewed life’.<sup>82</sup> ‘These things’ they noted, ‘are usually expected to occur’ at this time of year, ‘and the record cannot truthfully be classed as news’.<sup>83</sup> In her biobibliography of nearly 3000 book-published poets between 1880 and 1899, Catherine W. Reilly also found that ‘nature poems abound[ed]’, putting this down to the legacy of the Romantic period.<sup>84</sup>

At least three more *Young Woman* poets in the mid-1890s had written about death (one apparently from personal experience).<sup>85</sup> Another had written about Lake Como; another on love; and another on ‘the sorrow, sin, and suffering of cities’.<sup>86</sup> Other poem titles referred to include ‘May Days’, ‘Across the Moor’, ‘The Invalid’s Hymn’, ‘The Mysteries of Life’, ‘The Little Maid’, and ‘The Dream of Pilate’s Wife’.<sup>87</sup>

Of her over 5500 British and Irish poets who published verse in book form between the 1860s and 1890s, Reilly observes that, aside from nature poems, ‘much of the verse is of a religious nature’; ‘narrative poems based on fictional or factual incidents’ were ‘common’, with

---

<sup>78</sup> See, respectively, *Young Woman*, Volume 3 (1894–1895): November 1894, p.70 (‘Agnes’); March 1895, p.215 (‘Oswald’); June 1895, p.321 (‘Lily of the Valley’); July 1895, p.357 (‘Pansy E.’); and March 1895, p.215 (‘Young Aspirant’).

<sup>79</sup> See *Young Woman*, April 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), p.251 (‘M. Y.’).

<sup>80</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 3 (1894–1895): February 1895, p.178 (‘Ballywhin’); May 1895, p.286 (‘Thistle’); and February 1895, p.178 (‘E. M. H.’).

<sup>81</sup> ‘The worst thing connected with life in a newspaper office at this time of the year...’ [Under ‘Town and Country’], *The Warrington Guardian*, 21 March 1903, p.4.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Catherine W. Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry, 1880–1899: An Annotated Biobibliography* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1994), p.xii.

<sup>85</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 3 (1894–1895), March 1895, p.215 (‘Would-Be Poet’); July 1895, p.356 (‘Bereaved’); and June 1895, p.321 (‘Marjorie Messenger’).

<sup>86</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 3 (1894–1895): June 1895, p.321 (‘Naomi’); July 1895, p.356 (‘Daisy’); and January 1895, p.142 (‘Erato’).

<sup>87</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 3 (1894–1895): February 1895, p.178 (‘Gertrude’); April 1895, p.251 (‘Dalleth Reed’); June 1895, p.321 (‘M. M. P.’); July 1895, p.356 (‘Daisy’); May 1895, p.286 (‘K. K.’); and March 1895, p.215 (‘Red Lilac’).

‘Greek, Roman, Norse and Arthurian legend ... often the inspiration’; whilst ‘many poets chose to write about their own localities’, with a good deal of verse ‘about holiday places at home and abroad’.<sup>88</sup> She also notes that:

Members of the royal family were a constant source of poetic attention which increased markedly on such occasions as the jubilees of Queen Victoria in 1887 and 1897 and the wedding of the Duke of York and Princess Mary of Teck, later King George V and Queen Mary, in 1893. Political figures such as Gladstone and Disraeli, and popular heroes like General Gordon of Khartoum, are also commonly featured, as are general political matters, the question of Home Rule for Ireland being one of the regular themes. However, the most popular theme of all was love, easily surpassing the ‘in memoriam’ poems which were a feature of an age when infant mortality was high and life expectancy was short.<sup>89</sup>

Amongst other fictional submissions to the *Young Woman*, one individual had written a fairy tale and an unoriginal story about marriage, children, and death; another a story of a (presumably religious) conversion; and another some poetry or prose on extramarital desire.<sup>90</sup> Another had attempted a story about authorship, but was berated for failing to ‘understand the ways of authors and publishers’.<sup>91</sup> As with a few of the Macmillan and Chatto submissions, one aspirant’s poetry was also considered old-fashioned. The editor noted that the verses in question were ‘of the kind that were found in the poetry books of an earlier generation’ and so would fail to find a publisher now.<sup>92</sup>

## PART II

### Reading

#### BOOKS

Regarding novels sent to publishers Allen and Unwin in the early twentieth century, Christopher Hilliard has written that some were ‘attempts at ... genres of bestselling fiction: family melodramas, crime stories, and medieval romances’.<sup>93</sup> Many had governesses as heroines, like

---

<sup>88</sup> See Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry*, pp.ix and xii–xiii, and Catherine W. Reilly, *Mid-Victorian Poetry, 1860–1879: An Annotated Bibliography* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 2000), p.ix. (The majority of poetry books mentioned in the earlier volume do appear to have been published in the 1860s, however – outside the period of this study – rather than in the 1870s.)

<sup>89</sup> Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry*, pp.xii–xiii.

<sup>90</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 3 (1894–1895): June 1895, p.321 (‘Perseverance, Shrewsbury’ and ‘Willing Learner’); and September 1895, p.426 (‘Mortimer’).

<sup>91</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 3 (1894–1895), September 1895, p.426 (‘Complete Story’).

<sup>92</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 3 (1894–1895), June 1895, p.321 (‘E. L. P.’).

<sup>93</sup> Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp.70–1.

Ethel M. Dell's romances; others copied Elinor Glyn's themes of sex and luxury.<sup>94</sup> It is clear that many of this study's aspirants were also attempting to reproduce popular styles and genres, older ones particularly. The evidence of what aspirants were writing usefully therefore gives us insights into what they were reading, offering a form of 'quantitative book history', or 'readership analysis grounded in material facts', as opposed to details such as print-runs which, as Mary Hammond explains, 'tell us only what readers may have bought, not whether they ever read it'.<sup>95</sup>

In the submissions of some aspirants, there are traces of specific authors. One 1887 Macmillan submission had been strongly influenced by the stylistic trickery of George Meredith.<sup>96</sup> (The reader of the manuscript noted with regret that 'a jerky and enigmatical style' was 'creeping into vogue ... among MS. aspirants', one they considered 'intensely provoking and meaningless'.)<sup>97</sup> In terms of the types of literature being read, there is evidence, for example, of the reading of history or historical fiction – journalist Charles Montague Clark's knowledge of 'the time of the Dutch war of Charles II' must have come from somewhere – whilst published author Cyril Silverston's bohemian story, submitted in 1910, and Chatto's comment that they had 'had a number of "Bohemian" novels' in the preceding two decades, suggests the enduring influence and appeal of texts such as Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894).<sup>98</sup>

Perhaps one of the clearest deductions that can be made here, however, is that many aspirants were reading romances, melodrama, and sensation fiction, with several of their own compositions featuring, as we have seen, love, death, accidents, crimes, as well as several of the following 'plot elements that recur as staples of sensation fiction: illegitimate birth, concealed and changed identities, women of questionable sanity, fraud, spectacular rises and falls in personal fortune, drug use, incarceration, suicides, and corpses'.<sup>99</sup>

Some of these influences could well have been contemporary. As Hammond explains, Marie Corelli and Hall Caine 'both... wrote melodramatic romances that broke all sales records in the 1880s and 1890s'.<sup>100</sup> At one library, she notes, Caine's works were 'given as among the most popular, running a "neck and neck race for supremacy" with ... Corelli', a popularity that

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.71.

<sup>95</sup> Mary Hammond, 'Readers and Readerships', in Joanne Shattock (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1830–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p.32.

<sup>96</sup> See Macmillan RR Volume 55941, entry 5605, and for the submission see Macmillan RoM 56017, entry 5605.

<sup>97</sup> See Macmillan RR Volume 55941, entry 5605.

<sup>98</sup> For Charles Montague Clark, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26011, and 1911 Census, household record for 27 Holford Square, London. For Cyril Silverston, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23857.

<sup>99</sup> Kate Flint, 'Sensation', in Kate Flint (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.225.

<sup>100</sup> Hammond, 'Readers and Readerships', p.44.

was presumably replicated in many libraries, even if some – as she mentions – banned one or both authors, or particular works by them.<sup>101</sup>

Mid-Victorian popular fiction was also likely an influence, however. ‘Sensation fiction had its heyday in the 1860s’, as Sean Purchase notes, but as Lyn Pykett observes:

it is clear that some of the sensation novels and novelists of the 1860s continued to exert their fascination on readers long after the initial sensation boom had passed. *Lady Audley’s Secret*, *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone* and *East Lynne* were all included in the *Daily Telegraph’s* selection of the 100 best novels of the nineteenth century in 1899. Four years later *T. P.’s Weekly* noted that it was ‘no mean record for a book published nearly forty years ago to sustain as “Lady Audley” does, as strong a hold upon novel readers to-day as it promptly established when it appeared in its three-volume dress’.<sup>102</sup>

There is also evidence of the continued influence of general texts from this period. Macmillan in 1887, for example, received a ‘rather crude imitation of *Alice in Wonderland*’ (published in 1865).<sup>103</sup>

Publishers’ references to ‘worn’ and ‘worn out’ subjects and themes, an ‘old-fashioned story’, ‘past days’, and ‘the days of [thirty] years ago’ also substantiates the idea that at least some of the fiction being read and reproduced by aspirants was not the sort of material that companies such as Chatto and Macmillan were then publishing. Hilliard notes that some of the later Allen and Unwin writers ‘appeared to be consciously trying to master the formulas that had proved so successful’ to authors such as Dell and Glyn, and we can assume that some late-nineteenth-century aspirants were treading over old ground for the same reason.<sup>104</sup> They may also, of course, have been driven to imitate such literature simply because it was what they themselves enjoyed reading.

Indeed, there is clear evidence that a proportion of the literature being read – at home, school, and from libraries – was that of earlier eras. We saw in a previous chapter how autobiographers Daisy Cowper (b. 1890) and Edward Brown (b. 1880) enjoyed texts such as *Jane Eyre* (1847) as children; Jonathan Rose mentions youngsters from this period reading *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), and discusses the continued popularity of Shakespeare – at least at the beginning

---

<sup>101</sup> Mary Hammond, ‘The Great Fiction Bore’: Free Libraries and the Construction of a Reading Public in England, 1880–1914.’ *Libraries & Culture* 37.2 (2002), p.104.

<sup>102</sup> Sean Purchase, *Key Concepts in Victorian Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.188, and Lyn Pykett, ‘The Sensation Legacy’, in Andrew Mangham (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.210.

<sup>103</sup> See Macmillan RR Volume 55941, pp.45–6, entry 5683 (‘A Modern Maiden’s Dream or the Field of Learning’, Cora Langton (Miss E. Underdown)), and for her submission see Macmillan RoM 56017, entry 5683.

<sup>104</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.71.

of this period, if less so at its end.<sup>105</sup> Schools also appear to have given children a literary diet that was very much based around non-contemporary literature – not only Shakespeare, but a variety of classic and Romantic authors and poets. Rose notes how schoolboy Spike Mays (b. 1907) ‘studied *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, and *Tales from Shakespeare*’, whilst Mark Grossek (b. 1888), remembered Shakespeare and Byron.<sup>106</sup>

When it came to borrowing books, novels were not always the first choices for readers or for libraries in this period. Hammond notes that ‘fiction reading ... was discouraged by most public libraries at least until the turn of the century’, with ‘almost all library reports’ throughout this period showing ‘some concern on their first pages over the numbers of fiction books borrowed, congratulating themselves on having reduced the number in a given year, or seeking to rationalise the fact that they seem unable to do so’.<sup>107</sup> (Nor were these concerns limited to libraries; at the new Southend Public Library in 1906, adult fiction accounted for only 35% of books issued in the first few weeks – a further 15% being children’s books and 50% non-fiction – figures the local *Southend Standard* considered ‘gratifying’.)<sup>108</sup> With the fiction that *was* borrowed, though, there are signs that earlier Victorian titles were still very popular. In 1888, notes Rose, the recently opened Belfast Public Library reported that Dickens’ *The Pickwick Papers* (1837) and *David Copperfield* (1850) ‘were among its four most requested books’.<sup>109</sup>

Rose and Hammond offer further explanations for the reading of older material. Due to a ‘slow trickle-through effect’, Hammond observes, ‘new works reached different social sectors at different rates’, with the lower classes getting hold of some texts years after their initial publication.<sup>110</sup> Neither was this merely a nineteenth-century phenomenon; it ‘continued’, she notes, ‘well into the twentieth century’, with ‘the Modernist works of D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf from the 1910s and 1920s’ taking ‘well over a generation to filter down to the working classes’.<sup>111</sup>

Rose notes that ‘the reading tastes of the British working classes consistently lagged a generation behind those of the educated middle classes’, similarly observing that it was only once

---

<sup>105</sup> Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 2nd edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), pp.109, 122, and 124.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.157 and 159.

<sup>107</sup> Hammond, ‘Readers and Readerships’, p.32 and see also p.42, and Hammond, ‘The Great Fiction Bore’, p.93.

<sup>108</sup> ‘I had a chat with Mr Clay...’ *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 16 August 1906, p.2. NB: These fiction figures appear to be low and unrepresentative of libraries in this period – see, for example, the figures referred to in Hammond, ‘The Great Fiction Bore’ (see p.93).

<sup>109</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p.111.

<sup>110</sup> Hammond, ‘Readers and Readerships’, p.31.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

titles had become unfashionable that working people could afford them.<sup>112</sup> He mentions Joseph Keating's case by way of illustration: Keating 'immerse[d] himself' in dead authors such as Swift and Pope; works by living writers, though, were too expensive.<sup>113</sup> Dickens, he also notes, suffered a fall in reputation 'after his death in 1870, when critics began to write him off as a cheap, melodramatic, early Victorian caricaturist'.<sup>114</sup> His sales only increased, however, propelled by 'working-class readers' who 'could now acquire his works very cheaply or entirely free, given away by merchants as premiums to attract customers'.<sup>115</sup>

'Certain works' had also, Hammond notes, 'been labelled as "classics" by publishers anxious to attract readers to an authenticated list of "must-read" works' which were 'commonly taught in schools', from Shakespeare to Milton to – 'usually' Austen and George Eliot, with 'the result of the establishment of nationwide schools' from the 1870s also having 'a profound impact ... on the establishment of the idea of a "national canon" of works which everyone ought to have read'.<sup>116</sup> Rose notes the popularity of such lists of classics amongst working people; Sir John Lubbock's 'Hundred Best Books' list, 'compiled in 1886 ... was enormously popular among readers' such as one child's policeman father, 'who was eager to make up for an education that had been denied him'.<sup>117</sup>

## POETRY

The significant amount of poetry being written by aspirants in this period demonstrates that it was also being read and enjoyed. As we have seen, nature poetry was a popular choice amongst aspirants, and there is evidence of the influence of particular poets. Longfellow is one example: selected verses of one *Young Woman* correspondent were, observed the magazine, 'evidently founded on Longfellow's [poem] "Maidenhood"'.<sup>118</sup> A newspaper, meanwhile, observed that 'the influence of Longfellow' was 'at once apparent' in one of John Wrigglesworth's poems in his *Grass from a Yorkshire Village* (1897).<sup>119</sup>

It is clear that schools in this period were providing many children with a solid introduction to poetry, and it is likely through education that at least some aspirants picked up models for their own writing. Catherine Robson's book, *Heart Beats: Everyday Life and the*

---

<sup>112</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, pp.116 and 120–1.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p.121.

<sup>114</sup> Jonathan Rose, 'Education, Literacy, and the Victorian Reader', in Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (eds.), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), p.43.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Hammond, 'Readers and Readerships', pp.41 and 43–4.

<sup>117</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, pp.128–9.

<sup>118</sup> See *Young Woman*, Volume 2 (1893–1894), August 1894, p.393 ('Viga').

<sup>119</sup> See "Minor Poetry." *Dundee Advertiser*, 19 August 1897, p.2.

*Memorized Poem* (2012), highlights the significant place of poetry and verse memorisation in schools in this period. As well as providing one explanation for the popularity of verse amongst aspiring writers, particular poems that were memorised, such as Thomas Gray's *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* (1751) – which 'thousands and thousands of people were given the opportunity to learn' and which had 'a history within' the British elementary school 'for a good sixty years or so' – shed light on the tendency towards the enjoyment and replication of literature of an earlier era.<sup>120</sup> (Not that poems such as Gray's *Elegy* were only popular in the classroom; in Chapter 1 we saw how Helen Corke recalled her father reciting it at home.)

*Poetic Gems*, a 1906/1907 poetry book for young readers discussed by Robson, includes verse by Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Burns, Cowper, Grey, Shakespeare, and others alongside that of Tennyson, Swinburne, and Browning.<sup>121</sup> Mid-Victorian poems, such as *The Charge of the Light Brigade* (1854), also sit alongside late Victorian ones, such as *Vitai Lampada* and *Recessional* (both 1897).<sup>122</sup> Romantic nature poetry also features, including Keats' *To Autumn*, Shelley's *The Cloud* and *To a Skylark*, and Wordsworth's *The Green Linnet*, *To the Cuckoo*, *To a Skylark*, and *The Daffodils* (i.e. *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*).<sup>123</sup>

There are also several American poets in *Poetic Gems*, including Longfellow (who appears in the sections recommend for children aged 10 to 11, 12 to 13, and 13 to 14).<sup>124</sup> Poetry, including mid-nineteenth-century and American poetry, was clearly being taught to children younger than this, also. Daisy Cowper (b. 1890) remembers the 'poem for recitation' when she was around seven being Longfellow's *A Psalm of Life* (1838/9).<sup>125</sup> This poetry learnt at school clearly left an impression on some students. 'Scratch us, even now', said Amy Gomm (b. 1899) later, 'and we'll break out into a rash of Browning, Wordsworth, Shelley, Milton; and, of course, the Bard'.<sup>126</sup> Outside schools, there is also evidence that older poetry, such as Romantic poetry, had been read for the first time more recently than might be expected. The aforementioned trickle effect, Hammond makes clear, affected poetry as well as fiction; she mentions scholarship

---

<sup>120</sup> Catherine Robson, *Heart Beats: Everyday Life and the Memorized Poem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp.136 and 138.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.36–8.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.37–8. (For confirmation that the latter poem was 'I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud', see Anon., *Poetic Gems: A Selection of Good Poetry for Young Readers* (London: W. & R. Chambers, Limited, 1906), pp.54–5.)

<sup>124</sup> Robson, *Heart Beats*, pp.37–8.

<sup>125</sup> John Burnett (ed.), *Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education and Family from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.202.

<sup>126</sup> Rose, *Intellectual Life*, p.163.

proving that ‘the Romantic poets Byron, Shelley and Keats ... did not reach the lower classes until well into the nineteenth century when cheaper editions became available’.<sup>127</sup>

## NEWSPAPERS

Judging by the actions of autobiographer Edward Brown – who, as previously noted, used in his short novel several elements of the Suffragette movement ‘mostly culled or adapted from the daily papers’ – aspirants were also reading newspapers, and were mining them for material that could be fictionalised.<sup>128</sup> (Nor was this practice confined to aspirants – Kate Flint notes that Charles Reade’s fiction was ‘heavily dependent on material drawn from his copious collection of newspaper clippings’.)<sup>129</sup> Indeed, late-nineteenth-century newspapers were littered with dramatic incidents and accidents that could very easily have lent themselves to fiction and poetry. Ernest Ife’s Boer War poem – sent to Macmillan four months into the conflict – was, one assumes, prompted by newspaper coverage. (He may even have been inspired by Boer War poems in newspapers, which appear to have been fairly common – Hobbs and Januszewski report finding 142 in 1900, just in the consulted issues of their five sample provincial newspapers.)<sup>130</sup>

There is also some evidence to suggest that aspirants held on to newspapers and magazines, or to stories and snippets that interested them. The *Hampshire Telegraph*’s literary competition, as noted earlier, accepted both original and ‘selected’ contributions – nearly always stories taken from other publications. The publication the piece originally appeared in, along with the date of original publication, was also usually printed. These dates in the *Hampshire Telegraph* suggest that some readers may have held on to printed material for a considerable time. Whilst some selected contributions were from recent publications – a fourth-prize-winning story in November 1890 was from an August 1888 edition of *Wit and Wisdom*, for example – others were from issues that were decades old.<sup>131</sup> In May 1885, there was a piece from 1829; in December 1887, one from 1835.<sup>132</sup> This hints at the importance that some readers may have attached to printed material, and specifically to more traditionally ephemeral and disposable literature such as magazines, journals, and newspapers.

---

<sup>127</sup> Hammond, ‘Readers and Readerships’, p.31.

<sup>128</sup> Edward Brown, ‘Untitled’, Burnett Archive of Working-Class Autobiographies, Brunel University, p.73.

<sup>129</sup> Flint, ‘Sensation’, p.225.

<sup>130</sup> Hobbs and Januszewski, ‘How Local Newspapers Came to Dominate Victorian Poetry Publishing’, pp.76–7.

<sup>131</sup> See ‘Literary Competition.’ *Hampshire Telegraph*, 15 November 1890, p.10 (‘A Holiday Episode’).

<sup>132</sup> See ‘Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.’ *Hampshire Telegraph*, 9 May 1885, p.10 (‘The Point of Honour’); and ‘Literary Competition.’ *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 December 1887, p.10 (‘A Tough Yarn’).

## Experience

The evidence of what aspirants wrote also shows that some of them were writing – or at least gaining inspiration – from experience. In some cases, this experience was their work. Sarah Wilcher’s story about a girl who ‘makes good as a teacher’ presumably drew at least partly on her own experience as a schoolmistress.<sup>133</sup> One can also assume that 41-year-old teacher Emily Roff’s ‘The Boy Who Ran Away’ was influenced in some way by her experience with children (as well as, perhaps, her experience in a child-oriented household – three of her siblings, if we remember, were also teachers), and that 33-year-old teacher Marian Diamond’s work life had some bearing on her submission, ‘Dolly and the Teddy Bear’.<sup>134</sup> Similarly, 45-year-old Edith Giles’ portrayal of ‘nursery and school-room life about fifty years ago’, submitted in 1901, presumably drew on her experience of teaching stretching back to the 1880s (and, likely, the 1870s).<sup>135</sup>

Kindergarten principal Louisa Simmons, the apparent submitter of children’s story ‘A Blue-Eyed Boy’, was also, perhaps, influenced by her young charges, whilst Macmillan’s reader’s report sheds light on the existing genre into which Simmons may have hoped her work could be placed.<sup>136</sup> Lamenting that the story was ‘too long for its substance’, the reader ‘doubt[ed] whether, even if shortened, it would command anything like the success of “Misunderstood”, or one or two other books of that slightly mawkish cast. The sentimentalism of childhood offers attractions for a considerable public, no doubt’, they noted, ‘but this is not a strong specimen of its class’.<sup>137</sup> *Misunderstood* was Florence Montgomery’s ‘breakthrough’ novel of 1869, a ‘notorious tear-jerker’ about a boy who dies just after his widowed father – who ‘thinks him naughty and

---

<sup>133</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20179; Wilcher, *A Chance in Life*; 1911 Census, household record for 53 Thanet Road, Margate; 1901 Census, household record for 23 Gladstone Street, Southwark; and 1891 Census, records for Gladstone Street, Southwark – it is unclear which house Wilcher is in – possibly no. 52.

<sup>134</sup> For Emily Roff, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22605; 1911 Census, household record for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester; 1901 Census, household records for 71 Mersea Road, Colchester (Roff is absent), and 8 Toronto Road, Tilbury, Chadwell St Mary, Essex (the Emily Roff present here is likely our Emily Roff, despite the incorrect age – birthplace and occupation fit); and 1939 Register, record for Emily Roff, Colchester, b. 1872. For Marian Diamond, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20878; 1911 Census, household record for 50 Crofton Road, Plaistow, London; 1901 Census, household record for 63 Ravenscroft Road, West Ham, London; and 1939 Register, record for Marion E. Diamond, Wales, b. 1877.

<sup>135</sup> Giles is listed as a 25-year-old teacher in the 1881 Census, so it is fairly likely she was also teaching at the end of the 1870s. She is also listed as a teacher in the 1891 Census. Her occupation is not given in the census of the year she submitted (1901), but the fact that, as an 83-year-old in the 1939 Register her occupation is given as ‘teacher and collector (retired)’, suggests that teaching was a main career, rather than a stint. See Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13416; Macmillan RR Volume 55963, p.50; 1901 Census, household record for Stafford Villa, Paignton; 1891 Census, household record for 235 Hyde Park Road, Leeds; 1881 Census, household record for 86 Victoria Road, Leeds (Headingley with Burley); 1939 Register, record for Edith J. F. Giles, Malvern, Worcestershire, b. 1856; and 1911 Census, household record for 6 Westgate Road, Beckenham, Kent.

<sup>136</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7601; Macmillan RR Volume 55946, pp.5–6; and 1891 Census, household record for Louisa Simmons, Wellington Road, Enfield, Edmonton, Middlesex (Rosebank).

<sup>137</sup> See Macmillan RR Volume 55946, pp.5–6.

thoughtless' – realises 'how wrong he has been'.<sup>138</sup> 'Not a child's story', according to its author, but 'intended for those who are interested in children', it, notes Charlotte Mitchell, 'invites the reader to identify with the neglected child' and 'remained in print throughout [Montgomery's] life' (which ended in 1923).<sup>139</sup>

Joseph Keating's output, as already touched on, largely came from experience, with work experience a prominent feature of his writing. *Gwen Lloyd*, his 'novel of the mines' – seemingly his first attempt to turn his colliery background into fiction – was written, as noted earlier, as his entry to a competition for 'a novel of Welsh life', and his mining experiences were clearly used extensively in his writing thereafter.<sup>140</sup> Nor was this writing confined to novels and short stories – he mentions at one point delivering lectures 'about the characteristics of Welsh miners'.<sup>141</sup> (One of these talks was to 'a small society of Welsh undergraduates' from the University of Cambridge.)<sup>142</sup>

William Clay, meanwhile, submitted a manuscript to Chatto 'all about wicked trades-union organisers'.<sup>143</sup> While it is unclear whether Clay had any trade union involvement himself, one can assume that the literary, civic, and managerial nature of his librarian role must have informed his writing to some degree. In order to beat 94 other applicants to the post at Southend Public Library, and to then be successful at it, he must have had a good deal of literary knowledge which undoubtedly would have shaped his writing and/or his decision on what to write about. It is also clear that his position carried with it a great deal of civic duty. Far from being stuck behind a desk, Clay was a respectable local Borough representative and moved in the town's most illustrious circles. He frequently attended civic events in his official capacity, alongside an oft-repeated list of other officials, councillors, aldermen, and the Mayor. He is present, for example, at special council meetings, significant church services, and the funerals of prominent local figures.<sup>144</sup> The Mayor also attended events at the library.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup> See Charlotte Mitchell, "Montgomery, Florence Sophia (1843–1923), novelist and children's writer." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> See Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, pp.189, 200, 244–5, and 297–8; Keating, *Son of Judith*; and Joseph Keating, *Maurice: A Romance of Light and Darkness* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1905).

<sup>141</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.245.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.245–6.

<sup>143</sup> Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26045.

<sup>144</sup> See "Town Council's Sympathy. Congratulations to the New King." [Under 'Death of the King'], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 12 May 1910, p.6; "Southend Town Council." *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 18 August 1910, p.6; "Mayor's Sunday at Southend. Impressive Service at Prittlewell Church." *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 19 November 1908, p.5; "Corporation Sunday at Southend. Service at St Mary's, Prittlewell." *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 18 November 1909, p.5; "Civic Rulers at Church." *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 16 May 1912, p.9; "Sudden Death of Captain Kemp.

Clay was also effectively an employer as well as an employee. It is clear he headed a fairly sizeable library team, and that, unsurprisingly, he had some responsibility in terms of representing them. A 1909 newspaper piece detailing council news reports that ‘the Librarian submitted applications which he had received for increases in the salaries of certain members of the staff of his department’.<sup>146</sup> There are seven staff members mentioned, and one assumes therefore that there were at least a few others who are not.<sup>147</sup> Even if his Chatto submission was not based on direct trade union experience, these elements of his work life would undoubtedly have given him some knowledge of employment rights and interests, as well as experience of work relationships, politics, and personalities.

It is also clear that individuals were writing from their experience of life more broadly. From fiction and poetry about the natural world and love and relationships, to adolescent Wallace Nichols’ ‘verse of juvenile melodramatic despair’, aspirants were using universal topics and drawing from ordinary experiences in their work. That some writers made explicit reference to the fact that their stories were based on real events, however – such as the two *Hampshire Telegraph* competition entrants mentioned earlier – also suggests a recognition of the *extraordinary* nature of some experiences, and a belief that they therefore may be of worth and interest to other readers.<sup>148</sup> Again, we can see how in writing from experience – of all kinds – aspirants were seeing their own lives as important. Whether they were writing because they had seen their experiences reflected in their reading, or because they had not, they were feeling entitled to put pen to paper.

## Place

A final relevant category with respect to aspirants’ writings is that of place, heritage, and history. We have seen how some local *Hampshire Telegraph* correspondents included details about the Portsmouth area, whilst some of Reilly’s book poets wrote about ‘their own localities’, with

---

Piermaster and Sea Captain: Interesting Career.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 7 March 1907, p.5; and “The Funeral.” [Under ‘Death of the Deputy Mayor’], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 15 April 1909, p.5. See also “The Mayor’s New Year Banquet.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 6 January 1910, p.5.

<sup>145</sup> “Canada of To Day.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 8 October 1908, p.4.

<sup>146</sup> “Public Library.” [Under ‘Southend Town Council’], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 22 April 1909, p.7.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. For another brief mention of Clay having staff, see “Southend’s New Free Library.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 26 July 1906, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

<sup>148</sup> For the two competition entrants, see “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 17 December 1887, p.10 (“For the First Time of Asking”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize), and “Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph*, 2 May 1891, p.10 (“A Night of Peril”, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize).

much verse ‘about holiday places at home and abroad’.<sup>149</sup> It was to his neighbourhood and its history that librarian William Clay also ultimately turned – his small booklet *A History of Prittwell Priory, Illustrated* was published in 1918.<sup>150</sup> (It was an area that was on his doorstep, potentially literally; Victoria Avenue, where Southend Public Library was located, runs partially alongside the Priory site.)<sup>151</sup>

All three of Stephen Springall’s publications were linked to place. *Country Rambles round Uxbridge: A Descriptive Guide to the Neighbourhood* (1907) ‘deal[t] with the byeways [sic] and lanes and rights-of-way through the beautiful parks and lands’ of local areas, whilst Springall – apparently a keen preserver of footpaths – seemingly continued this theme with his later publication, *Mr Springall’s New Series of Right-o’-Way Leaflets* (1910).<sup>152</sup> *That Indomitable Old Lady. A Romance of Fitzroy Square* (1908) drew on different types of experience – Springall apparently knew the ‘old lady’ the book was based on for many years – but it was also set firmly in his experience of both place and time.<sup>153</sup> One paper noted that ‘the author’s far-reaching knowledge of London and its buildings’ was ‘borne out in the tale’.<sup>154</sup> Another noted its ‘interesting comparisons ... between the London’ of the period the book dealt with ‘and the present’, claiming that ‘it was his close association with the London of that day which gave the author the intimate knowledge of its conditions which this book displays’.<sup>155</sup> ‘The record’, they note, ‘is unfolded in a way that is quite Dickensian in its minutiae of local topography and social conditions and public affairs of the period concerned – the period ... when Fitzroy Square was in its prime as a recognised high-class residential centre’.<sup>156</sup>

Place was also clearly important to apparent labourer John Wrigglesworth, living near Halifax.<sup>157</sup> Two of his published works – *Grass from a Yorkshire Village* (1897) and book of short stories *Idylls of Yorkshire* (c.1900) – mentioned Yorkshire in their title, whilst his 1891 Macmillan submission, ‘The Sweetest Maid in Glowton’, serialised in a local paper in 1894, was billed as ‘A

---

<sup>149</sup> Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry*, p.xii.

<sup>150</sup> See William Clay, *A History of Prittwell Priory, Illustrated* (Southend-on-Sea: Donald Munro, 1918).

<sup>151</sup> This is assuming Victoria Avenue is as it was in the early 1900s. For evidence of Southend Public Library being in Victoria Avenue, see, for example, “Borough of Southend-on-Sea. Supply of Newspapers, Periodicals, Etc., to the Public Library.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 17 February 1910, p.1.

<sup>152</sup> See “Mr Stephen Springall, of the Greenway, Uxbridge...” *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser, Uxbridge, Harrow, and Watford Journal*, 18 July 1908, p.7; “Reviews.” *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser*, 19 December 1908, p.6; and Springall, *Mr Springall’s New Series of Right-o’-Way Leaflets*.

<sup>153</sup> See “Reviews.” *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser*, 19 December 1908, p.6.

<sup>154</sup> “That Indomitable Old Lady. By Stephen Springall.” *The Courier* [Dundee], 26 September 1908, p.7.

<sup>155</sup> “Reviews.” *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser*, 19 December 1908, p.6.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7294, and 1891 Census, household record for John Wrigglesworth, Crescent, Elland with Greetland, Halifax. He is in Greetland, near Halifax, in 1891 (in his submission and in the census of that year) and, apparently, in 1901 (see “‘Is Life Worth Living?’”, *Halifax Evening Courier, Sowerby Bridge, Elland, Brighouse, Hebden Bridge, and Todmorden Reporter*, 20 September 1901, p.4).

Yorkshire Story'.<sup>158</sup> His home county was clearly partly his inspiration; in one poem in *Grass*, for example, he 'plead[ed] for the purity' of the nearby River Calder.<sup>159</sup>

Writing about place was also, of course, a part of some aspirants' writing about work, from Joseph Keating's descriptions of the mines to Edith Giles' of the schoolroom. The evocation of place in writing was also not necessarily based on one's own locality, workplace, or experiences. The *Hampshire Telegraph* story about violence in Mexico was not based on first-hand observations, nor, as far as we can tell, was Ernest Ife's Boer War poem. Other writers, meanwhile, wrote historical stories, whilst some clearly used legend as their literary springboard, and – we might assume from the *Hampshire Telegraph's* rules – superstitions and customs.

Place and heritage may have been worth writing about for a number of reasons. In writing about or referencing one's local area, for example, an individual may have been expressing pride in it, a sense of its importance, or a sense of their own identity, as well as intentionally creating or reinforcing those feelings in readers. As Hobbs and Januszewski note in their study of original and selected poetry in provincial newspapers, 'for local readers, poems on local topics put their humble localities on the same map as Mount Parnassus. Place could be addressed head-on, as in "Traits o' Accrington" by An Accringtonian' (a dialect poem printed in the *Accrington Gazette* in 1882).<sup>160</sup> For readers, they note, 'local poetry touched ordinary places and people with literary magic'.<sup>161</sup> Local prose would likely have had similar effects. They add:

Local poetry added emotional power to wider topics, such as the volunteer militia movement launched to repel a feared French invasion, addressed in the poem 'Come, sons of brave old Somerset' by 'A Volunteer Rifleman' (*Bristol Mercury*, January 28, 1860). Local personalities were celebrated ... and local topics such as the sea, found particularly in the Portsmouth and Bristol papers, in poems like ... 'Ships of War' (*Hampshire Telegraph*, August 4, 1900). Many poems commented on local news topics ...<sup>162</sup>

As they emphasise, local newspapers themselves played a crucial role in providing a site where local writing could be printed and read. 'The most significant function of the local newspaper for Victorian poetry', they note, 'was its ability to deliver verse about local places,

---

<sup>158</sup> See John Wrigglesworth, *Grass from a Yorkshire Village* (London: Roxburghe Press, 1897); Hubert Cloudesley [pseud. John Wrigglesworth], *Idylls of Yorkshire* (Elland: Henry Watson, c.1900); and, for example, "A Yorkshire Story..." [advert], *The Halifax Guardian*, 10 March 1894, p.5, and "'The Sweetest Maid in Glowton.'" *The Halifax Guardian*, 21 April 1894, p.2.

<sup>159</sup> See "Minor Poetry." *Dundee Advertiser*, 19 August 1897, p.2.

<sup>160</sup> Hobbs and Januszewski, 'How Local Newspapers Came to Dominate Victorian Poetry Publishing', p.82.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p.83.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, p.82.

people, and events, by local poets, to a local audience'.<sup>163</sup> Just as newspapers can be seen to have had an active impact on aspirants terms of literary advice and correspondence, local papers, show Hobbs and Januszewski, played an active role in encouraging people to write. 'Local literary cultures', they note, 'particularly among working-class writers, flourished thanks to the newspapers ... by providing a publishing platform for tens of thousands of local poets, producing millions of poems, the local paper encouraged "poetic behaviour", treating poetry as a language available to all'.<sup>164</sup>

We can see here how the creation and reading of local poetry and prose may have contributed to the democratisation of writing. In local writing and in the use of place in writing more broadly, we can also again see a sense of entitlement to be writing. By writing about their local areas, or places they had experience or knowledge of – whether holiday destinations, Keating's mines, or Springall's Uxbridge – writers were not only putting places on the map, seeing the value of particular places, and in this way democratising place itself, but were demonstrating a belief in the worthiness of their own observations.

### **PART III**

#### **The Place of Writing**

The evidence of what aspirants were writing, and what was influencing them, helps us to understand more about their motivations and ambitions, as well as the place of writing in their lives. Whilst possible commercial motivations can be seen in submissions to publishers, and in imitations of the subjects and styles of popular works, there are also, again, many indications of non-materialist motivations and of writing amongst aspirants as an organic and joyful consequence of a growing engagement with words.

The popularity of poetry, and the submission of both prose and poetry to local newspapers, for example, hints at 'internal' motivations such as self-expression far more than commercial ambitions. For any aspirant aiming at wealth, verse would not have been the natural choice. The evident popularity and enjoyment of poetry-writing amongst aspirants was far more indicative of creative joy and a desire to share one's thoughts and feelings with a public. Submissions to local newspapers, meanwhile, even where a monetary prize was on offer, were likely as much about creativity and self-expression as commercial gain, with the pride of

---

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., p.80.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., pp.83–4.

potentially seeing one's story or poem in print arguably just as much of an incentive as the possibility of a small financial reward.

Local newspapers themselves were also clearly motivating readers who had not yet contributed to do so. It is easy to see how entries by local names from nearby areas could have inspired ordinary readers who had not already thought of writing in to attempt it. Such individuals were unlikely to be seeing themselves as the next Dickens; greater motivators would have been contributing to their local newspaper, mining their own lives for an incident or event to fictionalise, or simply seeing if they could create something worthy of being published.

Whilst any attempt to publish indicates a degree of commercial ambition, a submission to a newspaper, or even a publisher, may also have been an effort to ascertain the standard of one's work. Whilst this period saw a growing number of literary agents and others offering similar services, a direct submission to a publication or publisher was another, and likely cheaper, way of seeing if one's novel or poem was of publishable quality. Submission anywhere, meanwhile, demonstrates a level of confidence in oneself and one's work, and a recognition of the value of one's voice, perspective, and contribution.

Chapter 3 noted how the autobiographical impulse suggests non-materialist motivations as well as a desire to narrativise one's life. The use of one's own experiences in fiction, as well as writing about or referencing one's local area, can be seen as another version of this impulse; in using details and places from their own lives, many aspirants were – as with autobiography – demonstrating an awareness of the value of their experiences and perspectives.

In what aspirants wrote, and the places to which they submitted, we can also learn more about the relationship between their writing and their work lives. Whilst some individuals clearly drew on their work lives in their writing, perhaps keen to commit their work experiences to paper, others appear to have written on very different subjects, perhaps using writing as an imaginative escape. Maysel Jenkinson's 'little stories with a touch of fairy-feeling in them' were a possible welcome diversion from poultry farming, whilst Alfred Macey perhaps found poetry writing a pleasant intellectual contrast to his work as a shipyard driller.<sup>165</sup>

---

<sup>165</sup> For Maysel Jenkinson, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25541, and 1911 Census, household record for Duffs Hill, Glemsford, Suffolk. NB: Poultry farming was clearly not a family occupation, however – Jenkinson's father was in publishing and her siblings' occupations, where mentioned, are not manual. (See aforementioned census, and 1901 Census, household record for 49 Lyndhurst Road, Camberwell.) For Alfred Macey, see Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24162; 1911 Census, household record for 119 Hedley Street, South Shields; 1901

Publishers' archives also give some indications as to how aspirants' writing was done. Chatto, for example, sometimes recorded whether or not a manuscript was typed. For the 45 Chatto writers in this study, 18 submitted at least some typewritten work, whilst one (Stephen Springall) submitted work handwritten in pencil.<sup>166</sup> (It is unclear whether the remaining 26 individuals submitted typewritten or handwritten work.) Four of those using typewriters appear to have already been published at the time they submitted; excluding these, a majority (10 of 14) were, or had been, in clerical, secretarial, or other occupations related to reading and writing. Alfred Harbert, Richard Goddard, Sidney Durston, Eleanor Kennedy, and a writer assumed to be John Leonard Nutty were all current or former clerks or secretaries, Thomas Clarke and Charles Montague Clark were journalists, Ernest Estcourt Hayward was a stationer's representative, and Agnes Holliday and William Clay were, as we have seen, a teacher and librarian, respectively.<sup>167</sup> There is an apparent link here between white-collar work and typewritten submissions. It is possible that these writers' work lives gave them experience of using a typewriter and made the acquisition of one a natural and obvious choice. Individuals in

---

Census, household record for 15 Robertson Street, South Shields; and Alfred Macey (presumed but not confirmed to be our Alfred Macey) *The Heart's Love and Feeling in Poetic Verses* (London: J. Blackwood & Co., 1899).

<sup>166</sup> These writers are: Alfred Harbert (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entries 20294 and 20858); Agnes Holliday (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24286); Richard Goddard (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24407 and 24720, under R. Hazlewood); Eleanor Kennedy (at least one of her submissions was typed, see: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 23918); Sidney Durston (at least one of his submissions was typed, see: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25980); Millicent Burbridge (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23852); Gladys Davidson (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24405, 24406, and 24731); Ernest Estcourt Hayward (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26031); Herbert Rowland Walker (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25917); John Leonard Nutty (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26103); William Clay (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26045); Cyril Silverston (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23857); Thomas Clarke (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24150); Hamilton Seymour (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24260 and 24268); Emily Kornitzer (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24370, under E. M. Elliott); John Ruffitt (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24884); Wallace Nichols (his submission was part typewritten, see: Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20481); Charles Montague Clark (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26011); and Stephen Springall (Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17842).

<sup>167</sup> Those already published were: Gladys Davidson, Hamilton Seymour, Cyril Silverston, and Herbert Rowland Walker. See Chapter 3 for details. For those in clerical roles and so on, see as follows. For Alfred Harbert, see 1901 Census, household record for 128 Venner Road, Sydenham, and 1911 Census, household record for 43 Selby Road, Anerley, Croydon. For Richard Goddard, see 1911 Census, household record for 7 Ranelagh Gardens, Fulham, London. For Sidney Durston, see 1911 Census, household record for 58 Ruckholt Road, Leyton, Essex. For Eleanor Kennedy, see 1911 Census, household record for 21 Cheverton Rd, Islington, London (NB: Kennedy is listed in the census as an unemployed private secretary and bookkeeper (recently employed, it seems) seven months after her typed submission to Chatto in 1910, so it is assumed that at submission she had some secretarial experience). For John Leonard Nutty, see 1911 Census, household record for 64 Hunger Hill Road, Nottingham. For Thomas Clarke, see 1911 Census, household record for 14 Ruskin Walk, Herne Hill, London. (NB: Thomas Clarke is listed in the census as a journalist exactly two months after his typed submission to Chatto, so it is assumed that, in all likelihood, he had that job at the time of submission). For Charles Montague Clark, see 1911 Census, household record for 27 Holford Square, London. For Ernest Estcourt Hayward, see household record for 32 Oakington Road, Paddington, London. For Agnes Holliday, see 1911 Census, household record for Agnes Theresa Holliday, Stanford in the Vale, Berkshire (Croft Cottage), and 1939 Register, record for Agnes T. Holliday, Berkshire, b. 1878. For William Clay, see 1911 Census, household record for William Clay, Hermitage Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, Southend-on-Sea (Kersbrook).

lower-middle-class occupations such as these may also, potentially, have typewritten their work at their workplaces.

## Writing Spaces

Chapter 3 touched briefly on the issue of living arrangements and writing, noting that the home life of some teachers may have encouraged some sort of imaginative escape. Conversely, one's household situation could also, of course, leave one with limited physical and mental space in which to write. These are issues not only relevant to this period. Hilliard notes that 'when describing their writing habits' some decades later, 'male as well as female aspirants referred to struggles to find time and a relatively quiet place to write', even if 'the men's accounts display[ed] an implicit sense of entitlement to peace' that was 'absent from the women's'.<sup>168</sup> Whilst there is very limited evidence of aspirants' writing habits around the turn of the century, Joseph Keating's account offers a useful glimpse into the difficulties of finding the space and peace to write.

Finding a suitable place to write was a recurrent problem for Keating. His first novel, *Merva Brully*, was completed during a month-long break from his office job, taken deliberately for the purpose of finishing it.<sup>169</sup> Living at this point with his married sister in Cardiff, he had been allocated a back room as a 'quite place' in which to read and write.<sup>170</sup> The incessant sound of musical instruments through the wall, however, from next-door neighbours who only knew one tune and 'played it so often that the paper broke loose from the wall, and the plaster cracked', proved too much.<sup>171</sup> His daily work was also demanding, sometimes detaining him 'till ten o'clock in the night', and meaning 'writing and reading could only be done at home in the evenings, or on Sundays'.<sup>172</sup> 'Between the piano, [and] mandolin ... at home', he writes, 'and the heavy work at our office, I had no hope of being able to complete the book unless I did it during this holiday'.<sup>173</sup> Having already finished seven chapters, with a further 20 left to write, he took 'rooms in a market-gardener's house, near the river' in Carmarthen, and, by staying in and exercising discipline, wrote 60,000 words and completed the book.<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>168</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.43–4.

<sup>169</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, pp.176–8.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p.172.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p.174.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p.177.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.176–8.

Sometime later, he was in a shared rented house in London, with all of his writing ‘done in my den of a bedroom on the first floor’.<sup>175</sup> Aside from a small bed, which ‘almost filled’ the room, he had ‘a chair, a flower-table ... used for writing, and a mirrored mantel-piece’.<sup>176</sup> The room was dark, and although there was a window, there was also noise as before; ‘outside ... were the conveniences of a dress-making shop’, with ‘young women ... continually running up and down stairs’, ‘while over the roofs [sic] came the hooting and scratching of motor-buses, the weight of which as they passed made our house tremble’.<sup>177</sup> In his mind he pictured his ideal writing-room, ‘a great, spacious palace, with a lofty dome’, with ‘countless windows’, ‘no street, industrial, or domestic noises near me to frighten away ideas’.<sup>178</sup> Instead, he was confined to a ‘dark hole, with the dirty backs of high buildings all around’, enclosing him ‘as completely as if I were scribbling at the bottom of a well’.<sup>179</sup> We can imagine that many aspirants in this period may have had similar difficulties and feelings. Commission agent Charles Ely appears to have been living in a house in London with nine others (including five other boarders) in 1901, the year he submitted to Chatto and Macmillan.<sup>180</sup> Similarly, journalist William Bryant was one of nine boarders at a property in 1881, the year he submitted to Macmillan.<sup>181</sup>

Keating, at another point, was living in a garret in Torrington Square, ‘but could not work in it owing to the rattle of traffic outside, night and day’.<sup>182</sup> Instead, he wrote in the British Museum Reading Room along with his struggling writer friend, Patterson.<sup>183</sup> ‘No other place in London was quiet’, he notes.<sup>184</sup> Not that it was quiet enough. ‘Nearly all the readers there spent most of their time coughing, or clearing their throats, or turning over leaves of big volumes, and making swishing, irritating noises’.<sup>185</sup>

Even apart from the noise, the Reading Room does not appear to have been a problem-free writing space for Keating and others like him. A 1912 handbook to the Reading Room and an 1896 newspaper piece both state that its use ‘is restricted’ to ‘purposes of research and

---

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p.298.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.298–9.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p.299.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> See Macmillan RoM 56019, entry 13334; Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/5, entry 17726; and 1901 Census, household record for 26 Great Ormond Street, London.

<sup>181</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volume 56016, entry 3335, and 1881 Census, household record for 7 Greystoke Place, London.

<sup>182</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, pp.226–7.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p.227.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

reference’, and Keating explains that when working there, in around 1904, he had to pretend to be researching in order to stop the staff bothering him:

[Patterson] warned me that I was breaking all the rules of the Reading Room by using it as a writing room, and that I was endangering my chance of being admitted. I had no other place for my writing, and I thought it would be a wrong and unjust thing for any official to interfere with me. I noticed that the attendants kept an unduly watchful eye on me. One, certainly, did approach me to ask what books I was waiting for. After that, I ordered dozens of volumes every day and never opened one of them.<sup>186</sup>

Furthermore, the conditions of admission from 1912 indicate that Patterson’s fears were justified, and that the notion of the Room as a place of research was taken seriously.<sup>187</sup> One rule specifically states that ‘no person will be admitted for the purpose of preparing for examination’, or – curiously – for the purpose ‘of writing prize essays, or of competing for prizes’.<sup>188</sup>

The overcrowding in, and misuse of, the British Museum Reading Room, meanwhile, was commented upon on several occasions during this period.<sup>189</sup> Various newspaper pieces in the 1880s and 1890s describe the Room as a ‘much-abused institution’, ‘a sort of lounge for the literary pretender’, and a place where ‘idlers’ and ‘loafers’, sometimes with no intention to read, talk, take up space, and ‘snooze’, leaving ‘real’, ‘legitimate’, and ‘genuine’ readers and workers nowhere to sit.<sup>190</sup> Even the late Carlyle, one piece notes, was sometimes forced ‘to sit on a ladder’ for want of a free chair.<sup>191</sup> Another piece refers to readers who ‘secure three or four seats’ by giving one to their hat, another to their gloves, and so on, causing the room to swiftly become ‘filled with phantom monopolists’.<sup>192</sup>

---

<sup>186</sup> R. A. Peddie, *The British Museum Reading Room: A Handbook for Students* (London: Grafton & Co., 1912), p.4; “The British Museum Reading Room.” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 21 June 1896, p.8; and Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, pp.226–7. The *Lloyd’s* piece is slightly unclear as to whether these rules refer to the Reading Room as a whole or one of its subsidiary areas, but it appears to be the former.

<sup>187</sup> These, at least, are the conditions of admission as listed in Peddie’s student handbook on using the Reading Room, which was clearly authorised by the Museum itself – see Peddie, *The British Museum Reading Room*, Preface.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>189</sup> See, for example: “The British Museum Reading-Room.” *The Globe and Traveller*, 27 August 1880, p.1; “British Museum Reading Room.” *The Daily News* [London], 17 September 1887, p.5; “New brooms proverbially sweep clean; and the recently-elected Principal Librarian of the British Museum...” *Whitby Gazette*, 19 October 1888, p.4; “The British Museum Reading-Room.” *The St James’s Gazette*, 24 March 1890, p.11; “The British Museum.” *The Bradford Daily Telegraph*, 7 September 1893, p.2; and “The British Museum Reading Room.” *The Daily News* [London], 3 September 1894, p.6.

<sup>190</sup> See “The British Museum Reading-Room.” *Globe and Traveller*, 27 August 1880, p.1; “British Museum Reading Room.” *Daily News* [London], 17 September 1887, p.5; “New brooms proverbially sweep clean; and the recently-elected Principal Librarian of the British Museum...” *Whitby Gazette*, 19 October 1888, p.4; “The British Museum.” *Bradford Daily Telegraph*, 7 September 1893, p.2; and “The British Museum Reading Room.” *Daily News* [London], 3 September 1894, p.6.

<sup>191</sup> “The British Museum.” *Bradford Daily Telegraph*, 7 September 1893, p.2.

<sup>192</sup> “The British Museum Reading-Room.” *St James’s Gazette*, 24 March 1890, p.11.

Even those seemingly engaged in literary labour at the Reading Room did not escape criticism. A letter to the *Daily News* in 1894, apparently penned by historian Martin Andrew Sharp Hume, took issue with those ‘dawdling over’ books that could be got elsewhere, as well as abusers like the gentleman who treated the Room as his personal office, ‘edit[ing] a small newspaper’ and conducting a ‘voluminous correspondence’ from inside its walls.<sup>193</sup>

In a description that could have been based on Keating, Hume also took aim at those who ‘surround themselves with dozens of books, some of them books of reference which are frequently needed by others, and coolly retain them almost permanently’, looking at them infrequently or ‘not at all’.<sup>194</sup> Although Keating was not, it seems, ejected from the Museum, we can see how the Reading Room may not have entirely been the quiet and welcoming workplace that we might assume it was, especially, perhaps, for individuals such as Keating and Patterson, whose appearance alone may well have marked them out as potential ‘loafers’.<sup>195</sup> (Whilst Keating does not specifically mention their attire, he describes Patterson as ‘pale’, and notes that ‘his struggle for fame in London was at its hardest about this time’.)<sup>196</sup>

We can also see another possible discrepancy here between the fiction of *New Grub Street* and realities for real-life aspirants. The British Museum Reading Room is a recurring, if not significant, part of Gissing’s narrative, with Adrian Poole noting that it ‘stands physically at the centre of the novel, as the literal store-house of literary culture’.<sup>197</sup> Some of Gissing’s characters, one feels, almost own the Reading Room; they are at home there, bump into each other there, and seem to be guilty of most of the sins that in real life were frowned upon by people like Hume.

Mr Quarmby is described as the ‘inveterate chatterbox of the Reading-room’ and has spent sufficient time within its walls to have acquired a ‘peculiar’ laugh, ‘the result of long years of mirth-subdual’.<sup>198</sup> Marian is also a persistent worker at the Reading Room – even if she does not enjoy it – and early on has conversations there with Milvain, Quarmby, and Mr Hinks.<sup>199</sup> Unlike Keating, these characters also generally use the Room for research, not because it is their only quiet place to work.<sup>200</sup> Marian conducts research and writing for her father; Milvain, notes

---

<sup>193</sup> “The British Museum Reading Room.” *Daily News* [London], 3 September 1894, p.6.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> Keating, *My Struggle for Life*, p.226.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>197</sup> Adrian Poole, *Gissing in Context* (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp.142–3.

<sup>198</sup> George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp.83 and 103.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.80–4 and 106–9.

<sup>200</sup> An exception to this is the young Reardon, who, in the flashback section, goes to the Reading Room to keep warm. See *ibid.*, pp.59–60.

Poole, ‘raids the reading-room for smatterings of knowledge to flavour his facile concoctions’.<sup>201</sup> Marian’s father has a study; even Reardon, living initially with his wife and child in a few rooms at the top of a building, manages to use one of these rooms as his study, and is apparently not bothered by ‘the noise from the street’, which ‘was diminished at this height’.<sup>202</sup>

Keating, by the time of his stint at the Reading Room, is not worlds away from Gissing’s characters – he is a published author, and is not unlike an unmarried, less-educated, and less-evolved Reardon. The slight sense of difference between his experience of the Reading Room and that of Gissing’s writers, however, is interesting, and there would arguably have been even more of a potential gulf between Gissing’s fictional visitors and aspirants that were even lower down the professional scale than Keating – those without publications or any experience of the literary world.

Significantly, admission to the British Museum Reading Room was also by application. A newspaper article from 1896 notes that ‘those seeking admission must send in writing to the Principal Librarian, specifying profession or business, place of abode, and *the particular purpose* they have in view for making application’.<sup>203</sup> This had to ‘be accompanied by a written recommendation from a householder, who must be a person of recognised position, with full signature and address, stated to be given *on personal knowledge* of the applicant’.<sup>204</sup> These rules still existed almost word for word in 1912, with the additional stipulation that this recommendation could not come from ‘hotel keepers’, ‘boarding-house or lodging house keepers’, writing ‘in favour of their lodgers’.<sup>205</sup> Young Reardon, in the flashback portion of *New Grub Street*, resorts to writing ‘to a well-known novelist’ who invites him to his house and gladly supports his application.<sup>206</sup> One wonders to what extent many real-life aspirants, though, would have been prevented or at least put off in making an application by such requirements. By 1912, there was also an age limit of 21 years.<sup>207</sup>

There are also indications that not all public libraries in this period may have offered a free and welcoming space to write, or even read. Mary Hammond reminds us that public libraries were not a wholly ‘unmitigated blessing’, noting that ‘library committees ... worried about their new building being used by loafers and their books being damaged, and positively discouraged

---

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., see, for example, pp.80 and 106, and Poole, *Gissing in Context*, p.143.

<sup>202</sup> Gissing, *New Grub Street*, see, for example, pp.92 and 97–8, and 45–6.

<sup>203</sup> “The British Museum Reading Room.” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 21 June 1896, p.8. Italics in original.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid. Italics in original.

<sup>205</sup> See Peddie, *The British Museum Reading Room*, pp.5–6.

<sup>206</sup> Gissing, *New Grub Street*, pp.58–9.

<sup>207</sup> See Peddie, *The British Museum Reading Room*, p.6.

working-class readers from using it because of their perceived idleness, or their dirty hands and clothes'.<sup>208</sup> She draws attention to elements that would have made some libraries appear hostile to poorer would-be users – from closed shelves, daunting methods of book obtainment, and strict rules (such as those requiring silence, 'discourag[ing] use of the library as a congenial meeting place' and discouraging browsing), to the watchful gazes of staff, and expectations of cleanliness – the latter particularly problematic for manual workers, as she notes, 'when few workplaces provided washing facilities for their employees' and at least some libraries apparently frowned upon their public conveniences being used for such purposes.<sup>209</sup>

Indeed, there is evidence that some working people found libraries unfriendly places. Hammond quotes factory worker Alice Foley, who described the book selection process (prior to open access shelving) as 'quite a business', involving 'probing through ... massive catalogues ... followed by reference to an in-and-out card index ... which often entailed a tedious repetition'.<sup>210</sup> Her negative experience did not end there; after choosing books for her family, she then 'usually crept upstairs to the reading-room trying to still the clatter of clogs on stone steps, but on settling down with a picture magazine, up came the irate caretaker', and she 'was shunted out like an unwanted animal'.<sup>211</sup>

There are also signs of strongly held beliefs about right and wrong types of reading matter and right and wrong types of library user. A letter to the London *Standard* in 1895 prompted by 'what appear to be abuses of the [public library] scheme', took issue with the disproportionate number of visitors to the news and magazine rooms of one library – 'almost six to one ... of those attending ... go in simply to read the papers' – as well as the 'times at which these readers of newspapers attend'.<sup>212</sup> With 10 to 11am the most popular period, there was – apart from a small increase in the lunch hour – a 'steady decrease' in visitors for the remainder of the day, 'even in the hours when the working man is supposed to be improving his mind, after leaving work at five p.m.'.<sup>213</sup> 'This', says the writer, 'leads me to suppose that the visitors are simply the unemployed, or they would not be able to devote the most valuable working hours of the day to loafing in a reading-room'.<sup>214</sup>

---

<sup>208</sup> Hammond, 'Readers and Readerships', p.42. See also Hammond, 'The Great Fiction Bore', p.91.

<sup>209</sup> Hammond, 'The Great Fiction Bore', pp.96–9.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p.97. See also Hammond, 'Readers and Readerships', p.42.

<sup>211</sup> Hammond, 'The Great Fiction Bore', p.97. Also quoted in Hammond, 'Readers and Readerships', p.42.

<sup>212</sup> "Public Libraries and their Abuse." *The Standard* [London], 2 April 1895, p.3.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

Such experiences and attitudes may not have been universal, but it does remind us that, contrary to the impression given by Johansen's London librarians and their libraries, not every institution may have been inviting as a place to simply be, or write, and that the experience of using a library could – and did – encompass a lot more for working people than the simple act of checking out books.

This chapter has shown how the examination of what some aspirants wrote can give us a fuller understanding of who these individuals were, why they were writing, and how writing fitted into their lives. Several aspirants seem to have been modelling their own stories on fiction and genres that had proved popular and that they themselves had enjoyed reading, whether these texts had been discovered at home as children, bought, or borrowed from libraries. (The origin of these texts is sometimes even suggested, as in one reader's report which describes a melodramatic submission as 'an ordinary library novel'.)<sup>215</sup>

Inspiration also came from people's work lives, their immediate environment, and the world around them. Short stories contributed to local newspapers, meanwhile, were likely inspired, in part, by the newspapers themselves, echoing, as they often did, the attention-grabbing, noteworthy nature of real-life news events. Poetry, meanwhile, was both written and read. In an age when fiction was not yet as dominant as it would become, poetry – a shorter and arguably easier form of writing than a long Victorian novel – was likely an accessible and less daunting entry point into authorship for the late-nineteenth-century aspirant. Aspirants' poems appear to have been inspired by their own lives and the world around them, as well as the verse they were reading or hearing, in school or outside it. The amount of poetry being written – and by extension – being read, meanwhile, supports both Reilly's observation that poetry 'seems to have been a favourite medium' for the newly educated working classes, as well as Hobbs and Januszewski's and Peterson's assertions as to the place and importance of verse in Victorian print culture.<sup>216</sup>

We can also see here yet more proof of non-materialist motivations and of a general enjoyment of writing, as well as a sense that aspirants felt entitled to be writing and were embracing it as a democratic activity. Working- and lower-middle-class individuals were consuming and enjoying books, poetry, newspapers, and other literature, with many attempting

---

<sup>215</sup> See Macmillan RR Volume 55941, entry 5619. (NB: This submitter is not amongst the Macmillan writers selected for this study.)

<sup>216</sup> See Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry*, p.x; Hobbs and Januszewski, 'How Local Newspapers Came to Dominate Victorian Poetry Publishing', especially pp.65–87; and Linda H. Peterson, 'Periodical Poetry', in Joanne Shattock (ed.), *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p.127.

to become part of the cultural world around them as contributors and creators. Whilst some individuals clearly aspired to commercial success, a desire for self-expression is also very evident, both from what aspirants wrote (such as poetry) and the places in which they attempted to publish (such as local newspapers), if, indeed, they attempted to publish at all. A consideration of writing spaces, meanwhile, reminds us to be cognisant of the practicalities of fitting writing as an activity into working- and lower-middle-class lives at the turn of the century. Whilst there is limited evidence of aspirants' actual experiences of writing, we can see how some domestic arrangements, as well as some public spaces apparently conducive to writing, may, in fact, have created obstacles for some individuals who wished to put pen to paper.

## CONCLUSION

‘The author cannot write’, noted Chatto in 1914 about ‘Wm Johnson’, who had sent them a 204-page submission, described by Johnson himself as a ‘humourous’ novel.<sup>1</sup> Ethel Hanna’s ‘amateurishly written’ effort in 1911 – ‘so obviously a first novel’, they noted – was no better received.<sup>2</sup> In Macmillan’s records are similar efforts and comments. ‘The author has ideas’, they noted about submitter ‘K. Widdup’ in 1901, ‘but is hopelessly hampered in their expression by want of education’.<sup>3</sup> A 1901 report for a writer named Charlotte Roxburgh, meanwhile, stated:

It is to be regretted that the author has not been educated. She has observation, and some descriptive power when dealing with coarse and narrow personages. But her style is so utterly uncultivated, and she is so ignorant of what to omit, that her novel is useless.<sup>4</sup>

An 1892 report for another writer, named only as Rhoda, who seemed ‘to be trying her hand for the first time’, noted that she ‘appear[ed] to have studied fiction in the novels of Mrs Ward and Miss Corelli, [and] life in the [*Family Herald?*]’.<sup>5</sup> Her story did not make a good impression. The reader judged it ‘foolish, confused ... [and] tiresome’, adding that ‘it would be difficult to say in which field’ the writer ‘most [conspicuously?] displays her ignorance’.<sup>6</sup>

Johnson appears to have been a ‘designer and draughtsman’, and was living with his cabinet maker uncle and his family; Hanna was a young widow living with her mother and two brothers (a clerk and a cashier); Widdup – believed to be Katherine Widdup, as noted earlier – was the wife of a timber merchant.<sup>7</sup> Details about Charlotte Roxburgh and Rhoda are unknown, but the former had presumably not received a great deal of schooling.<sup>8</sup>

It may not have been until the early to mid-twentieth century that writers’ circles emerged and writing became, as Christopher Hilliard has shown, an ‘organised pursuit’.<sup>9</sup> As these

---

<sup>1</sup> Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26194. (NB: These are Chatto’s quote marks – i.e. this is Chatto’s quoting of Johnson’s word – and they include ‘[sic]’ after in their comments – clearly to highlight Johnson’s misspelling.)

<sup>2</sup> Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24488.

<sup>3</sup> Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13349, and Macmillan RR Volume 55962, p.277 (see also p.276).

<sup>4</sup> Macmillan RR Volume 55963, pp.116–7. (For her submission, see Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13480.)

<sup>5</sup> Macmillan RR Volume 55977, entry listed as ‘23. Changes; by Rhoda’. (For her submission, see Macmillan RoM 56017, entry 7896.)

<sup>6</sup> Macmillan RR Volume 55977, entry listed as ‘23. Changes; by Rhoda’.

<sup>7</sup> For William Johnson, see 1911 Census, household record for 58 Belgrave Road, Walthamstow. For Ethel Hanna, see 1911 Census, household record for 48 Nightingale Lane, London. For Katherine Widdup, see 1901 Census, household record for 12 Merlin Road, Blackburn.

<sup>8</sup> Both Charlotte Roxburgh and Rhoda submitted via other people, so it is not possible to trace them easily in the census. There is also no surname given for Rhoda.

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), front cover flap.

and the other writers in this study demonstrate, however, ordinary individuals in the period from 1870 and 1914 were writing and were aspiring to write. The fact that these individuals were likely quite isolated, and were often working other jobs, with little free time, might explain why collective avenues of help such as writers' circles only seem to have emerged later. Many of this period's working- and lower-middle-class writers were, however, making use of avenues of help that were available to them, and whether or not they ever published, or even desired to publish, they were reading literature, enjoying it, and crucially, were feeling entitled to create it themselves.

An entitlement to be writing and a sense of self-belief is a recurring theme amongst the aspirants of this study. From Alfred Harbert's repeated publication attempts with Chatto, to the *Young Man* correspondent who asked how to become an author, these populations were seeing authorship as something that was open to them and within their grasp. Returning to Hilliard's proposition that 'it is a shared sense of entitlement to participate in cultural activities' that 'makes the place of literature ... in a society "democratic"', we can see how creative writing was, to a significant extent, already being democratised.

Given the developments that we know occurred across the nineteenth century, especially from the 1870s onwards – from the introduction of Board schools and the emergence of a literary advice industry, to the expansion of the lower-middle-class workforce – it is, in many ways, unsurprising that these individuals were writing. Indeed, historians are well aware that aspirant writers existed, as we saw earlier, for example, with Philip Waller's acknowledgement that 'a vast amount of aspiration was waiting to be satisfied'.<sup>10</sup> These people have generally been seen, however, not as individuals, but as a vast, homogeneous, and largely invisible mass. What this study has shown is that it is possible to uncover some evidence about these populations. By drawing on different sources, it is possible to extract some representative individuals from the mass. Whilst the bulk of new readers and writers in this period are unrecoverable, we can gain an important glimpse of these people's thoughts, writings, and aspirations. All this evidence suggests that increased literacy, and the availability of, and exposure to, reading material, were – along with other changes already mentioned – having immediate impacts on these populations, their activities, and their visions of themselves and the world around them.

As we have seen, this period did not only bring about the real-life aspirant, however – it created the phenomenon of the aspirant, also. The aspirant was an imaginary figure that was

---

<sup>10</sup> Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.402.

written about, written to, discussed, feared, and criticised. Whilst the figure of the aspirant in no way saturated print media, references to the aspirant – and authorship generally – cropped up regularly, and seemingly with increasing frequency over this period.

A rough search of one British newspaper database for the exact phrase ‘literary aspirant’ at the time of writing brings up 372 results for the decade from 1860 to 1869; 309 results for 1870 to 1879; 789 for 1880 to 1889; and 1369 and 1275 for the years 1890 to 1899, and 1900 to 1909, respectively.<sup>11</sup> These are extremely rough figures that may well reflect differences in the numbers of digitised newspapers available on the selected database for each decade, but they still indicate that the period from 1880 to the early 1900s was the peak period of the aspirant.

Other figures hint at the extent to which the popularity of authorship grew as well. Submissions of manuscripts to Macmillan increased in the 1870s alone; in the years from 1870 to 1876, around 130 to 160 manuscripts appear to have been received annually; by the end of the decade (1878 and 1879), these figures were approximately 257 and 266.<sup>12</sup> These totals continued to increase; in 1905, the company appears to have received around 725 manuscripts.<sup>13</sup> The general increase in manuscripts received by Macmillan in later decades is also suggested by the year coverage of the large Record of Manuscript volumes. Just one volume appears to cover the 17 years from late 1866 to late 1883, for example; the following volume covers nine-and-a-half years, from late 1883 to spring 1893; whilst a later volume covers just seven years (from late 1899 to late 1906).<sup>14</sup> (The extent to which these submissions may have been from working- and lower-middle-class aspirants, however, is unclear without further research. A good proportion of these submissions would also likely have been non-fiction.)

This study’s deliberate focus on the aspirant does not just highlight that the real-life aspirant existed, or that the phenomenon of the aspirant did also, however. It reveals, significantly, how the aspirant interacted with, and reacted to, the wider culture, and vice versa. There were often contradictions at play here, as we have seen. Print media articles, correspondence columns, and competitions, for example, could provide help, encouragement, and feedback to the real-life writer, and this largely positive impact sat alongside negative attitudes and fears about writing as an activity, who was doing it, and the quality of what was

---

<sup>11</sup> The database used was the British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>12</sup> These figures were very roughly arrived at by manually counting the relevant entries in Macmillan RoM Volume 56016. Unfortunately it is not always possible to simply subtract the entry number at one’s start date (in this case 1 January 1870) from the entry number at one’s end date (in this case 31 December 1879) as at times there are errors in the numbering. In one point in 1874, for example, the entry numbers jump from 1099 to 2000.

<sup>13</sup> This rough figure was arrived at by multiplying the number of pages by the number of entries per page, for the year 1905, in Macmillan RoM Volume 56019.

<sup>14</sup> See Macmillan RoM Volumes 56016, 56017, and 56019.

being produced, highlighting opposing views in this period about universal education and mass literacy. Whilst some believed writing was teachable, others did not; whilst some mocked aspirants and the new 'quarter-educated' populations, others, such as Dawson in the *Young Man*, encouraged their literary efforts and ambitions. Whilst some assumed writing was an automatic right, others believed that there were right and wrong literary producers, and more worthy and less worthy literary products. Print media's general coverage of writing and publishing, meanwhile, undoubtedly helped to create more aspirants, not only reflecting the popularity of authorship but helping to perpetuate it.

Aspirants themselves also impacted the literary world around them. By contributing stories to local newspaper competitions, entering into dialogue via correspondence columns, and purchasing literary handbooks, for example, they were helping to shape the literary environment, and were also adding their voices to it. This study's sustained focus on the aspirant has also highlighted the place of literary imagination in the popular culture of this period, especially interesting, perhaps, given the apparent lack of awareness amongst commentators of the non-professional uses of fiction writing and the non-materialist joys and benefits of writing as an activity. Far from just offering new diversions (such as reading) or new professions (such as writing), literacy and literature had deep, imaginative impacts on people's lives, shaping their thoughts and actions and influencing how they saw both themselves and the world around them. We can also see the extent to which work and leisure in this period could be closely connected. Reading and writing were not only ways to fill increased leisure time and spend increased wages; the nature of some occupations may have pushed people into the world of words, either as an imaginative escape, or as a natural progression of the work or training they were doing. Reading for pleasure could also draw people into authorship and literary professions more broadly.

Overall, these findings demonstrate how important a part of the literary picture in this period the aspirant was. It is also clear the extent to which top-down accounts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with their focus on 'successful' authors and high-end fin de siècle debates, do not describe or represent aspirants, their experiences, or simply working-class engagement with literacy in this period. Seemingly representative fiction, such as Gissing's *New Grub Street* (1891), meanwhile, whilst offering a 'realist depiction of a society in transition' does not present an image of working-class literary engagement.<sup>15</sup> Whilst ordinary aspirants may have experienced money worries like the fictional Reardon, and shared some of his anguish at being faced with a blank page, they likely wrote alongside other occupations and had very

---

<sup>15</sup> Robert McCrum, 'The 100 Best Novels: No. 28 – *New Grub Street* by George Gissing (1891).' *The Guardian*, 31 March 2014.

different literary experiences and concerns. Debates about the changing marketplace and issues such as copyright, as well as fears about the quantities of trashy novels, were generally of little day-to-day relevance to this period's new literate generations.

On the contrary, the evidence suggests that these populations were gaining a great deal of enjoyment from all types of literature. From children who were reading all they could get their hands on, to lower middle-class workers frequenting public library newsrooms, these generations were, first and foremost, gaining delight, knowledge, and inspiration from both printed information and imaginary worlds. This enjoyment has been discussed before; Jonathan Rose's work, for example, as noted earlier, has emphasised the joy that many pupils gained from English literature lessons at school. This study, however, has shown that there is evidence of this literary enjoyment in other places, such as in aspirants' fictional submissions to publishers and newspapers. What aspirants wrote, as we have seen, can reveal a great deal about what they read. Highlighting this evidence helps us to appreciate further the experiences and perspectives of these populations and how they may have differed from those of cultural commentators.

This study's focus on aspirants has also touched on the legacy of Romanticism and how Romantic ideas may have had cross-cutting influences. On the one hand, there appears to have been a perpetuation of ideas of literary genius (also therefore perpetuating the notion that aspiring writers could lack it), but on the other, we can see how Romantic ideas about creativity, as well as the continued popularity of poetry, and of nature as a literary subject, were helping to democratise writing for newly literate generations. Evidence about the popularity of poetry amongst aspirants is also significant given its continued popularity after this period, particularly as a popular form of expression during the First World War.

What is also interesting in this story is the extent to which aspirants were *not* influenced by many of the prevailing opinions and attitudes around them. It was noted earlier how aspirants were evidently not discouraged by failure – either their own or other people's – and we have seen evidence of the self-belief and entitlement that these new writers possessed. These individuals appear to have taken the ideas that worked for them and discarded the rest. Ideas about writing being unlearnable, fears about there being a surplus of writers, and paternalistic notions about the cruelty of literary manuals, do not appear to have concerned aspirants, perhaps unsurprisingly.

Instead, new literate generations seem to have been led by Romantic ideas about creativity and Smilesian self-improvement and persistence, as well as their talents and the

literature they were reading. As noted earlier, Catherine W. Reilly and Philip Waller have observed how the working classes were proud of and excited by their new-found literary abilities.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the lack of a non-professional and non-commercial model of authorship does not seem to have deterred aspirants either; these generations were writing anyway, inspired by what they read, what was read to them, and propelled by non-materialist as well as materialist motivations. Despite fears about the democratisation of writing, they were enjoying writing as a form of self-expression and treating it as an automatic right.

Despite this study's findings, there are some limitations to its evidence that must be acknowledged. Its main emphasis on submitters to Macmillan and Chatto and Windus, in particular, skews the evidence not only towards those who wished to publish, but those who contacted these particular high-end publishers, and did so directly, rather than through an agent or third party. These and the other aspirants mentioned in this study, meanwhile, are – naturally – those who either made some recorded contact with the literary world around them (submissions to publishers; letters and submissions to newspapers and magazines) or left accounts of such contact or of literary efforts (autobiography). Some of this evidence of contact, meanwhile, is not without its problems for the historian. As Hilliard has noted, the 'glimpse' offered by readers' reports 'is refracted through the jaded eyes' of those 'charged with assessing unsolicited manuscripts'.<sup>17</sup> Rose, also, reminds us, with reference to Joel Wiener's work, that letters to editors were sometimes faked by the editors themselves.<sup>18</sup>

To a degree, these limitations and issues were unavoidable; this study's research was bound by the surviving evidence. Writers who submitted to Macmillan and Chatto via an agent are also very difficult to trace as the address given is always that of the agent, not the writer. Some of the evidence gained from partially problematic sources, meanwhile, is unaffected by their problematic nature; readers' reports, for example, can still be relied upon for evidence of a submission's plot, irrespective of the thoughts and potential prejudices of the publisher's reader.

Further work on this topic could investigate archives of other publishers; the archives of agents such as Watt and particularly Pinker (both in the US) may also provide a small amount of further evidence. A more in-depth examination of print media could also be conducted. Many more local newspaper titles have been digitised since the research for this study was carried out.

---

<sup>16</sup> Catherine W. Reilly, *Late Victorian Poetry, 1880–1899: An Annotated Biobibliography* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1994), p.x, and Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations*, p.402.

<sup>17</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.70.

<sup>18</sup> Jonathan Rose, 'Workers' Journals', in J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel, *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p.304.

The 1921 Census, when it becomes available, may also provide useful additional information about the ongoing lives, occupations, and movements of aspirants from this period.

A further line of enquiry, meanwhile, could be literary societies and other relevant groups that did exist during this period. Lauren Weiss' Literary Bonds project on periodicals produced by literary and mutual improvement societies in England and Scotland over the long nineteenth century might offer a useful start point.<sup>19</sup> It would also be valuable to probe the question of geographic differences and to gain a better understanding of how the experience of being an aspirant may have differed according to one's location, and may have changed as the period progressed. As touched on earlier, there may have been considerable differences in the experience of reading and writing depending on one's family, schooling, and the availability and/or accessibility of a local library, with some of these factors naturally changing over time.

In 1885, as Jonathan Rose has noted, public libraries 'served only 25 percent of the population in England', compared to 62% – still not incredibly high – in 1911.<sup>20</sup> Based on other scholars' book sales research, he also observes how Victorian reading tastes (and therefore, one assumes, experiences) could vary according to region and 'even among different neighbourhoods of the same city'.<sup>21</sup> He notes how in the 'mill town of Burnley, a shop catering to a working-class clientele reported selling more than 20,000 copies of the works of Silas Hocking – more than one volume for every five inhabitants'.<sup>22</sup> It is possible that writing experiences were equally varied. The influence of one particular interactive local publication, for example, may have affected what an aspirant wrote about, and the type of writing (such as short stories) that they became practised in.

Further work could also acknowledge to a greater degree the differences between published writers' work. The phrase 'published author' conjures up a particular impression, but what this could mean varied greatly. Both Herbert Rowland Walker and William Clay were – strictly speaking – published writers, but whilst Walker's output was prolific, Clay's only published work appears to have been his *A History of Prittwell Priory, Illustrated* (1918), a very small booklet, unlikely to have had more than a handful of local readers.

In his book chapter, 'Education, Literacy, and the Victorian Reader', Rose states that 'the most difficult question historians of reading must confront is absolutely basic: who read what,

---

<sup>19</sup> See Lauren Weiss, Kirstie Blair, and Michael Sanders, '*Literary Bonds*', literarybonds.org.

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Rose, 'Education, Literacy, and the Victorian Reader', in Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (eds.), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), p.36.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

and how?<sup>23</sup> In focussing at length on the aspirant, this study has attempted to contribute to a fuller answer to this with respect to the writer. A quarter of a century ago, John Sutherland wrote that ‘we still make do with only the sketchiest sense of the infrastructure of Victorian fiction – how the bulk of it was produced; who originated, reproduced, distributed and consumed the product’.<sup>24</sup> His work on a sample of nearly 900 novelists aimed to create a more comprehensive picture; whilst these individuals were ‘probably unrepresentative’, he admitted, they were ‘less unrepresentative than the invariable dozen or so novelists’ who were normally considered synonymous with the study of Victorian fiction.<sup>25</sup> To investigate the ‘still invisible sub-stratum’ below the level of these writers, Sutherland noted, ‘some future literary archaeological tool’ would ‘have to be devised’.<sup>26</sup> Using various sources, this study has shown how there is, in fact, limited evidence of these ‘failures, rank amateurs, third-rate hacks and utter nonentities’, and that their story is not only important in its own right, but helps to widen our understanding of the late nineteenth century and of the democratisation of writing.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.39.

<sup>24</sup> John Sutherland, *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), p.151.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp.164 and 152–3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.164.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. See also p.152.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: MACMILLAN/CHATTO WRITERS – ARCHIVE DETAILS

MEB = Manuscript Entry Book; RoM = Records of Manuscripts; RR = Readers' Report

**1. BAXTER, Joseph**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20112

**2. BLOCH, Regina**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25824

**3. BRYANT, William**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56016, entry 3335

Macmillan RR Volume 55935, entry for 'An Evil Life (William Bryant) 3335'

**4. BURBRIDGE, Millicent (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23852

**5. CLARKE, Thomas**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24150

**6. CLAY, William**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26045

**7. CLOKE, Ellen**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26042

**8. COOPER, Sarah**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20143

**9. COOTE, Cecil**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25945

**10. CROWN, Sidney**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17918

**11. CURTOIS, Daniel (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM 56016, entry 3255

**12. DAVIDSON, Gladys**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20854

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24405, 24406, and 24731

**13. DIAMOND, Marian**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20878

**14. DONNELLY, John**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24305

**15. DURSTON, Sidney**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24112

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25980

**16. ELY, Charles (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM 56019, entry 13334

Macmillan RR Volume 55962, pp.275–6

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/5, entry 17726

**17. GARDINER, Linda**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7597

Macmillan RR Volume 55945, p.144

**18. GILES, Edith**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13416

Macmillan RR Volume 55963, p.50

**19. GODDARD, Richard (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24407 and 24720 (under R. Hazlewood)

**20. GREENING, Claude**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13558

**21. GREGORY, Alfred (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20840

**22. HANNA, Ethel**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24488

**23. HARBERT, Alfred**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entries 20294 and 20858

**24. HAYWARD, Ernest (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26031

**25. HOGG, (Miss)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24344

**26. HOLLIDAY, Agnes**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24286

**27. HULLAH, Mary**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56016, entry 3533

**28. IFE, Ernest**

Macmillan RoM 56019, entry 12629

**29. JACOBSON, Edward (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 21284

**30. JENKINSON, Maysel**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25541

**31. JOHNSON, William (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26194

**32. KENNEDY, Eleanor (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 23918 and 25058

**33. KINGMAN, (Miss)**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7492

Macmillan RR Volume 55945, p.88

**34. KORNITZER, Emily (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24370

**35. KRIKORIAN, Jessie**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/3, entry 11186

**36. LEE, George (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25103

**37. LETCH, Annie Gertrude (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 19927

**38. LOVESEY, Georgina**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7173

Macmillan RR Volume, 55944, pp.123–4

**39. MACEY, Alfred**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24162

**40. MEYER, Rhoda**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13883

**41. MONTAGUE CLARK, Charles**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26011

**42. MUTCH, John (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM 56016, entry 2776

**43. NICHOLS, Wallace**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20481

**44. NUTTY, John Leonard (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26103

**45. OAKLEY, Samuel (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20499

**46. O'BRIEN, Daniel (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 19884

**47. ORME, Joseph**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24649

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 26095

**48. PHILLIPS, Alfred**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24028

**49. PIMBLETT, William (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22645

**50. PORTER, Eliza**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24506

**51. PRITCHARD, Charles**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13708

**52. ROBERTS, Ralph (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/3, entry 10943

**53. ROFF, Emily**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22605

**54. RUMFITT, John (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24884

**55. SEYMOUR, Hamilton**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entries 24260 and 24268

**56. SILVERSTON, Cyril**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 23857

**57. SIMMONS, Louisa (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7601

Macmillan RR Volume 55946, pp.5–6

**58. SPEARING, Evelyn (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20858

**59. SPRINGALL, Stephen**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/6, entry 17842

**60. STEVENS, Frederick (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 25206

**61. TAYLOR, Reginald**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7813

Macmillan RR Volume 55946, p.140

Macmillan RR Volume 55977, entry listed as '14. Lot Fifty; by Reginald Taylor'

**62. THODY, Dorothy**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24044

**63. WALKER, Herbert Rowland (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/10, entry 25917

**64. WALKINGTON, George (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13822

**65. WHELDER, Doris**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13783

Macmillan RR Volume 55964, p.47

**66. WHITE, Ebe (assumed)**

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/7, entry 20475

**67. WIDDUP, Katherine (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13349

Macmillan RR Volume 55962, pp.276–7

Macmillan RoM Volume 56021, entry 22556

Chatto and Windus MEB CW E/9, entry 24657

**68. WILCHER, Sarah (assumed)**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56020, entry 20179

**69. WILSON, George**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56019, entry 13444

**70. WILSON, John**

Macmillan RoM 56016, entry 3435

**71. WRIGGLESWORTH, John**

Macmillan RoM Volume 56017, entry 7294

Macmillan RR Volume 55944, p.181

## APPENDIX 2: MACMILLAN/CHATTO WRITERS – SUBMISSION AND CENSUS DETAILS

NB: All details below were obtained using the Macmillan/Chatto archives and census records.

### 1. BAXTER, Joseph

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Joseph Baxter. 60 Barking Rd, Canning Town, [?] (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 4 April 1905. Says ‘declined to see’, so offered, not submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* ‘A story concerning a young girl who serves in a café in a provincial town and who despises the lowly condition of her life, offered for perusal.’

*Estimated age at submission:* (assuming the writer is the son) approximately 25

*Profession:* (assuming the writer is the son) school teacher

*Marital status:* (assuming the writer is the son) single

*1901 Census:* There are two Joseph Baxters at 60 Barking Road, West Ham: father, aged 47, ‘Bootmaker shop’, ‘Employer’, and son, aged 21, ‘School Teacher’. I am assuming the writer is more likely the latter. At this property are: father and mother, two sons, and mother’s brother.

### 2. BLOCH, Regina

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Regina Miriam Bloch. 88 Duke’s Avenue, Chiswick, W. (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 29 January 1914, Songs of Sorrow, MS submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* ‘Miss Bloch is one of those young ladies whose works are mysteriously various and unpublished. In spite of her strain[?] after beauty of thought and diction, she never once achieves anything but an air of moaning.’

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 24/25

*Profession:* journalist (freelance, it seems)

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Regina Miriam Bloch, aged 22, single, ‘Journalist’ (‘own account’, ‘at home’), is at 88 Duke’s Avenue, Chiswick, with her parents (her father is also a journalist working from home). All are from Germany. Regina is one of three living siblings. Six rooms in dwelling.

### 3. BRYANT, William

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* William Bryant. 7 Greystoke Place, EC (i.e. London)

*Date/title of submission:* 23 May 1881, ‘An Evil Life’

*Macmillan reader’s report:* ‘A curiously crude little story of villainy, murder, forgery, suicide, & other pleasantries. It might almost pass for a caricature of sensation stories. Quite unworthy of serious words.’

*Estimated age at submission:* 30

*Profession:* journalist

*Marital status:* single

*1881 Census:* William, aged 30, journalist, is a boarder at 7 Greystoke Place. He is one of nine boarders at the property.

### 4. BURBRIDGE, Millicent (assumed)

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Miss M. Burbridge. 51 Coventry Rd, Ilford E. (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 15 July 1910, 'Lu Elliott', typed MS of about 40,000 words submitted  
*Comments in Chatto records:* 'A foolish and irritating story. The author is highly pleased with her heroine, but I think that most readers would be offended by the preposterousness of the girl's actions, and the absurdity of her mental attitude'.

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 36/37

*Profession:* [?] help at home. Father is retired factory manager

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* At 51 Coventry Road, Ilford, is Millicent Burbridge, aged 37, occupation: '[? possibly "mothers"] help at home', with parents (father is 'Factory Manager Retired'), three grown-up siblings, and a child of one of them. Millicent is one of 11 surviving children (13 in total). Siblings are: telegraph clerk GPO; manager rubber[?] factory; manager [? might be advertising, but unclear] agent. Seven rooms in dwelling.

## **5. CLARKE, Thomas**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Tom Clarke. 14 Ruskin Walk, Herne Hill, SE (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 3 February 1911, 'Wife and no Wife' by 'Clive Thomas'. Typed MS of 60,000 words submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'This is a well written + [healthy?] book about two young people who marry in London, and who part hastily as the husband, a naval man, is ordered to Hong Kong. The book is obviously made to last out 60,000 words by padding; and there is very little character-drawing. I am afraid that a short story without plot + character stands no...[?].'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 25/26

*Profession:* journalist (sub-editor)

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* Thomas Clarke, aged 26, 'journalist (sub-editor)', is at 14 Ruskin Walk with wife and a servant. Six rooms in dwelling.

## **6. CLAY, William**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* William Clay. Public Library, Southend-on-Sea

*Submission date/comments:* 23 June 1914, 'Straws[?]', typed MS of 2[?]50 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'All about wicked trades-union organisers, very dully written. It seems to be the same story which author submitted a good many month[cut off in my image] under anoth[cut off in my image]'.

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 33/34

*Profession:* librarian

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* There is a William Clay, 'Librarian' ('Boro' Council) in Southend-on-Sea. He is aged 30, single, a boarder in a house with a family (two parents and two children), another boarder, and a servant.

## **7. CLOKE, Ellen**

*Name in Chatto records:* Miss Ellen E. Cloke. Earl's Colne Place, Earl's Colne, Essex

*Submission date/comments:* 18 June 1914, 'The Story of the Wind and the Rain', from the French of Paul de Musset. Typed [MSS?] of 53 pages + two pen + ink drawings submitted

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 41

*Profession:* lady's maid (at very large property)

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Ellen Elizabeth Cloke, aged 38, servant (lady's maid), is at Colne Place, Earls Colne, Essex, with head of house and his wife, and four other servants. 25 rooms in dwelling. (Note: head of house is Walter Edward Grimston – he is listed as 'independent means' on the census, and according to an internet search was a cricketer.)

## **8. COOPER, Sarah**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Sarah A. Cooper. Oxford House, Lichfield St, Walsall

*Submission date/comments:* 12[?] April 1905?, 'Links in Life', about 80 pages + 25 chapters offered for perusal

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 57

*Profession:* teacher (within own home)

*Marital status:* single

*1901 Census:* at Oxford House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, are Sarah A. Cooper, aged 53, 'Teacher' ('own account', 'at home'), her sister (same occupation), and a servant.

*1911 Census:* the sisters are still there, but with a different servant. On the actual record, it now says 'Oxford House School'. Both sisters have 'Teaching', 'Private School', 'own account', 'at home' as their occupation. 10 rooms in dwelling. Sarah is now 64.

## **9. COOTE, Cecil**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Cecil A. Coote. 6 Neale Rd, Halstead, Essex

*Submission date/comments:* 15 April 1914, 'The Honeymoon', MS of 220 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'There is a welter[?] of interest in this melodramatic tale. The story is suited only to the very cheapest class of periodical. It is wildly improbable, and the author is almost illiterate.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 24

*Profession:* reporter, weekly paper

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Cecil Coote, aged 21, 'Reporter', 'Weekly Paper' is at 6 Neale Road, Halstead, with his parents and five siblings (he is third of the six, and the parents have had 10 children in all). Father is 'Tailor Maker' (clothing trade, self-employed, works at home); elder brothers are a 'Fitter' and a 'Turner' (both in engineering); youngest two sisters (aged 16 and 14) are shop assistants (drapery). Six rooms in dwelling.

## **10. CROWN, Sidney**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Sidney S. Crown. 208 High Street, Walthamstow, Essex

*Submission date/comments:* 27 September 1901, 'The Lust of Man', MS of 253pp

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'An unattractive title – the author displays no literary qualifications.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 16/17

*Profession:* none given; father is a tailor

*1901 Census:* Sidney Crown, aged 16, is at 208 High Street, Walthamstow, with his parents (father is 'Tailor', 'Employer', 'At Home'), five siblings and a servant. Elder brother (aged 18) is

‘merchants clerk’

*1891 Census:* Sidney is six; father is ‘Tailor (Master)’ and an employer.

### **11. CURTOIS, Daniel (assumed)**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* D. Curtois. Insurance office, Lincoln (to be called for)

*Date/title of submission:* 15 December 1880, ‘Crosses’, a novel

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 21/22

*Profession:* insurance clerk

*Marital status:* single

*1881 Census:* There is a Daniel H. C. W. Curtois, aged 22, in the Lincoln area (Washingborough, Lincoln) who is a clerk in an insurance office, which I am assuming is the writer. (The only other D. Curtois in the Lincoln area is too young, if the age is correct.) Daniel Curtois is with his widowed mother, six siblings, a cousin, and two servants.

### **12. DAVIDSON, Gladys**

*Name in Macmillan and Chatto records:* Miss Gladys Davidson

*Address in Macmillan and Chatto records:* 78 Glen Road, Nether Edge, Sheffield

*Dates/titles of submissions:*

5 April 1911, ‘The Butterflies’ Ball’ (Macmillan)

29 June 1911, ‘The Bad Puppy Book’, typed MS of 27 pages submitted; there is also another submission immediately below this that appears to belong to Gladys Davidson – ‘Tales from the Woods and Fields’, a typed MS of 10 pages. Same submission date. (Chatto)

20 February 1912: ‘The Good Old Nursery Tales’ retold by Gladys Davidson’, typed MSS of two of the stories submitted (Chatto)

*Comments in Chatto records:* (on ‘The Bad Puppy Book’): ‘Miss Davidson’s suggested text[?] is amusing, as far as it goes, and tells of the adventures of three puppies, each adventure being intended to[?] face an illustration. But there seems no reason why we should hunt[?] up an illustrator[?]’

*Estimated ages at submissions:* approximately 35–37

*Profession:* typist at steel works

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* The 1911 Census was conducted on 2nd April, so almost to the day that she would have sent her MSS to Macmillan. At 78 Glen Road, Sheffield, is Louise Gladys Davidson, aged 36, typist, steel works, her father (widower, ‘retired civil engineers’), two sisters (one of whom is a governess) and a cousin. The women are all single.

### **13. DIAMOND, Marian**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Miss Marian Diamond. 50 Crofton Road, Plaistow, E. (i.e. London)

*Date/title of submission:* 21 April 1911, ‘Dolly[?] and the Teddy Bear’

*Estimated age at submission:* 33

*Profession:* teacher

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Marian is at 50 Crofton Road with her family – father (aged 56, shipwright at local

docks), mother, sister (aged 17, shop assistant at draper's), brother (aged 16, laboratory boy at sugar refinery), and another female relative. House contains five rooms (excluding bathrooms). Parents have been married for 34 years, and have had eight children (seven still living), meaning Marian is one of seven living siblings. 'Borough Council' is written for Marian in industry/service column, so she was presumably employed by the council. Marian was born in Wales.

*1901 Census:* Marian (aged 22, teacher at 'school'), is living in London (63 Ravenscroft Road, West Ham) with family – father (shipwright), mother, and six younger siblings (one of whom is an office boy at the port, another is a stevedore at the docks).

*1939 Register:* Marian (single, retired teacher, born 29/12/1877) is with father (married, retired shipwright, born 13/04/1854), and another person (not viewable) in Wales.

#### **14. DONNELLY, John**

*Name/ address in Chatto records:* John Donnelly. Ravens Street, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury

*Submission date/ comments:* 24 April 1911, 'The Perfect Lover', MS of 65000 words submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'The whole thing is too juvenile and unformed to be amusing.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 44/45

*Profession:* egg and butter merchant

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* At Ravens Street, Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury, is John Donnelly, single, aged 44, occupation: 'Egg and Butter Merchant' ('Own Account', working from home), with three siblings who are a coal miner hewer ('coal face below ground, 'Worker'); a housekeeper (of their home, it seems); and a blanket finisher (blanket manufacturing, 'Worker'). Five rooms in dwelling. Three of them (including John) were born in Scotland.

#### **15. DURSTON, Sidney**

*Name in Chatto records:* Sidney C.[?] Durston (1911); Sidney Chas[?] Durston (1914)

*Addresses in Chatto records:* 58 Ruckholt Rd, Leyton, Essex (1911); 63 Ruckholt Rd, Leyton (1914)

*Submission dates/ comments:*

6 January 1911: 'The Perilous Edge', MS in 10[?] sections submitted

6 May 1914: 'The Earnest Hypocrite', typed MS of 145 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:*

(On 'The Perilous Edge'): 'All about Dukes + Duchesses, in a very suburban manner. Mr Durston has no better idea of novel-writing than he has of spelling.'

(On 'The Earnest Hypocrite'): 'An ungrammatical and very short story about a man who was loved by two girls, one of whom committed suicide in order that he might marry the other. Mr Durston does not know how to write a sentence; and his general attitude to the life of the high-born and adventurous is that of the small shopkeeper.'

*Estimated age at submissions:* 18/19 (1911); 21/22 (1914)

*Profession:* manufacturer's clerk at carpet merchant's

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* The Durston family is at 58 Ruckholt Road. There is father, mother and two late-teenage sons. Eldest son is Sidney Charles, aged 19, and 'Manufacturer's Clerk', 'Carpet merchants'. Father is Sidney George (aged 54, Messenger Pensioned). I am assuming the author is the son, Sidney Charles. Other son is 'Engineer's clerk' 'Electrical + mechanical'. Six rooms in dwelling.

## 16. ELY, Charles (assumed)

*Name in Macmillan/Chatto records:* Charles J. Ely (Macmillan); C. J. Ely (Chatto)

*Address in Macmillan/Chatto records:* 26 Great Ormond Street, WC (Macmillan); 26 Gt Ormond St, Bloomsbury, WC (Chatto) (i.e. London).

*Dates/titles of submissions:*

8 March 1901, 'Tommy's Folly' (Macmillan)

5 June 1901, 'Mr Spudd's Folly', MS of 743 pp[?] (Chatto)

*Macmillan reader's report* (for 'Tommy's Folly'): 'Apparently the story of a Syndicate, most of the members of which are rogues and the others fools. "Tommy" the principal dupe, has an energetic son who manages to avert some of the worst consequences of his father's folly. Vulgar – and hidden in a fog of unnecessary details and tedious conversations.'

*Comments in Chatto records* (for 'Mr Spudd's Folly'): 'Unattractive verbosity.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 35-37

*Profession:* commission agent

*Marital status:* single

*1901 Census:* At 26 Great Ormond Street, Holborn, there is Charles J. Ely (aged 36, single, and a 'commission agent'), boarding along with five other male boarders in the house of a couple (the wife is the lodging house keeper) and two servants. Charles was born in London (Chelsea). The other boarders are a civil servant, a law student, a medical student, a barrister at law, and a stock share dealer.

## 17. GARDINER, Linda

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Miss Linda Gardiner. Observer Office, Winchester, Hants

*Date/title of submission:* 16 February 1892, 'Monty Churchill's Daughter'

*Macmillan reader's report:* 'A lady's novel – of the usual sort: love-making, misunderstanding, reparations [etc?]. I fear nothing hopeful can be said of it.'

*Estimated age at submission:* 27/28

*Profession:* journalist (daughter of newspaper editor)

*Marital status:* single

*1891 Census:* There is a Linda Gardiner (aged 27, 'Journalist') living in Winchester (64 Parchment Street) with her father (aged 64, 'Newspaper editor'), and mother (aged 60). Linda and her father also both have 'author' written near to their occupations – this may have been added at a later date. Linda was born in Suffolk, her father in Ireland, and her mother in Yorkshire.

## 18. GILES, Edith

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Miss Edith Giles. Stafford Villa, Paignton

*Date/title of submission:* 13 April 1901, 'Dorothy: A Tale of Some Old-Fashioned Girl'

*Macmillan reader's report:* 'Nursery and school-room life about fifty years ago. Essentially mediocre.'

*Estimated age at submission:* 45

*Profession:* unclear in 1901; teacher in 3 other censuses

*Marital status:* single

*1881 Census:* Edith Giles, aged 25, 'teacher (school)' is in Leeds with her mother, a visitor, two boarders, and a servant

*1891 Census:* There is an Edith J. F. Giles, aged 35, single, 'teacher' ('school is written in pencil

next to this) in Leeds with her widowed mother (aged 75, own means), a visitor, and a servant  
*1901 Census:* Boarding at Stafford Villa, Paignton, is Edith J. F. Giles (single, aged 45, born in Cheshire)

*1911 Census:* In Beckenham, Kent, is Edith Josephine Fletcher Giles (single, age unclear – could be 56/55) with her widowed sister-in-law, the sister-in-law's three grown-up daughters, and two servants. 14 rooms in dwelling (excluding bathrooms)

*1939 Register:* In Malvern, Worcestershire, is Edith J. F. Giles (date of birth 14/01/1856), occupation 'teacher and collector (retired)'.

## **19. GODDARD, Richard (assumed)**

*Name in Chatto records:* Richd E.[?] Goddard (1911); R. Hazlewood (his wife's maiden name) (1912)

*Address in Chatto records:* 7 Ranelagh Gardens, Hurlingham, SW (i.e. London)

*Submission dates/comments:*

29 June 1911: 'Marian Francis', typed MS of 198 pages submitted

19 February 1912: 'The Worldly Hope', typed MS of 405 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:*

(On 'Marian Francis'): 'The story of an engagement, very slight, moderately [diverting?]. If published at a shilling, this book might amuse newly engaged people who would marvel to see their own [fatuities?] in print. I do not think anybody else would care much about the book, although it is not [bad of its kind?].'

(On 'The Worldly Hope'): 'An old-fashioned story, in which the author seems to mix up Dickens and Tom Robertson, and to offer them as a very disjointed story of unlikely happenings. The whole book melts into a sort of amiable unreal chattering.'

*Estimated age at submissions:* approx 33/34

*Profession:* private secretary, motor[?] manufacturer's

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* Richard Ernst[?] Goddard, aged 33, 'Private Secretary', 'Motor[?] Manufacturers', is with his wife, young daughter, and a servant, at 7 Ranelagh Gardens, Fulham. Wife's first two names are Frances Marian. Rooms in dwelling: '6 rooms in upper part'

*Name given in his 1912 submission:* I have confirmed through other searches that Hazlewood is his wife's maiden name.

## **20. GREENING, Claude**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Claude Greening. 46 Marian[?] Road, Streatham Common, SW (i.e. London)

*Date/title of submission:* 11 June 1901, 'Poems'

*Estimated age at submission:* 30/31

*Marital status:* married

*Profession:* solicitor's clerk

*1901 Census:* at 46 Marion Road Lonesome, Mitcham, Croydon, Surrey, is Claude Greening, aged 30, 'solicitors clerk' (sic) and a 'worker', born in Brixton; his wife, aged 32; and their son, aged four, born in Balham

*1891 Census:* Claude is aged 20, an 'articled clerk', living with his widowed father (a solicitor), his

four siblings and three servants at Rookwood, Palace Road, Streatham. Claude's brother is also an articled clerk, and 'law' seems to be written near their occupation.

### **21. GREGORY, Alfred (assumed)**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* A. Gregory. 20 Guildford Place, Heaton, Newcastle on Tyne

*Submission date/comments:* 1 March 1906, 'Shadows', MS of 588 pages submitted for perusal

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'MS of about 110,000 words in 23 chapters. A tale of modern domestic life. am[ong? word cut off] the characters are a young clergyman in love with a young lady who leave[s? word cut off] her home to go on the stage under another name.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 30/31

*Profession:* journalist, sub-editor

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* Author is assumed to be Alfred Ernest Gregory, who in 1911 is aged 36, 'Journalist Sub-Editor', 'Daily [Press?]', living at 20 Guildford Place with his wife's family.

### **22. HANNA, Ethel**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Ethel M. Hanna (Mrs). 48 Nightingale Lane, Clapham Common, SW (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 19 September 1911, 'The Tragedy of Eileen', MS of 305 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'It is so obviously a first novel that I have read only the first packet of MS, and have skimmed only a page or two elsewhere. It is so very lamely[?] and amateurishly written that it seems not worth reading.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 33/34

*Profession:* none given

*Marital status:* widowed

*1911 Census:* Ethel Hanna (widow, aged 33, no occupation listed) is with widowed mother and two brothers at 48 Nightingale Lane. Brothers are a clerk at a gramophone maker's, and a cashier at an aniline dye works; mother has private means. Five rooms in dwelling.

### **23. HARBERT, Alfred**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Alfred Harbert. 128 Venner Road, Sydenham, [SE?] (i.e. London)

*Submission dates/comments:*

13 June 1905[?]: 'The Trail of a Siren', typed MS of 205 pages, submitted for perusal

9 March 1906: 'Into the Arms of Johanna', typed MS of 301 pages submitted for perusal

He also submitted on other occasions – see comments below

*Comments in Chatto records:*

(On 'The Trail of a Siren'): 'The author writes to say that this is the fourth time he has submitted a book to us, having [striven?] unsuccessfully for six years to get a footing on the bottom rung of the ladder. It would be a mistaken kindness to raise hopes that the literary ladder is to be climbed by one so poorly equipped. This seems to be on the same lines as 'Verinder[?] Hall', a MS submitted in March 1903. See also MSS 18430, 18815, 20219.'

(On 'Into the Arms of Johanna'): 'It turns on a murder mystery in a tunnel on the Brighton railway, strongly suggesting the case of Miss Money.'

*Estimated ages at submission:* approximately 24/25/26

*Profession:* commercial clerk (1901 Census); secretary public company (1911 Census)

*Marital status:* single

*1901 Census:* Alfred Harbert, aged 20, 'Commercial Clerk', is at 128 Venner Road with his large family (his parents, seven siblings, and sister's husband). Father is a tailor; other occupations in the house are solicitor's clerk, post office clerk, and draper's assistant

*1911 Census:* The family are now at 43 Selby Road, Anerley, Croydon. Alfred is aged 30, Single, 'Secretary Public Company'. A few siblings are no longer listed. Eight rooms in dwelling.

#### **24. HAYWARD, Ernest (assumed)**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Estcourt Hayward. 32 Oakington Rd, Paddington, W. (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 18 June 1914, 'The Trail of Trespass', typed MS of 287 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'A very crude MS indeed.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 39/40

*Profession:* stationer's representative

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* Ernest Estcourt Hayward, aged 36, 'Stationers Representative', is with his wife, a 'Mantle Cutter', at 32 Oakington Road, Paddington. They have been married 14 years, and had one child, who died. Three rooms in dwelling. (There are three census entries for that exact address, so there are different households within the building.)

#### **25. HOGG, (Miss)**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Miss Hogg. 58 Shearbourne[?] Rd, Upper Tooting, SW (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 15 May 1911, 'Waiting', MS of between 50,000 & 60,000 words submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'A childish story written by a nice unmarried lady. The whole thing, though well intentioned, reads like the attempt of an elderly schoolgirl to imitate the superficial shortcomings[?] of Jane Austen.'

*Estimated age at submission:* depends which family member is the writer

*Profession:* depends which family member is the writer – either teacher, typist, showroom assistant, widow, or not given

*Marital status:* single if any of the daughters; widowed if the mother

*1911 Census:* At 58 Streathbourne Road, Upper Tooting, are 64-year-old widow, Sarah Hogg, and her five daughters (all named Hogg), so it is unclear exactly who the writer is. Daughters are Ann (33), Susan (30, private school teacher), Eliza (27), Florence (22, 'Showroom Assistant', 'Drapers'), and Agnes (21, 'Shorthand Typist', 'Engineers'). 10 rooms in dwelling.

#### **26. HOLLIDAY, Agnes**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Miss Agnes Theresa Holliday. Croft Cottage, Stanford-in-the-Vale, Faringdon, Berks

*Submission date/comments:* 11 April 1911, 'Pedita's Star', etc. Typed MS of 8 stories submitted

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 32/33

*Profession:* elementary school teacher

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Agnes Theresa Holliday, aged 32, single, occupation: 'Elementary School Teacher', 'Berks County Council', is with parents (in their 70s, father is 'Police Pensioner') at Sheepcroft Cottage, Stanford in the Vale. Agnes is one of two surviving siblings; a further three died. Five rooms in dwelling

*1939 Register:* There is an Agnes T. Holliday in Faringdon, Berks, dob 07/07/1878, single, occupation: 'Permanently Teacher Incapacitated'.

### **27. HULLAH, Mary**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Miss Mary Hullah. 5 J[?] Cornwall Residences Clarence Gate NW (i.e. London)

*Date/title of submission:* 24 March 1882, 'Hannah Tarne'

*Estimated age at submission:* 33

*Profession:* governess

*1881 Census:* At '5 Allsop Place Cornwall Residences' there is Mary E. Hullah (aged 33, occupation: 'Governess'), with her brother Francis (aged 26, occupation: 'Clerk [?] Chief Justice Coleridge'), and a servant. NB: There is another Mary Hullah in the same general part of London (aged 60, a widow, occupation: 'lady'), who could be her mother or another relation.

### **28. IFE, Ernest**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Ernest Ife. Mayor's Walk, Pontefract

*Date/title of submission:* 19 February 1900, 'The Boer War: A Poem'

*Estimated age at submission:* 26/27

*Profession:* manufacturing chemist

*Marital status:* married

*1901 Census:* There is a Charles Ernest Ife at Mayor's Walk, Pontefract (aged 28, a manufacturing chemist, and 'worker'), with his wife, small son, and a servant. He was born in Wales.

### **29. JACOBSON, Edward (assumed)**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* E. Jacobson. 41 The Avenue, West Ealing

*Date/title of submission:* 22 September 1911, 'Story of Three Pussy Cats'

*Estimated age at submission:* 57/58

*Profession:* colonial merchant general produce

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* At 41 The Avenue, W. Ealing, is Edward Jacobson (aged 57, born in Stoke Newington) and his wife, aged 41. His occupation is 'Colonial Merchant General Produce', 'Own Account'. They have been married eight years and do not have children. Rooms in dwelling (excluding bathrooms): 'Four – a Flat'.

### **30. JENKINSON, Maysel**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Miss Maysel Jenkinson. Duft[?] Hill Hse, Glemsford, Suffolk  
*Submission date/comments:* 5 August 1913, 'Behind the Blue Mist', 2 illustrations, MS 153pp submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'Pleasant, nicely written little stories with a touch of fairy-feeling in them. It does not seem to me that they are strong enough to make a place for themselves in a

market which is already so overcrowded.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 28/29

*Profession:* poultry farmer (at home)

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* There is a Lydia Maysel Jenkinson, aged 26, 'Poultry Farmer' (at home), single, at Duffs Hill, Glemsford, Suffolk, with her parents and two sisters. She is one of six living siblings. Father is 'Correspondent and Translator', 'Publishing'. One sister is 'Reciter[?]' and musician'. 11 rooms in dwelling.

### **31. JOHNSON, William (assumed)**

*Name/ address in Chatto records:* Wm Johnson. 58 Belgrave Rd, Walthamstow

*Submission date/ comments:* 19 November 1914, 'The Derelict', MS 204 fcap pages, submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'The author describes this as a 'humourous' (sic) novel. It does not seem to contain any story, and as far as I can see, it belongs to the order of facetious novels. The author cannot write.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 45/46

*Profession:* designer and draughtsman, various trades

*Marital status:* single in 1911 census

*1911 Census:* William Johnson, aged 42, Single, 'Designer & Draughtsman', 'Various Trades', 'Own acct', 'at home', is at 58 Belgrave Road, Walthamstow, with his uncle (a cabinet maker), and the uncle's wife and daughter. Five rooms in dwelling.

### **32. KENNEDY, Eleanor (assumed)**

*Name in Chatto records:* Miss E. Kennedy (1910); Miss Eleanor Kennedy (1912)

*Address in Chatto records:* 21 Cheverton Rd, Hornsey Lane, N. (i.e. London)

*Submission dates/ comments:*

2 September 1910: typed MS of 2 stories by Miss Eleanor Kennedy & 6 watercolour drawings by Miss A. M. Edgers[?] to [?] each submitted

23 August 1912: 'The Land of Dreams', MS submitted

*Estimated ages at submission:* approx 45–48

*Profession:* secretary and bookkeeper (unemployed)

*Marital status:* single in 1911

*1911 Census:* Eleanor Kennedy, aged 46, 'Secretary and Bookkeeper (Unemployed)', 'Lately[?]' with Lady [?] novelist[?]', is with widowed mother, aged 77, at 21 Cheverton Road. Two rooms in dwelling.

### **33. KINGMAN, (Miss)**

*Name/ address in Macmillan records:* Miss Kingman. 2a Lansdown Road, Bath

*Date/ title of submission:* 5 December 1891, 'Time Will Show'

*Macmillan reader's report:* 'A novel, not actively and aggressively bad in any way, but dull and mediocre. No life in it of any kind.'

*Estimated age at submission:* either 48/49 (if writer is Mary Kingman) or 42/43 (if writer is Ellen Kingman)

*Profession:* either retired elementary teacher (Mary) or shop assistant to greengrocer (Ellen)

*Marital status:* single (at least in April 1891)

*1891 Census:* There are two women with the surname 'Kingman' at 2a Lansdown Road, Bath, with their father (aged 73, 'Greengrocer'). They are: Mary A. Kingman (aged 48, single, 'certified elementary teacher retired') and Ellen M. Kingman (aged 42, single, 'shop assistant to greengrocer').

### **34. KORNITZER, Emily (assumed)**

*Name/ address in Chatto records:* E.[?] M. Elliott (her maiden name). 19 Kenilworth Gardens, Seven Kings, Essex

*Submission date/comments:* 30 May 1911, 'The Angel of Augsburg' by Emon[?] Nelson, typed MS of 190[?] [pages?] submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'A story of the 15th century, but very poor. The tale is very [straggling?] and incoherent. One never knows or cares who is who, or what they are doing.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 40/41

*Profession:* none given; wife of precious stone and pearl broker

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* At 19 Kenilworth Gardens, Seven Kings, is the Kornitzer family – husband (aged 38, 'Precious Stone and Pearl Broker', Austrian), wife Emily Mary (aged 40), their three young children, and a servant. After suspecting Elliott might have been the wife's maiden name, I have confirmed this by doing a marriage search. Seven rooms in dwelling.

### **35. KRIKORIAN, Jessie**

*Name in Chatto records:* Jessie Krikorian. 43 Redcliffe Gardens, SW (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 2 March 1892, 'Daughter of the Devil'

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'Title uninviting. Presents no distinctive features.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 32/33

*Profession:* none given; wife of commission[?] merchant/agent

*Marital status:* married

*1891 Census:* At 43 Redcliffe Gardens is Jessie G. C. Krikorian, living with husband (occupation: 'commission[?] merchant') and 'agent' is written afterwards, her mother, her brother and two servants. Husband is Turkish. Jessie is 32.

### **36. LEE, George (assumed)**

*Name/ address in Chatto records:* Geo Lee. 3 Vol Terrace, Spital, Chesterfield

*Submission date/comments:* 24 October 1912, story of 40,000 words offered

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 46/47

*Profession:* fruiterer – dealer

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* At 3 Vale Terrace, Spital, Chesterfield, is George Lee, 45, 'Fruiterer – Dealer', with his wife and four children. Eldest children are a wheelwright, and a shop assistant – fruiterer. Five rooms in dwelling.

### **37. LETCH, Annie Gertrude (assumed)**

*Name/ address in Chatto records:* Gertrude Letch. 38 Castlewood Road, Stamford Hill, [?] (i.e.

London)

*Submission date/comments:* 31 December 1904, Consequences: The Story of a Plain [?], MS submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'A [storiette?] of about 2[?]0,000 words – a juvenile effort.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 24/25

*Profession:* none given; father is a schoolmaster

*Marital status:* single

*1901 Census:* Annie G. Letch, no occupation given, is 21, listed with her parents, brother and sister at 38 Castlewood Road, Hackney. Father is 'School Master Assistant'; brother is 'Clerk Insurance Office'

*1911 Census:* The family is still there. Annie Gertrude Letch is 31, no occupation listed. Father listed as 'Assistant schoolmaster L.C.C. (secondary) Hackney Downs School', 'London County Council'. Eight rooms in dwelling.

### **38. LOVESEY, Georgina**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Georgina Lovesey. Stoke Goldington, Bucks

*Date/title of submission:* 2 April 1891, 'The Cottage in the Glen and Other Poems'

*Macmillan reader's report:* 'A short volume of miscellaneous poems. I can find nothing to say about them, save that they are terribly weak and slender – not a note of real poetry in them.'

*Estimated age at submission:* 17 or 21 (depending on whether the 1891 or 1901/1911 Censuses are correct)

*Profession:* dressmaker

*Marital status:* single

*1891 Census:* There is only 1 Georgina Lovesey in the census, and she's in Stoke Goldington, so it is assumed this is her. (NB: her submission date was three days before the 1891 census.)

Georgina is listed as aged 21, with her 34-year-old aunt, Sarah, at High Street, Stoke Goldington, Newport Pagnell. Occupation of both is 'Dress maker'. Both were born in Northamptonshire

*1901 Census:* Georgina and her aunt are still in the same road. Georgina's age is now given as 27. No occupations listed. Birthplace for both is Syresham, Northants

*1911 Census:* Georgina and her aunt Sarah are still together in Stoke Goldington, at 'The Green'. Georgina's age is listed as 37; Sarah's as 54. Georgina does not have an occupation listed; Sarah is 'Lacemaker' (and she appears to work for herself, at home). Both are single

*1881 Census:* There is only one name match, so again I am assuming it is her – she is 'Scholar', aged 11, with her grandfather, two of his children, and two visitors at The Lamb Inn, High Street, Stoke Goldington. Grandfather is aged 61 and a brickmaker. His daughter (aged 30) is a housekeeper, and son (aged 19) is a brickmaker.

### **39. MACEY, Alfred**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Alfred Macey. 119 Hedley St, South Shields

*Submission date/comments:* 7 February 1911, MS of 14 poems submitted

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 40/41

*Profession:* shipyard driller (hand)

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* Alfred Macey, aged 41, 'Shipyard[?] Driller (Hand)', 'Shipbuilding' (in 'industry connected to' column), 'Worker', is with wife, their three children, and his parents, at 119 Hedley

Street, South Shields. Five rooms in dwelling. They had an additional child who died. Alfred is one of 13 children, six of whom died

*1901 Census:* Alfred, wife Elizabeth, and baby son, Alfred, are at 15 Robertson Street, South Shields. Alfred is aged 31, and ‘Shipyard; driller’.

#### **40. MEYER, Rhoda**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Miss Rhoda A. Meyer. 31 Fountain Street, Anlaby Road, Hull

*Date/title of submission:* 2 November 1901, ‘Fairy Stories’

*Estimated age at submission:* 19/20

*Profession:* typist

*1901 Census:* At 31 Fountain Street, Kingston upon Hull, is Rhoda A. Meyer (aged 19, born Hornsea, Yorkshire), her three older siblings (two of whom are much older), and a servant. Her 36-year-old sister is a ‘Governess School’, and her brother is a corn and fruit agent.

#### **41. MONTAGUE CLARK, Charles**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* CH Montague Clark. 27 Holford Sq, WC (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 26 May 1914, ‘Silas [Chuck?], Mariner’, typed MS of 96000 words submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* ‘A conventional and not very grammatical tale of the 17th century, beginning at the time of the Dutch war of Charles II. The narrative is dull and the mere literary performance is without qualities.’

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 68/69

*Profession:* journalist (freelance, it seems)

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* Charles Henry Montague Clark, aged 65, ‘Journalist’ (own account, working at home), married, is listed alone at 27 Holford Sq. Two rooms in dwelling. It appears there are several households within the building – there are four census listings for number 27, and the word ‘house’ is crossed out where it says ‘House, tenement or apartment’.

#### **42. MUTCH, John (assumed)**

*Name in Macmillan records:* J. P. Mutch. 6 Smith’s Terrace, Hornsey Rd, N. (i.e. London)

*Date/title of submission:* 1 Jan 1879, ‘a novel’

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 26

*Profession:* chemist (at least from 1881 onwards). NB: There is a mention of John Pratt Mutch in the *Pharmaceutical Journal and Transactions* in 1882 – he is listed as a member of the associated Society and as having passed his exams. He is listed under London

*Marital status:* married (just, at this point, probably)

*1881 Census:* At ‘Smiths Terrace (Place), 6, Hornsey Road, Islington’ (‘6 Smiths Terrace’ on actual record) is John Mutch, aged 28, chemist, born in Scotland, his wife, their baby daughter, and another person (looks like a servant)

*1891 Census:* The family are at 359 Hornsey Road, Islington. There is John P. (aged 35, chemist, born in Scotland), his wife, and now four children. John is ticked in the column ‘neither employer nor employed’

*1901 Census:* The family are at 405 Hornsey Road. There is John P. (aged 48, chemist), his wife,

their son (medical and dental student), and youngest daughter. John is 'own account' (i.e. self-employed)

*1911 Census:* The family are still at 405 Hornsey Road. There is John Pratt Mutch (aged 58, pharmacist and [word unclear]), his wife, and youngest daughter (aged 24, listed as a Professor of Music, North London Collegiate School for Girls). There are six rooms in the house (excluding bathrooms). The couple have been married for 33 years, and have had four children, two of whom have died. John is listed as 'own account' again, and as working 'at home'

*1939 Register:* The wife and youngest daughter seem to be in London (Bexleyheath) with one servant (although daughter's birthdate is wrong) – wife is widow, and daughter is chemist.

#### **43. NICHOLS, Wallace**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Wallace Berham[?] Nichols. 51 Palace Road, Streatham Hill, SW (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 4 September 1905, copy for a volume of verse submitted for perusal part typewritten + part slips

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'A volume of verse of juvenile melodramatic despair.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 17/18

*Profession:* unknown. Listed as 'poet' at the age of 23 (1911 census)

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Wallace Bertram Nichols, aged 23, 'Poet', is at 51 Palace Road, Tulse Hill, with parents and two servants. Father is civil engineer. 10 rooms in dwelling

*1901 Census:* The family are at a different address in Streatham. Wallace is aged 13.

#### **44. NUTTY, John Leonard (assumed)**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* J. Leonard Nutty. 5 Hamburg Rd, Mapperley, Nottingham

*Submission date/comments:* 24 July 1914, 'The Valley of Death', typed MS of 61[?] pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'Twelve chapters of a commonplace sensation novel. It might serve as a serial in a provincial newspaper.'

*Estimated age at submission:* 22 (if 1939 Register is him)

*Profession:* clerk to assessor and collector of government taxes

*1911 Census:* The 1911 Census has someone else living at 5 Hamburg Road. However, there is a John Leonard Nutty living elsewhere in Nottingham, so it is assumed that this is a match. John Leonard Nutty is 18, a 'Clerk to Assessor and Collector of Government Taxes', living with his widowed mother (a cook), and a boarder at 64 Hunger Hill Road, Nottingham. Five rooms in dwelling

*1939 Register:* There is a John L. Nutty (dob 04/06/1892), 'Manager to Nurseryman and Wholesale Product Merchants', living with his wife, a 'General Draper Dealer', in Nottingham.

#### **45. OAKLEY, Samuel (assumed)**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* S. Harold Oakley. 29 Burlington Road, Bayswater, W. (i.e. London)

*Date/title of submission:* 14 November 1910, 'The Artist and Other Poems'

*Estimated age at submission:* 46/47

*Profession:* artist/painter

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* At 29 Burlington Road, Paddington, W., is: Samuel Harold Oakley, aged 47, single, born Egremont, Cheshire, occupation: 'artist painter'. Works at home. Number of rooms in dwelling (excluding bathrooms) appears to say 'one'.

#### **46. O'BRIEN, Daniel (assumed)**

*Name in Chatto records:* D.[?] O'Brien. 14 Gt Maze Ct[?], Maze Pond, SE (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 1[?] December 1904, a novel of 170,000, together with some short stories, totalling in all about 100,000 words, offered for perusal. (NB: This material was just offered (as opposed to submitted), and they 'declined to see' it.)

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 23/24

*Profession:* druggist's packer (1901); assistant warehouseman, druggist company (1911)

*Marital status:* single

*1901 Census:* A Daniel O'Brien is at 14 Great Maze Court, Southwark, with his parents and two young sisters. He is aged 20, and is a 'Druggist's Packer'

*1911 Census:* They are still at 14 Great Maze Court, but there is only Daniel (now aged 30, single, 'Assistant Warehouseman', still relating to a druggist place/company) and his mother (now widowed, and a wool finisher). Three rooms in dwelling. It has been crossed out, but it looks like there were eight children, and only four have survived (so Daniel is one of four surviving). NB: I cannot be 100% sure that the writer is Daniel, but there is no one else in listed in the 1901 Census that it could be – it could only possibly be another relative that was not present on the night of the census.

#### **47. ORME, Joseph**

*Name/addresses in Chatto records:* Joseph Orme. 11 Mere Avenue, Seedly, Manchester (1912); 74 Reservoir Street, Seedley, Manchester (1914)

*Submission dates/comments:*

5 January 1912: 'The Disappearance of Mrs Druce[?]', MS of 346 pages submitted

20 July 1914: 'The Kirklands of Kirkland', MS of 2[?]40 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:*

(On 'The Disappearance of Mrs Druce[?]): 'Quite hopeless. Nobody would get any further than I did – [?] page 3[?].'

(On 'The Kirklands of Kirkland'): 'The book is illiterate. The plot appears to be sensational, about a hero convicted of killing his rival. He is naturally proved innocent in the end.'

*Estimated ages at submission:* approximately 63–66

*Profession:* retail provision dealer, out of business

*Marital status:* widowed

*1911 Census:* Joseph Orme, widower, aged 63, 'Out of Business', 'Retail Provision dealer', is at 11 Mere Avenue, Pendleton, Salford, with his three grown-up children, who are a housekeeper (in their house), a commercial clerk (engineering), and an engineer's driller (engineering). It looks as if Joseph has six living children in all (with a further one having died). Five rooms in dwelling.

#### **48. PHILLIPS, Alfred**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Alfred Phillips. 58 Bardolph St, Leicester

*Submission date/comments:* 3 November 1910, several short stories, from 4000 to 16000 words, offered for publication on the half profit system

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 25/26

*Profession:* painter (not an artist type of painter, by the looks of it – possibly a house painter)

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Alfred Phillips, single, aged 26, occupation: 'Painter' (may say 'house' in pencil next to it) and 'Worker', is with his sister and her family (husband, three young sons) and their brother. Brother is 'Chauffeur', 'Motor Garage', 'Worker'; sister's husband is 'Bricklayer'. Six[?] rooms in dwelling.

#### **49. PIMBLETT, William (assumed)**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* W. Pimblett. 563 Chorley Old Road, Bolton

*Date/title of submission:* 17 March 1913, 'The Golden Quest'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 59

*Profession:* auditor (textile machine [?])

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* At 563 Chorley Old Road, Bolton, is William Pimblett (aged 57, 'Auditor (Textile Machine [Works?])', and a 'Worker' (as opposed to 'Employer'), with his wife and adult daughter. All were born in Bolton. Wife has had two children, one of whom died (so there cannot be a W. Pimblett that is a grown up son). Six rooms in dwelling (excluding bathrooms).

#### **50. PORTER, Eliza**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Miss Eliza Jane Porter. 55 Gratton Rd, West Kensington, W. (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 3 October 1911, various MSS offered for publication

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 65/66

*Profession:* inmate, Sunset Home for Aged Poor. Possibly a former journalist (see below)

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Eliza Jane Porter, aged 65, single, occupation: 'none inmate' is at 55 Gratton Road, Hammersmith, which (according to the results page – it is not written on the actual record) is the 'Sunset Home for Aged Poor'. There are 10 people at the property, eight of whom are inmates. Each of the inmates has what presumably was their prior occupation listed next to 'none inmate'; Eliza's looks like it may say 'journalist'. Nine[?] rooms in dwelling.

#### **51. PRITCHARD, Charles**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Charles H. Pritchard. 48 Grosvenor Park Road, Walthamstow

*Date/title of submission:* 21 August 1901, 'Poems'

*Estimated age at submission:* 33/34

*Profession:* merchant's clerk

*Marital status:* single

*1901 Census:* At 48 Grosvenor Park Road, Walthamstow, is Charles H. Pritchard (aged 33, 'merchants clerk' (sic), and a 'worker'), his widowed father (aged 63, 'drapers salesman' (sic) and a 'worker') and sister (aged 31). Charles and his sister were both born in Bristol

*1911 Census:* Charles (aged 43, single, 'merchant's clerk', and a 'worker') is with his father (aged

73, retired draper) and sister (aged 41) at 51 Peterborough Road, Leyton (London). 'Industry/service with which worker is connected' column appears to say 'zinc rolling' for Charles. Number of rooms in dwelling (excluding bathrooms and so on) is six

*1891 Census:* Charles is aged 23, living with his older brother (aged 26), his wife, their four children, and a servant in Walthamstow. Charles' occupation is 'commercial clerk'

*1881 Census:* Living at 4 Hills Buildings, Bristol, is Charles (aged 13, 'scholar'), his father (aged 44, 'draper shopkeeper'), his mother (aged 48), his brother (aged 16, 'clothiers assistant' (sic)), his sister (aged 11, 'scholar'), and a visiting cousin of the children.

## **52. ROBERTS, Ralph (assumed)**

*Name/ address in Chatto records:* R. A. Roberts. 142 Elgin Avenue, W. (i.e. London)

*Submission date/comments:* 2 October 1891, MS of a short story

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'Feeble in style. Worn out conventional theme.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approx 36/37

*Profession:* army and civil servant tutor

*Marital status:* married

*1891 Census:* At 142 Elgin Avenue, Paddington, is Ralph A. Roberts, 36, born in Ireland, 'army and civil servant tutor', ('school' is written next to it in pencil), with his wife and servant. He is 'employed'.

## **53. ROFF, Emily**

*Name/ address in Macmillan records:* Miss Emily E. Roff. 71 Mersea Road, Colchester

*Date/ title of submission:* 4 March 1913, 'The Boy Who Ran Away'

*Estimated age at submission:* 41

*Profession:* elementary school teacher (1911 census)

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Emily is aged 39, occupation: 'Elementary Sch Teaching', living at 71 Mersea Road with three sisters (one older, two younger), all of whom are either elementary or secondary schoolteachers. All are single. All were born in Essex, except for the eldest sister listed, who was born in London. House has eight rooms (excluding bathrooms)

*1901 Census:* The family is at 71 Mersea Road, but Emily is not. There is the father (widower, aged 74, retired school master) and three sisters (one of whom is new, i.e. not listed in the 1911 Census). Two of the three sisters are 'Certificated B S Teacher'. Someone who appears to be Emily (age is wrong, but name, birthplace and occupation are correct) is a board school teacher boarding in Tilbury, Essex

*1939 Register:* The family is still at 71 Mersea Road. There is Emily (born 24 February 1872, retired schoolteacher), two sisters (one retired schoolteacher, one schoolteacher), another probable sister (a retired salvation army officer), and an unrelated person.

## **54. RUMFITT, John (assumed)**

*Name/ address in Chatto records:* J[?]W [?] R[?]mfitt. 2 Grosvenor Terrace, Bootham, York

*Submission dates/comments:* 28 May 1912: 'The Bookworm', typed MS of 101[?] pages submitted. There is also a note on this record saying 'Nov 19'13 again submitted & declined', so he resubmitted this manuscript a year and a half later

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'The story of a man, very studious by temperament, who is infatuated with a girl of the lower class, and marries her. The book lacks atmosphere, subtlety, and interest; and it remains uninspired by any imaginative gift.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 43–45

*Profession:* retired tobacconist[?]

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* At 2 Grosvenor Terrace are the Rumfitt family: John William [Todd?] Rumfitt, aged 42, single, 'Retired Tobacconist[?]' with his parents (father is retired brick[?] manufacturer), his sister, and a servant. Nine rooms in dwelling.

## **55. SEYMOUR, Hamilton**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* AA Hamilton Seymour / Hamilton Seymour. 40 Guilford St, Russell Square, WC (i.e. London)

*Submission dates/comments:*

28 March 1911: typed MS of 110 pages submitted, 'To the Manor Born'

3 April 1911: typed MS of 70,000 words submitted, 'The Outrage'

*Comments in Chatto records:*

(On 'To the Manor Born'): 'We could not want such a story unless we were suddenly transported back into the days of 30 years ago.'

(On 'The Outrage'): 'The story is unconvincing and melodramatic. The whole thing, though planned with a sort of old-fashioned thoroughness, is very crude.'

*Estimated ages at submission:* approximately 60

*Profession:* journalist

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* Hamilton Seymour, boarder, married, aged 60, journalist, is at 40 Guilford Street with a boarding house keeper and her niece; another boarder; and a servant.

## **56. SILVERSTON, Cyril**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Cyril J. Silverston, 10 Rotten Park Road, Edgbaston, Bham (i.e. Birmingham)

*Submission date/comments:* 9 July 1910, 'Transition', typed MS of 373 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'The story is rather padded out, and I think the subject is rather worn. We have had a number of 'Bohemian' novels in the last 20 years. Earlier part of this story is slow and feeble. Author has published with Digby, Long & Sisley. Greening is probably his next stage.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 32/33

*Profession:* 'Electro Gilder' 'Jewellery' and an 'Employer'

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* Cyril Silverston, aged 33, occupation: 'Electro Gilder' 'Jewellery', and an 'Employer', is at 10 Rotten Park Road with his parents (father is 'Wholesale Jeweller, Dealer' and an 'Employer'); two siblings (one of whom is a 'Silversmiths Manager'); and two servants. 12 rooms in dwelling. Cyril is one of five living siblings (there were seven in all).

### **57. SIMMONS, Louisa (assumed)**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Mrs W. Simmons. 'Rosebank', Wellington Road, Enfield

*Date/title of submission:* 22 February 1892, 'A Blue-Eyed Boy'

*Macmillan reader's report:* 'A children's story – built on very slight material indeed. Certainly it is rather too long for its substance, and I doubt whether, even if shortened, it would command anything like the success of 'Misunderstood', or one or two other books of that slightly mawkish cast. The sentimentalism of childhood offers attractions for a considerable public, no doubt; but this is not a strong specimen of its class.'

*Estimated age at submission:* 38/39

*Profession:* principal of kindergarten

*Marital status:* married

*1891 Census:* At Rosebank, Wellington Road, Enfield, Edmonton, Middlesex, is Louisa Simmons (aged 38, 'Principal of Kindergarten', 'School'), her husband William (aged 39, 'architect and surveyor'), their two young daughters (both listed as 'pupil'), an 18-year-old 'assistant', and a 16-year-old servant (both female).

### **58. SPEARING, Evelyn (assumed)**

*Name/addresses in Macmillan records:* Miss E.[?] M. Spearing. Bedford College, Baker Street, W. (i.e. London) and – underneath – 6 Park Side, Cambridge

*Date/title of submission:* 7 April 1911, 'In the Morning'

*Estimated age at submission:* 25

*Profession:* assistant lecturer in English at Bedford College, London

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* (NB: this census was taken five days before her submission date.) There is a Spearing family at 6 Parkside, Cambridge (father, aged 67, solicitor), mother, daughter (aged 17, at school), and two servants, but Miss E. M. Spearing is not there. There is an Evelyn Spearing, though, at Bateman Street, Cambridge (as a visitor). She is aged 25, single, and is 'Lecturer (Assistant) in English At Bedford College, University of London'

*1901 Census:* Evelyn M. (aged 15) is living with her father, mother, two siblings and two servant girls at 4 Park Terrace, Cambridge. (NB: The address is given as Emmanuel House, 4 Parker Street, Park Terrace on the transcript)

*1891 Census:* Evelyn M. is at Warkworth Street, Cambridge, with her aunt, two other relatives, and a servant.

### **59. SPRINGALL, Stephen**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Stephen Springall. 3 Enfield Place, The Greenway, Uxbridge

*Submission date/comments:* 7 August 1901, 'That Indomitable Old Lady A Romance of Fitzroy Square By me who has lived there', written MS of 108pp

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'Written in pencil on both sides of the paper. The author seems to have drawn his inspiration from newspaper paragraphs relating to the Warren St Scandal, and the Cleveland St scandal.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approx 48/49

*Profession:* [?] steward (job listed as 'club steward', 'agents club' in later census)

*Marital status:* married

*1901 Census:* Stephen Springall, aged 48, [?] steward', is with wife and four children at 3 Enfield

Place

*1911 Census:* Stephen and his wife are still at 3 Enfield Place, aged 58 and 59, and he is listed as 'Club Steward' ('Agents Club' and a 'Worker'). No children are listed with them, but the record states they have had five, of which four are still living. They have been married 29 years. Six rooms in dwelling.

#### **60. STEVENS, Frederick (assumed)**

*Name/ address in Chatto records:* F. J.[?] Stevens. 8 Belgrave Terrace, Wakefield

*Submission date/ comments:* 16 January 1913, 'Nancy Maguire', MS of 463 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'The tedious [prating?] of a septuagenarian, and a rigmarole [? ?].'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 78/79

*Profession:* journalist

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* At 8 Belgrave Terrace, Wakefield, is Frederick Thomas Stevens, aged 77, 'journalist', 'newspaper', with his wife and daughter. Five rooms in dwelling.

#### **61. TAYLOR, Reginald**

*Name/ address in Macmillan records:* R. Taylor (Reginald Taylor in readers' reports). 7 Castle Terrace, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

*Date/ title of submission:* 23 June 1892, 'Lot Fifty'

NB: There are two similar reports for Taylor's submission:

*Macmillan reader's report (in Volume 55946):* 'A domestic melodrama of the old Adelphi pattern, showing virtuous poverty kept out of its rightful inheritance by dishonest wealth, but in the end of course triumphant. This is relieved by a tragic, but wholly irrelevant interlude, dealing with the ill-starred loves of a popular actor and an Earl's daughter, which results in the death of the girl's brother by the hand of her lover and the latter's consequent [?]. The story has nothing to recommend it in plot, incident, character or style. It is mere foolishness of the servants [sic][?] hall.'

*Macmillan reader's report (in Volume 55977):* 'An Adelphi melodrama – virtuous poverty kept out of its rightful inheritance by dishonest wealth, but eventually triumphant, [relieved?] by the tragic but [entirely irrelevant?] episode of the lover of an actor [&?] an [?] daughter, which result in the death of the Earl's son by the hand of the actor [&?] the latter's suicide. The story is mere foolishness, ill-composed, ill-written, ill [bred?].'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 25

*Profession:* land agent and valuer's assistant

*Marital status:* married

*1891 Census transcript:* At 7 Castle Terrace is Reginald Taylor (aged 26, 'land agent and valuers (sic) assistant') and wife. Reginald was born in Devon (apparently in Exeter)

*1901 Census:* Unable to find them. They are no longer at 7 Castle Terrace

*1881 Census:* There is a Reginald Taylor (aged 16, born in Exeter, 'land agents (sic) clerk'), with his mother, father, and two brothers living in St Clement, Truro, Cornwall. Father is 'Solers Managing Clerk', and eldest brother is 'Journeyman painter etc'.

## **62. THODY, Dorothy**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Miss Dorothy Thody. Isisville[?], Leighton Rd, Cheltenham

*Submission date/comments:* 8 November 1910, a story of 7[?] chapters offered

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 15/16

*1911 Census:* Dorothy Thody, aged 16, is at 14 Leighton Road, Cheltenham, with her parents (father is 'Automobile Engineers Companies Secretary[?]' and a 'Worker') and two younger sisters. Six rooms in dwelling.

## **63. WALKER, Herbert Rowland (assumed)**

*Name/address in Chatto records:* Rowland Walker. Ryburne, East Barnet, Herts

*Submission date/comments:* 25 March 1914, 'The Blacksmith of Barford', typed MS of 201 pages submitted

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'This is a highfalutin story of past days, of the 'unhand me, Sir' order. The writing is painfully ridiculous.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 37

*Profession:* accountant

*Marital status:* married

*1911 Census:* At Ryburne, Rosslyn Avenue, East Barnet, is Herbert Rowland Walker, aged 34, 'Accountant' (in a religious organisation, it looks like), with his wife and two young daughters. Six rooms in dwelling.

## **64. WALKINGTON, George (assumed)**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* G. E. Walkington. 25 Taylors Street, Birkenhead, Cheshire

*Date/title of submission:* 9 October 1901, 'Poem'

*Estimated age at submission:* 22/23

*Profession:* clerk, shipping

*Marital status:* single

*1901 Census:* At 25 Taylor Street, Birkenhead, Cheshire, is George E. Walkington (aged 23, 'clerk shipping'), his widowed mother, his five sisters, two of their husbands, and three of the sisters' children. George was born in Birkenhead. Family members' occupations include dressmaker, apprentice bookbinder, and dock labourer.

## **65. WHELER, Doris**

(From a well-off family – included in sample due to her age)

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Miss Doris L. Wheler. 114 Lansdowne Place, Hove, Sussex

*Date/title of submission:* 25 September 1901, 'The Treasure of the Castle'

*Macmillan reader's report:* 'A story for children, commonplace and poor in style and absurdly improbable in its incidents.'

*Estimated age at submission:* 15

*1901 Census:* At 114 Lansdowne Place, Hove, is Doris L. Wheler, aged 15, born in Preston, Lancashire, living with her parents (father is 'Lieut Colonel Infantry Retired'), two younger siblings and four servants

*1911 Census:* The family are still at 114 Lansdowne Place. There is Doris (aged 25), her father (on his army pension), her mother, and three servants. There are 15 rooms in the dwelling (excluding

bathrooms)

*1939 Register:* There is a Doris L. Wheler (date of birth 03/03/1886), alone at 209a Kensington High Street, London. Occupation is 'domestic duties unpaid'.

#### **66. WHITE, Ebe (assumed)**

*Name in Chatto records:* Miss [C.? E.?] M. White. 70 West Street, Brighton

*Submission date/comments:* 2 September 1905, 'Minnie's Views', MS of 118 pages submitted for perusal, and specimen illustration

*Comments in Chatto records:* 'MS novelette about 35,000 words, chiefly for older schoolgirls, but it contains touches on present-day secondary education.'

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 29/30

*Profession:* school teacher in 1901 census; bookseller's assistant as a teenager (presumably helping father, who was a bookseller)

*Marital status:* single in 1901

*1901 Census:* In 1901, Ebe White, aged 25, 'School Teacher', is at 70 West Street, Brighton, with her family (parents and four younger sisters) and a boarder. Father is a wood carver. Mother was born in Italy

*1891 Census:* The family are listed at 69 West Street. Father is 'Bookseller'. Eve M. (aged 15) is 'Bookseller's Assistant'. (Based on the other censuses and a birth search, I believe her name was Ebe, however)

*1881 Census:* The family are listed at 70 West Street. Father is bookseller and wood carver.

#### **67. WIDDUP, Katherine (assumed)**

*Name in Macmillan and Chatto records:* K. Widdup (1901, Macmillan); R. Widdup (1912, Chatto); K. or R.[?] Widdup (1913, Macmillan)

*Address in Macmillan and Chatto records:*

(1901, Macmillan): Sunnyside, Merlin Road, Revidge, Blackburn. (It seems the house name 'Sunnyside' applies to the record below this one in the archive, and is against this entry in error)

(1912, Chatto): 12 Merlin Rd, Revedge, Blackburn, Lancs

(1913, Macmillan): 12 Merlin Road, [RevrIDGE?], Blackburn

*Dates/titles of submissions:*

13 March 1901, 'The Master Confidence' (Macmillan)

10 January 1912, 'Ten Days in Holland', MS of about 17,000 wds offered for publication (Chatto)

13 February 1913, 'Ten Days (sic) Holiday' (Macmillan)

*Macmillan reader's report:* (for 'The Master Confidence'): 'Describes the characters, rather than the lives, of three village children and an aristocratic villain, encountered in the hospital wherein the irresistably [sic] lovely heroine, Golding, is a nurse. There is scarcely an incident in the story until Golding dies – the victim of heredity, though how or why we are not informed. The author has ideas, but is hopelessly hampered in their expression by want of education.'

*Estimated ages at submission:* approximately 28 (1901), approximately 38-40 (1912/1913)

*Profession:* none given; wife of timber merchant and (later) saw mill owner

*Marital status:* married

*1901 Census:* In Merlin Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, are Katherine Widdup, (aged 28, no occupation listed), with husband, John (aged 27, 'Timber Merchant', and an 'Employer', not a

‘Worker’). Katherine was born in Darlington, Durham; husband in Whalley, Lancashire  
*1911 Census:* Katherine and husband are at 12 Merlin Road, with a servant. Husband’s occupation is now ‘Merchant in British Timber and Saw Mill Proprietor’, and he is listed as an ‘Employer’. They are both aged 38, have been married for 13 years, and have no children.

#### **68. WILCHER, Sarah (assumed)**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* Miss S. A. Wilcher. 53 Thanet Road, Margate

*Date/title of submission:* 24 June 1910, ‘A Chance in Life’

*Estimated age at submission:* approximately 67

*Profession:* retired certificated schoolmistress

*Marital status:* single

*1911 Census:* At 53 Thanet Road is: Sarah Anne Wilcher (single, aged 68, ‘Cert Schoolmistress Retired’, born in Bermondsey, London), and sister Marian Eliza Wilcher (single, aged 62, ‘Teacher of Deaf and Dumb, Retired’, born in Bermondsey, London)

*1901 Census:* Sarah is in London (23 Gladstone Street, Southwark, aged 55, single, ‘Schoolmistress’). Marian is also there (aged 51, ‘Teacher of Deaf and Dumb’) but is a visitor in the house

*1891 Census:* Sarah A. Wilcher is listed alone at Gladstone Street (not clear in which house – possibly no. 52). She is single, aged 42, born in London, and a ‘Certificated Elementary Teacher’.

#### **69. WILSON, George**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* George Wilson. 11B[?] Featherstone Buildings, Holborn, WC (i.e. London)

*Date/title of submission:* 23 April 1901, ‘Poems’

*Estimated age at submission:* 31/32

*Profession:* engineer and merchant (export)

*Marital status:* single

*1901 Census:* At Featherstone Buildings, 11, Holborn (NB: it is difficult to understand the residences within the buildings) there is George F. Wilson, aged 31, single, occupation: ‘engineer and merchant (export)’, born in Egypt.

#### **70. WILSON, John**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* John Wilson [? maybe Esq]. 69 Angell Rd, Brixton

*Date/title of submission:* 2 November 1881, ‘Audrey’s Story’

*Estimated age at submission:* 56/57

*Profession:* retired commercial clerk

*Marital status:* married

*1881 Census:* At 69 Angell Road, Lambeth, is John Wilson (aged 56, ‘retired commercial clerk’, born in Kent), with his wife and a servant.

#### **71. WRIGGLESWORTH, John**

*Name/address in Macmillan records:* John Wrigglesworth. The Crescent, Greatland, nr. Halifax

*Date/title of submission:* 23 June 1891, ‘The Sweetest Maid in Glowton by Hubert Cloudesley’

*Macmillan reader’s report:* ‘A novel by a writer who seems to have tried other ventures. This, at

least, is pure trash; it deserves no word of criticism.'

*Estimated age at submission:* 33/34

*Profession:* cotton dyer's labourer

*Marital status:* married

*1891 Census:* There is a John Wigglesworth at 'Crescent, Elland with Greetland, Halifax'. He is 34, a 'cotton dyer's labourer', and head of a family with wife and five children. The eldest two sons (aged 13 and 10) are both listed as 'Woollen Operative'.

### APPENDIX 3: CAPSULE PROFILES OF SECOND-TIER FIGURES IN LATE VICTORIAN STUDIES

#### CRAWFORD, Emily (?–1915)<sup>1</sup>

Journalist Emily Crawford (née Johnstone) was born in Ireland and later moved to Paris, her choice of career not too surprising given that she ‘counted four American newspapermen among her relatives’.<sup>2</sup> She married journalist George Morland Crawford in 1864, taking over his post on the *Daily News* after his death in 1885.<sup>3</sup> Emily Crawford wrote for numerous publications, including *Truth*, the *New York Tribune*, the *Weekly Dispatch*, the *Calcutta Englishman*, and the *New York Century*, and ‘reported on, and explained, great political events in France’, her pieces ‘enhanced by the background knowledge the Crawfords had gathered from their friendship with many leading French politicians’.<sup>4</sup> In 1890, she became a ‘life fellow of the Institute of Journalists’.<sup>5</sup> Her piece ‘Journalism as a Profession for Women’ appeared in the *Contemporary Review* in 1893.<sup>6</sup> An interview with her – titled ‘A Famous Lady Journalist: A Chat with Mrs Emily Crawford’ – appeared in the *Young Woman* in 1894.<sup>7</sup> Pieces by her were also printed in both the *Young Woman* and *Young Man*.<sup>8</sup>

#### LANG, Andrew (1844–1912)

Described by William Donaldson as an ‘anthropologist, classicist, and historian’, Andrew Lang enjoyed a ‘hugely prolific and successful intellectual career, which saw him achieve eminence in several fields’.<sup>9</sup> As a scholar, poet, journalist, and author, he had a substantial literary output, and, as Donaldson notes, wrote for many different periodicals, with his monthly column in *Longman’s Magazine* becoming ‘a national institution’.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly for a well-known literary figure, Lang crops up multiple times in the field of literary advice. Literary aspiration was a topic he had some experience with; as a correspondence columnist, he was often approached by correspondents wishing to be published.<sup>11</sup> His amusing *How to Fail in Literature: A Lecture* (1890) was a version of a talk he had given ‘at the South Kensington Museum, in aid of the College for

---

<sup>1</sup> Crawford’s year of birth is unclear – Fred Hunter’s ODNB entry has an estimate of 1831; a *Young Woman* interview (possibly incorrect) suggests it was 1842. See Fred Hunter, “Crawford [née Johnstone], Emily (1831?–1915), journalist.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004, and “A Famous Lady Journalist. A Chat with Mrs Emily Crawford.” *The Young Woman*, March 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), pp.183–5.

<sup>2</sup> Hunter, “Crawford [née Johnstone], Emily...” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> “Journalism as a Profession for Women.” *The Contemporary Review*, September 1893, Volume 64, pp.362–71.

<sup>7</sup> See “A Famous Lady Journalist. A Chat with Mrs Emily Crawford.” *Young Woman*, March 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), pp.183–5.

<sup>8</sup> See “The Ideal Husband. VII. By Mrs Emily Crawford.” *The Young Woman*, June 1895, Volume 3 (1894–1895), pp.305–310, and reference to her in “There are three capital stories...” *The Young Woman*, March 1897, Volume 5 (1896–1897), p.219.

<sup>9</sup> See William Donaldson, “Lang, Andrew (1844–1912), anthropologist, classicist, and historian.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 27 May 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> As already noted, Annie Swan had the same problem. See Margaret Beetham, “The Agony Aunt, the Romancing Uncle and the Family of Empire: Defining the Sixpenny Reading Public in the 1890s”, in Laurel Brake, Bill Bell and David Finkelstein (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), pp.254–5 and 257–8.

Working Men and Women' in 1889.<sup>12</sup> He also made comments on the subject of novel writing in 1886, and in a lecture he gave on 'The Art of Letters' given to the Philosophical Institution in Edinburgh in 1892.<sup>13</sup>

### **MARRYAT, Florence (1833–1899)**

Novelist Florence Marryat, the youngest child of the novelist Frederick Marryat, published more than 75 novels, 'primarily popular romances for women'.<sup>14</sup> Her first, *Love's Conflict*, appeared in 1865.<sup>15</sup> She also wrote non-fiction, including the two-volume *Life and Letters of Captain Marryat* (1872), about her father.<sup>16</sup> 'A woman of varied accomplishments', notes Jean G. Neisius, 'Marryat added to the roles of author and novelist those of playwright, comedy actress, operatic singer, lecturer, and entertainer'.<sup>17</sup> She appears to have established her School of Literary Art, offering 'instruction in composing and writing fiction, journalism, and the drama', in early 1897, though how successful it was is unknown.<sup>18</sup> There appears to be little evidence of it aside from adverts and a one-page prospectus, and Marryat died a couple of years later.<sup>19</sup>

### **PAIN, Barry (1864–1928)**

Writer Barry Pain studied at Cambridge and published his first book, *In a Canadian Canoe*, in 1891.<sup>20</sup> N. T. P. Murphy notes that he 'made his name as a novelist and writer of short stories, mainly of a humorous nature', his 'dislike of banality' causing him 'to satirise the stock characters and accepted formulas of Victorian fiction'.<sup>21</sup> In 1900, he published *Eliza* – 'a series of domestic sketches narrated by a despotic and fussy London clerk' – which was 'an instant success', and followed by four further *Eliza* books.<sup>22</sup> Murphy notes that while 'Pain is best-known today for his humorous working-class sketches, it was his serious writing that earned critical acclaim during his lifetime'.<sup>23</sup> He 'was admired for his narrative ability and economy' and penned more than 60 books, as well as 'a mass of uncollected articles and short stories in every conceivable vein'.<sup>24</sup> His contribution to the field of literary advice, *First Lessons in Story-Writing*, appeared in 1907.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> See Preface, Andrew Lang, *How to Fail in Literature: A Lecture* (London: Field & Tuer, 1890). For evidence the talk was in 1889, see, for example "Mr Andrew Lang on 'How to Fail in Literature.'" *The Daily News* [London], 29 November 1889, p.2.

<sup>13</sup> See "Mr Andrew Lang on 'The Novel Business.'" *Edinburgh Evening News*, 23 August 1886, 3rd page, and "Mr Andrew Lang on Novel Writing." *The Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express*, 19 November 1892, p.7.

<sup>14</sup> Jean G. Neisius, "Marryat [married names Church, Lean], Florence (1833–1899), novelist." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "The School of Literary Art..." *Daily Mail*, 23 January 1897, p.1, and see "Nursery for Novelists. Miss Florence Marryatt's [sic] Scheme." *Daily Mail*, 11 January 1897, p.3.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, "The School of Literary Art..." *Daily Mail*, 23 January 1897, p.1, and "The School of Literary Art" [one-page prospectus], accessed on [florencemarryat.org](http://florencemarryat.org). See also Neisius, "Marryat [married names Church, Lean], Florence..." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>20</sup> N. T. P. Murphy, "Pain, Barry Eric Odell (1864–1928), writer." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Barry Pain, *First Lessons in Story-Writing* (London: Literary Correspondence College, 1907).

### **PEMBERTON, Max (1863–1950)**

Novelist Max Pemberton was educated at Cambridge and became a freelance journalist and the editor of *Chums* and *Cassell's Magazine* before 'mov[ing] into writing unabashedly derivative novels – initially imitations of Robert Louis Stevenson and Rider Haggard'.<sup>26</sup> He penned a significant number of works, including novels *The Iron Pirate* (1893), *The Impregnable City* (1895), *Pro Patria* (1901), *Beatrice of Venice* (1904), and *Captain Black* (1911).<sup>27</sup> He was also a playwright.<sup>28</sup> Christopher Hilliard notes that Pemberton 'sought to capitalise on his measure of literary success by going into the literary advice business'.<sup>29</sup> He led the Quill Club, which was started in 1898 and 'sought to encourage literary beginners', and later went on to run the London School of Journalism (formerly the London Correspondence College), which, under his leadership, 'prospered and became the least distrusted institution of its kind'.<sup>30</sup> He was knighted in 1928.<sup>31</sup>

### **RUSSELL, Percy (dates unknown)**

Writer Percy Russell published *The Literary Manual* (1886) and then *The Authors' Manual* (1890), which one review noted 'created a considerable stir in the literary world' when it appeared, and which went to at least eight editions.<sup>32</sup> A 'journalist of long and varied experience', Russell published many works spanning non-fiction, fiction, and verse, including *Leaves from a Journalist's Note-Book* (1874), *A Guide to British and American Novels* (1894), *My Strange Wife. A Novel* (1887), and *King Alfred, and Other Poems* (1880).<sup>33</sup> He also had fiction serialised in newspapers.<sup>34</sup>

### **SWAN, Annie (1859–1943)**

Novelist Annie Swan (often Annie S. Swan) was born in Edinburgh, and her 'teenage persistence in writing fiction was rewarded when *Wrongs Righted* (1881) was published serially in the *People's Friend*'.<sup>35</sup> The novel *Aldersyde* (1883) 'made her reputation', and she 'confirmed her success with *The Gates of Eden* (1887) and *Maitland of Laurieston* (1891)'.<sup>36</sup> 'It is estimated', notes B. Dickson, that Swan penned '162 novels under her own name and at least forty under the male pseudonym David Lyall', her 'prolific output' due to a habit of 'rising at 6 a.m. and writing 3000 words which

---

<sup>26</sup> Christopher Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp.24–5.

<sup>27</sup> See British Library Catalogue.

<sup>28</sup> See "Sir Max Pemberton." *The Stage*, 2 March 1950, p.12.

<sup>29</sup> Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, p.25.

<sup>30</sup> Philip Waller, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.402; Hilliard, *To Exercise Our Talents*, pp.24–5; and see adverts in the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book, 1908* (see Advertisements, p.vii), the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book, 1909* (see Advertisements, p.iii), and the *Writers' and Artists' Year-Book, 1913* (see page following Advertisements, p.iii – the page in question is not numbered).

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, "Max Pemberton Honoured." [Under 'King's Birthday Honours'], *Birmingham Gazette*, 4 June 1928, p.1.

<sup>32</sup> See British Library Catalogue and "The Author's Manual. By Percy Russell." *The Colonies & India and American Visitor*, 21 May 1892, p.17. For proof Russell's manual went to eight editions, see "17. The Author's Manual by Percy Russell..." [advert, under 'Digby, Long, & Co.'s New Books', under 'Publishers' Column'], *The Dundee Advertiser*, 21 November 1895, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

<sup>33</sup> See "The Author's Manual. By Percy Russell." *The Colonies & India*, 21 May 1892, p.17, and British Library Catalogue.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, "The Master Villain: by Percy Russell." *Leicester Daily Post*, 17 May 1907, p.8.

<sup>35</sup> B. Dickson, "Swan [married name Burnett Smith], Annie Shepherd [pseud. David Lyall] (1859–1943), novelist." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

she never redrafted'.<sup>37</sup> Like Andrew Lang, she had a magazine correspondence column which resulted in requests for publication help from hopeful aspirants; also, like Lang, she lectured on fiction writing at least once (in Glasgow in 1891).<sup>38</sup> Dickson notes that 'she was much in demand for press interviews', and one such interview, titled 'Annie S. Swan at Home', which touched on literary aspiration, appeared in the *Young Woman* in 1893.<sup>39</sup> The interview even referred to a possible 'plan' of Swan's of 'getting hold of young women who are engaged in the metropolis in literary and journalistic work, with the view of cheering what are often very lonely lives'.<sup>40</sup> Other references to Swan, and pieces by her, appeared in the magazine and in its sister publications, the *Young Man* and the *Home Messenger*.<sup>41</sup> She also attended at least one of the magazines' holiday conferences in Switzerland, in 1893.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> See Beetham, 'The Agony Aunt, the Romancing Uncle and the Family of Empire', pp.254–5 and 257–8. See also "Annie S. Swan on Fiction Writing as a Profession." *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 17 January 1891, 2nd page; "Lecture by Annie S. Swan. ..." *The Glasgow Herald*, 17 January 1891, p.7; "Annie S. Swan on Novel Writing." *Edinburgh Evening News*, 17 January 1891, 2nd page; and "Annie Swan on Writing as a Profession." *Glasgow Evening News*, 17 January 1891, p.3.

<sup>39</sup> See Dickson, "Swan [married name Burnett Smith], Annie Shepherd..." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and "Annie S. Swan at Home." *The Young Woman*, March 1893, Volume 1 (1892–1893), pp.183–7.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, the reference to the *Home Messenger* in *The Young Man*, January 1892, Volume 6 (1892), p.24; "Glimpses of German Student Life." *The Young Man*, May 1892, Volume 6 (1892), pp.160–3; "Our Christmas Number." *The Young Woman*, October 1893, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.9; and "A Letter to Annie S. Swan." *The Young Woman*, October 1898, Volume 7 (1898–1899), pp.34–5.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, "Our Great Holiday Conference in Switzerland." *The Young Woman*, March 1894, Volume 2 (1893–1894), p.195, and "Our Holiday Trip to Switzerland." *The Young Man*, January 1893, Volume 7 (1893), p.34.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

#### Archives

#### Archives of Chatto & Windus Ltd, University of Reading

Manuscript Entry Books:

CW E/1.

CW E/2.

CW E/3.

CW E/4.

CW E/5.

CW E/6.

CW E/7.

CW E/8.

CW E/9.

CW E/10.

#### Burnett Archive of Working-Class Autobiographies, Brunel University London

Ashley, James, 'Untitled', 1:24.

Brown, Edward, 'Untitled', 1:93.

Chase, Alice Maud, 'The Memoirs of Alice Maud Chase', 1:141.

Clarke, Maud, 'Untitled', 1:156.

Cooper, Charles H., 'Reminiscences of School Life in the Latter Part of the 19th Century', 1:862.

Cowper, Daisy, 'De Nobis', 1:182.

Goring, Jack, 'Untitled', 1:274.

Sharman, Jessie Ravenna, 'Recollections of Jessie Ravenna Sharman', 1:618.

Smith, Sam, 'Bosley Cloud: A North Country Childhood', 3:168.

**Macmillan Archive, British Library, London**

Reader Reports, Volumes:

Add MS 55934.

Add MS 55935.

Add MS 55941.

Add MS 55944.

Add MS 55945.

Add MS 55946.

Add MS 55961.

Add MS 55962.

Add MS 55963.

Add MS 55964.

Add MS 55977.

Add MS 55982.

Records of Manuscripts, Volumes:

Add MS 56016.

Add MS 56017.

Add MS 56018.

Add MS 56019.

Add MS 56020.

Add MS 56021.

**Royal Literary Fund Archive, University of Cambridge**

Case files of applicants. Reel 2030–2053.

## Printed primary sources

Adams, W. H. Davenport, *The Steady Aim: A Book of Examples and Encouragements from Modern Biography* (London: James Hogg and Sons, 1863).

Anon., *Poetic Gems: A Selection of Good Poetry for Young Readers* (London: W. & R. Chambers, Limited, 1906).

Bennett, Arnold, *How to Become an Author: A Practical Guide* (London: C. Arthur Pearson, Ltd, 1903).

Besant, Walter, *All in a Garden Fair*, Volumes I, II, and III (London: Chatto & Windus, 1883).

Besant, Walter, *The Pen and the Book* (London: Thomas Burleigh, 1899).

Besant, Walter, *The Society of Authors. Record of its Action from its Foundation* (London: The Incorporated Society of Authors, 1893).

Bloch, Regina Miriam, *The Vision of the King. A Coronation Souvenir* (London: Greening & Co., 1911).

Broughton, Rhoda, *A Beginner* (1894; Gloucester: Dodo Press, 2008).

Burke, Thomas, *Son of London* (London: Herbert Jenkins Limited, 1946).

Clay, William, *A History of Prittlevell Priory, Illustrated* (Southend-on-Sea: Donald Munro, 1918).

Cloudesley, Hubert [pseud. John Wrigglesworth], *Idylls of Yorkshire* (Elland: Henry Watson, c.1900).

Cooper, S. A., *Links in Life* (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1933).

Corke, Helen, *In Our Infancy. An Autobiography, Part I: 1882–1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

Davies, J. L. (ed.), *The Working Men's College, 1854–1904: Records of its History and its Work for Fifty Years, by Members of the College* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1904).

Dawson, W. J., *Table Talk with Young Men* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1898).

De Musset, Paul, *Mr Wind and Mistress Rain*, translated by Ellen E. Cloke (London, George G. Harrap & Co., 1923).

Fitzgerald, Percy, *Memoirs of an Author*, Volume 2 (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1894).

Gissing, George, *New Grub Street* (1891; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Gissing, George, *The Unclassed* (1884; Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976).

- Harrison, J. F. C., *A History of the Working Men's College, 1854–1954* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954).
- Jacox, Francis, *Aspects of Authorship; or Book-Marks and Bookmakers* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1872).
- Keating, Joseph, *Maurice: A Romance of Light and Darkness* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1905).
- Keating, Joseph, *My Struggle for Life* (London: Simpkin, Marshall Hamilton, Kent & Co. Ltd., 1916).
- Keating, Joseph, *Son of Judith: A Tale of the Welsh Mining Valleys* (London: George Allen, 1900).
- Keating, Joseph, *The Great Appeal* (London: Everett & Co., 1909).
- Lang, Andrew, *How to Fail in Literature: A Lecture* (London: Field & Tuer, 1890).
- Morgan, Charles, *The House of Macmillan, 1843–1943* (London: Macmillan, 1943).
- Muir, Edwin, *The Story and the Fable: An Autobiography* (London: George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd, 1940).
- Pain, Barry, *First Lessons in Story-Writing* (London: Literary Correspondence College, 1907).
- Peddie, R. A., *The British Museum Reading Room: A Handbook for Students* (London: Grafton & Co., 1912).
- Riddell, Charlotte, *A Struggle for Fame* (1883; Dublin: Tramp Press, 2014).
- Russell, Percy, *A Guide to British and American Novels*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Digby, Long & Co., 1895).
- Russell, Percy, *The Authors' Manual: A Complete and Practical Guide to All Branches of Literary Work*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (London: Digby, Long, and Co., 1891).
- Russell, Percy, *The Authors' Manual: A Complete and Practical Guide to All Branches of Literary Work*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (London: Digby & Long, c.1892).
- Smiles, Samuel *Self-Help* (1859; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Springall, Stephen, *Mr Springall's New Series of Right-o'-Way Leaflets* (Uxbridge: publisher unknown, 1910).
- Tressell, Robert, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1914; London: Penguin, 2004).
- Wagner, Leopold, *How to Publish a Book or Article, and How to Produce a Play; Advice to Young Authors* (London: Redway, 1898).

Wheler, Doris L., *The Treasure of the Castle: A Story for Children* (London: Grant Richards, 1902).

Whyte, Frederic, *William Heinemann: A Memoir* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928).

**Periodicals (years consulted in brackets)**

*Good Words* (1880–1881)

*Literary Land* (1891)

*McEwan's Amateur Journalist and Literary Aspirant* (1907)

*The Author* (1890–1891)

*The Board Teacher* (1883–1884, 1904), later *The London Teacher* (1911)

*The Bookman* (1893–1898)

*The Bookseller* (1880)

*The Boy Amateur* (1882), later *The British Amateur* (1883)

*The Contemporary Review* (1893)

*The Literary Amateur* (1882)

*The Literary Year-Book* (1900)

*The Palace Journal* (1887–1890, 1892)

*The Schoolmistress* (1911)

*The Scribbler* (1876–1878)

*The Working Men's College Journal* (1890, 1892–1900)

*The Writers' Year-Book* (1902)

*The Writers' and Artists' Year-Book* (1906–1908, 1913)

*The Young Authors' Gazette* (1892)

*The Young Authors' Journal* (1887)

*The Young Man* (1887–1888, 1891–1895)

*The Young Woman* (1892–1895, 1897–1898, 1900)

### **Print media pieces**

“17. The Author’s Manual by Percy Russell...” [advert, under ‘Digby, Long, & Co.’s New Books’, under ‘Publishers’ Column’], *The Dundee Advertiser*, 21 November 1895, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

“£2,500 to be given in prizes...” *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 20 September 1893, p.4.

“£2,500 to be given in prizes...” *Burnley Express and Clitheroe Division Advertiser*, 27 September 1893, p.3.

“A Close Time for Authors.” *The Shields Daily Gazette and Shipping Telegraph*, 6 March 1902, p.4.

“A correspondent writes asking...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *The Clifton and Redland Free Press*, 13 February 1903, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

“A good shillingsworth of short stories...” [Under ‘Books and Bookmen’], *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle Literary Supplement*, 22 August 1896, p.12.

“A Guide to Authorship.” *The Daily News* [London], 17 September 1890, p.5.

“A literary agent the other day was revealing the mysteries of his profession...” *The Manchester Guardian*, 6 October 1913, p.7.

“A Literary and Artistic Competition.” *The Evening News* [Portsmouth], 1 September 1893, p.2.

“A Literary Competition...” [advert], *Leamington Spa Courier and Warwickshire Standard*, 16 January 1892, p.5.

“A Lost Manuscript.” *The Morning Post* [London], 9 July 1890, p.2.

“A New Departure in Novel Writing.” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 31 January 1884, pp.4–5.

“A Novel Literary Competition.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 6 February 1903, p.4.

“A Nursery for Novelists.” *Fun*, 26 January 1897, p.38\*.

“A Popular Author.” *The Illustrated London News*, 17 July 1897, p.73\*.

“A School for Fiction.” *The Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express*, 11 April 1891, p.5.

“A School of Fiction.” *The Globe and Traveller*, 4 February 1897, p.3.

“A School of Fiction.” *The Illustrated London News*, 18 April 1891, p.507\*.

- “A School of Fiction.” *Northern Daily Mail* [Hartlepool], 1 May 1891, p.2.
- “A Struggle for Fame.” *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 18 August 1883, pp.216–7\*.
- “A very useful book to literary aspirants...” *The Framlingham Weekly News. Railway Gazette and East Suffolk Advertiser*, 11 January 1908, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.
- “A very well known [sic] literary writer who has written novels himself...” [Under ‘Literary Notes’], *The Western Daily Press*, 18 April 1902, p.7.
- “A Word to the Aspiring.” *The Academy*, 6 October 1900, pp.283–4\*.
- “A Writing Competition.” *The Leeds Times*, 8 December 1888, p.8.
- “A Yorkshire Story...” [advert], *The Halifax Guardian*, 10 March 1894, p.5.
- “Advice to Literary Aspirants.” *The Woman’s Herald*, 7 September 1893, p.455\*.
- “Advice to Novelists.” *The Daily News* [London], 2 October 1894, p.6.
- “Age and Authorship.” *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 20 September 1884, 2nd page.
- “Age and Authorship.” *The Evening News and Star* [Glasgow], 18 September 1884, p.4.
- “Age and Authorship.” *Whitby Gazette*, 6 February 1891, p.4.
- “Although we have it on authority that no one thinks of questioning that poets are born and not made...” [Under ‘Miscellaneous Works’], *The Scotsman*, 8 December 1910, p.4.
- “Amateur Authors...” [advert, under ‘Pressmen, Printers, Canvassers’], *The Daily News* [London], 23 April 1901, p.10.
- “Amateurs’ Literary and Painting Prize Competition.” *Aberdeen Journal. And Daily Advertiser for the North of Scotland*, 23 September 1893, p.7.
- “Amateurs’ Literary and Painting Prize Competition.” *Edinburgh Evening News*, 25 September 1893, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.
- “Amateurs’ Literary and Painting Prize Competition. Local Winners.” *Cheltenham Chronicle. And General Advertiser for Gloucestershire and the Adjoining Counties*, 24 August 1895, p.2.
- “An American publisher complains that...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 8 December 1905, p.3.
- “An Immense Literary Competition.” *Evening Telegraph & Star and Sheffield Daily Times*, 18 April 1896, p.3.

- “An Immense Literary Competition.” *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 18 April 1896, p.8.
- “Andrew Lang on ‘How to Fail in Literature.’” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 30 November 1889, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.
- “Annie S. Swan on Fiction Writing as a Profession.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 17 January 1891, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.
- “Annie S. Swan on Novel Writing.” *Edinburgh Evening News*, 17 January 1891, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.
- “Annie Swan on Writing as a Profession.” *Glasgow Evening News*, 17 January 1891, p.3.
- “Another novelist is being boomed by her publisher apparently because of her youth...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 18 September 1908, p.3.
- “Aspects of Authorship.” *The Morning Post* [London], 30 November 1872, p.3.
- “Authors and Publishers.” *East London Advertiser, Tower Hamlets Independent, Essex & Middlesex Guardian*, 26 March 1892, p.5.
- “Authors and Publishers.” *The Canterbury Journal and Farmers’ Gazette*, 26 March 1892, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.
- “Authors and Publishers.” *The Congleton & Macclesfield Mercury and Cheshire General Advertiser*, 26 March 1892, 6<sup>th</sup> page.
- “Authors and Publishers.” *The Hants & Berks Gazette and Middlesex and Surrey Journal*, 26 March 1892, p.6.
- “Authors and Publishers.” *The Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald*, 26 March 1892, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.
- “Authors’ MSS. Wanted...” [advert], *Brighton Gazette, Hove Post, Sussex & Surrey Telegraph*, 16 June 1904, p.8.
- “Authors. Study ‘How to Write Saleable Fiction’...” [advert], *The Daily News* [London], 5 January 1910, p.10.
- “Authors!...” [advert], *The Daily News* [London], 28 January 1905, p.2.
- “Authors Who Have Written against Time.” *The Manchester Courier Weekly Supplement from Cassell’s Saturday Journal*, 7 March 1891, p.2.
- “Authorship Easier.” [Under ‘The World’s Press’], *Daily Mail* from *The Sphere*, 9 February 1907, p.6.
- “Borough of Southend-on-Sea. Supply of Newspapers, Periodicals, Etc., to the Public Library.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 17 February 1910, p.1.

“Borough of Southend-on-Sea. The new Public Library, Victoria Avenue...” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 12 July 1906, p.1.

“Borough of Southend-on-Sea. To Gardeners, Nurserymen, etc.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 6 February 1908, p.1.

“British Museum Reading Room.” *The Daily News* [London], 17 September 1887, p.5.

“British Museum Reading Room.” *The Daily News* [London], 16 August 1902, p.3.

“Can the art of fiction writing be taught?...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *The Ballymena Observer and County Antrim Advertiser*, 27 June 1902, p.4.

“Can the ‘Average Author’ Live?” [Under ‘Gossip about Books’], *Daily Mail*, 22 September 1899, p.3.

“Canada of To Day.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 8 October 1908, p.4.

“Charles Reade’s Aids to Novel Writing.” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 July 1884, p.4.

“Children’s Corner.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 August 1884, p.12.

“Children’s Corner.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 4 July 1885, p.12.

“Children’s Corner.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 October 1886, p.12.

“Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 1 December 1888, p.12.

“Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 26 October 1889, p.12.

“Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 29 March 1890, p.12.

“Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 30 May 1891, p.12.

“Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 November 1892, p.12.

“Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 20 May 1893, p.12.

“Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 February 1894, p.12.

“Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle* [in supplement], 10 February 1900, p.11.

- “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 28 September 1901, p.11.
- “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 28 June 1902, p.11.
- “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 21 November 1903, p.12.
- “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 23 January 1904, p.12.
- “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 8 August 1908, p.12.
- “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 16 January 1909, p.12.
- “Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 5 March 1910, p.12.
- “Circulating Libraries and Authorship.” *Western Mail* from *Saturday Review*, 16 December 1884, p.3.
- “Civic Rulers at Church.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 16 May 1912, p.9.
- “Considerable publicity has lately been given to the emoluments of successful novelists...” [Under ‘Literary Notes’], *The Observer*, 5 June 1910, p.8.
- “Corporation Sunday at Southend. Service at St Mary’s, Prittlewell.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 18 November 1909, p.5.
- “Dickens and his Novels.” *Taunton Courier. Bristol and Exeter Journal and Western Advertiser*, 16 March 1910, p.4.
- “Dickens and his Novels.” *Taunton Courier. Bristol and Exeter Journal and Western Advertiser*, 23 March 1910, p.4.
- “Disappointments in Literature.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 14 November 1892, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.
- “Do Novelists Cry Over Their Work?” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 30 April 1888, pp.1–2.
- “Early Authorship.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee] from *The Athenaeum*, 18 December 1877, 4<sup>th</sup> page.
- “Editor (to aspiring writer)...” *Chums*, 25 March 1896, p.487\*.
- “Editor (to aspiring writer)...” *The Dover Express and East Kent Newspaper*, 10 July 1896, 7<sup>th</sup> page.
- “Election of a Librarian.” [Under ‘Public Library’ section of ‘Southend Town Council’], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 22 March 1906, p.3.
- “Eleven Thousand Scribblers.” *The Manchester Courier*, 3 May 1909, p.6.

“Experiences of a Literary Aspirant.” *The Falkirk Herald and Linlithgow Journal* from *Chambers’s Journal*, 23 July 1874, p.8.

“Experiences of a Literary Beginner.” *The Globe and Traveller*, 8 September 1893, p.3.

“Fiction and the School Board.” *Pick-Me-Up*, 30 March 1895, p.404\*.

“First Steps in Literature.” *The Daily News* [London], 25 September 1894, p.4.

“Flat-ironed Literature.” [Under “The World’s Press”], *Daily Mail* from *Literary World*, 1 June 1901, p.4.

“For Aspiring Writers.” *Northern Daily Mail* [Hartlepool], 17 October 1910, p.1.

“For threepence a month it will be possible (more or less) for the literary aspirant to learn how to become a journalist...” [Under ‘Humber-Side Echoes’], *The Daily Mail, Hull Packet and East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Courier*, 18 December 1906, p.3.

“Furnishing Fictionists.” *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 24 December 1887, p.292\*.

“Guides to Authorship.” *The Globe and Traveller*, 14 May 1886, 1<sup>st</sup> page.

“Hamlet, on being asked ‘What do you read?’ answered...” *The Dundee Advertiser*, 3 April 1893, p.5.

“Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 December 1883, p.10.

“Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 January 1884, p.10.

“Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 April 1884, p.10.

“Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 14 June 1884, p.10.

“Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 19 July 1884, p.10.

“Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 9 May 1885, p.10.

“Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 24 April 1886, p.10.

“Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 May 1886, p.10.

“Hampshire Telegraph Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 June 1886, p.10.

“‘Hampshire Telegraph’ Literary Competition.” *The Evening News* [Portsmouth], 28 November 1883, p.2.

“Have You Any Literary Ambitions?...” [advert], *The Daily News* [London], 7 February 1906, p.2.

“Have you read ‘Links in Life’...” [Under ‘Local News’], *The Walsall Observer and South Staffordshire Chronicle*, 13 May 1933, p.10.

“He Did His Part.” [Under ‘Yankee Humour’], *The Canterbury Journal and Farmers’ Gazette*, 8 November 1890, p.6.

“Hints to Literary Aspirants.” *The Woman’s Herald*, 24 August 1893, p.423\*.

“Home.”, *The Western Daily Press*, 1 June 1914, p.6.

“How I Learnt to Write. Autobiographical Sketch by Mr R. L. Stevenson.” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 November 1887, p.11.

“How Literary Aspirants are Swindled.” *The Illustrated Police News, Law Courts and Weekly Record*, 7 April 1894, p.4.

“How to Fail in Literature, By One Who Has Been Successful.” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 November 1889, p.6.

“How to Publish...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 1 August 1908, p.8.

“How to Publish Quickly...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 2 February 1907, p.4.

“How to Succeed as a Novelist. Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant.” *Daily Mail*, 26 March 1902, p.4.

“How to Write...” [advert], *The Swindon Advertiser, Wilts, Berks and Glo’ster Chronicle*, 10 April 1903, p.4.

“How to Write a Story.” *The Dundee Courier and Argus*, 27 August 1887, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

“How to Write Novels: Mr James Payn on the Art of Fiction.” *The Daily News* [London], 9 December 1897, p.8.

“How to Write Saleable Fiction’...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 4 October 1912, p.6.

“How Writers Write.” *Evening Telegraph and Post* [Dundee] from *The Gentlewoman*, 9 October 1905, p.6.

“I had a chat with Mr Clay...” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 16 August 1906, p.2.

“In connection with their Christmas publications this year Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons have arranged a literary and artistic competition...” *The Morning Post* [London], 2 November 1893, p.2.

“In spite of a good deal of reactionary criticism...” [Under ‘Books and Bookmen’], *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 February 1905, p.6.

“In the current number of the ‘Athenaeum’...” [Under ‘Literary Gossip’], *The Globe and Traveller*, 30 January 1897, p.6.

“In the latest number of the *Author* Mr Walter Besant once more affirms that novel writing can be taught...” *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 April 1891, p.5.

“In this connection it is amusing to note...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *The Banbury Advertiser*, 25 April 1901, p.8.

“Interesting to the Ladies. Important Literary Competition.” [advert], *The Dundee Advertiser*, 10 September 1879, p.1.

“‘Is Life Worth Living?’”, *Halifax Evening Courier, Sowerby Bridge, Elland, Brighouse, Hebden Bridge, and Todmorden Reporter*, 20 September 1901, p.4.

“It may seem hardly necessary to encourage people to become novelists...” *The Manchester Guardian*, 7 November 1903, p.6.

“Joan Harcourt, by Gertrude Letch.” [Under ‘Books and their Publishers’], *The Courier* [Dundee], 30 March 1910, p.7.

“Joys of Authorship.” [Under ‘The World’s Press’], *Daily Mail* from *Illustrated London News*, 9 March 1907, p.4.

“Keating, Joseph...” [Under ‘Books Received on Saturday’], *The Westminster Gazette*, 26 November 1900, p.12.

“Lady Novelists’ Methods.” *The Evening News* [Portsmouth], 9 September 1892, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

“Lecture by Annie S. Swan. ...” *The Glasgow Herald*, 17 January 1891, p.7.

“Lecture on George Eliot. ...” *Taunton Courier. Bristol and Exeter Journal and Western Advertiser*, 13 April 1910, p.4.

“Lecture on George Eliot. ...” *Taunton Courier. Bristol and Exeter Journal and Western Advertiser*, 20 April 1910, p.4.

“Lecture on ‘Thackeray.’ ...” *Taunton Courier. Bristol and Exeter Journal and Western Advertiser*, 6 April 1910, p.4.

“Letter from Mr Gladstone.” *The Manchester Weekly Times and Salford Weekly News*, 5 September 1890, p.4.

“Literary Advice.” [Under ‘With the Editor in Council’], *Weekly Supplement to the Leeds Mercury*, 9 December 1905, p.11.

“Literary Agent and his Clients. Curious Guildhall Story.” [Under ‘At the Police Courts’], *The Standard* [London], 11 December 1906, p.10.

“Literary Ambitions.” *The Shields Daily News*, 22 September 1892, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

“Literary & Art Competitions. Local Prize-Winners.” *The Daily Gazette* [Exeter], 14 June 1894, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

“Literary and Fine Art Competitions.” *The Yorkshire Herald, and the York Herald*, 16 November 1894, p.6.

“Literary Aspirant and Her Tutor. Serious Allegations of Fraud.” *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 22 April 1894, p.3.

“Literary Club for Women. The Growing Needs of a New Profession.” *Daily Mail*, 9 October 1903, p.6.

“Literary Competition. For Readers of ‘The Citizen’.” *The Citizen* [Gloucester], 5 August 1907, 5<sup>th</sup> page.

“Literary Competition. For Readers of ‘The Citizen’.” *The Citizen* [Gloucester], 6 August 1907, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 August 1884, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 16 July 1887, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 27 August 1887, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 December 1887, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 20 October 1888, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 27 April 1889, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 27 July 1889, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 February 1890, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 26 July 1890, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 15 November 1890, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 May 1891, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 1 August 1891, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 29 August 1891, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 31 October 1891, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 8 October 1892, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 November 1892, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 26 November 1892, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 6 May 1893, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 7 October 1893, p.10.

“Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 25 November 1893, p.10.

“Literary Competition...” [advert], *The Manchester Guardian*, 23 May 1907, p.4.

“Literary Competition.” *The Morning Post* [London], 2 August 1879, p.3.

“Literary Notes.” *The Lanarkshire Examiner and Upper Ward Advertiser*, 14 June 1890, p.2.

“Local Literature.” *The Birmingham Daily Post*, 11 January 1870, p.6.

- “Lost, a Novel!” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee] from the *Daily News*, 8 July 1890, p.2.
- “Mark Twain to Literary Aspirants.” *Young Folks Paper. For Old and Young Boys and Girls*, 17 April 1886, pp.246–7\*.
- “Max Pemberton Honoured.” [Under ‘King’s Birthday Honours’], *Birmingham Gazette*, 4 June 1928, p.1.
- “Mayor’s Sunday at Southend. Impressive Service at Prittlewell Church.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 19 November 1908, p.5.
- “Messrs. Raphael Tuck and Sons’ Competitions.” *Berrow’s Worcester Journal*, 23 June 1894, p.4.
- “Minor Poetry.” *The Dundee Advertiser*, 19 August 1897, p.2.
- “Miss Broughton’s New Novel.” *The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art*, 5 May 1894, p.474\*.
- “Miss Ella King-Hall. Literary Agent.” [advert], *The Globe and Traveller*, 17 September 1913, p.9.
- “Miss Florence Marryat, the well-known novelist...” *The Western Daily Press*, 8 January 1897, p.8.
- “Motives of Authorship. Judge Parry on Books and Their Writers.” *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 April 1909, p.8.
- “Mr Andrew Lang on ‘How to Fail in Literature.’” *The Daily News* [London], 29 November 1889, p.2.
- “Mr Andrew Lang on Novel Writing.” *The Blackburn Standard and Weekly Express*, 19 November 1892, p.7.
- “Mr Andrew Lang on ‘The Novel Business’.” *Edinburgh Evening News*, 23 August 1886, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.
- “Mr Besant and Literary Aspirants.” *The Lancashire Evening Post*, 23 January 1888, p.2.
- “Mr Bright on Novel Writing.” *Weekly Supplement to the Leeds Mercury*, 13 May 1899, p.9.
- “Mr Coulson Kernahan lectured...” *The Manchester Guardian*, 31 January 1905, p.8.
- “Mr Coulson Kernahan. Romance and Pathos of Writing.” *The Daily Mail, Hull Packet and East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire Courier*, 3 April 1908, p.3.
- “Mr George Allen announces...” [Under ‘Literary Notes’], *The Midlothian Journal, Musselburgh, Portobello, Loanhead, Penicuik, Lasswade, Bonnyrigg and Gorebridge Weekly News*, 12 October 1900, p.2.
- “Mr Percy Fitzgerald on Authorship.” *The Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 6 December 1892, p.8.

“Mr Stephen Springall, of the Greenway, Uxbridge...” *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser, Uxbridge, Harrow, and Watford Journal*, 18 July 1908, p.7.

“Mr Walter Besant has in hand, or at any rate in the air, a scheme for starting a School of Fiction...” *The Scotsman*, 24 April 1891, p.4.

“Mr Walter Besant has stepped forward as the champion of the literary agent...” *The Yorkshire Evening Post*, 26 May 1891, p.2.

“Museum for Southend.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 28 November 1912, p.5.

“Music lovers and students will rejoice to know...” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 2 August 1906, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

“National Competition in Writing.” *The Dundee Courier and Argus*, 7 September 1888, p.5.

“National Competition in Writing and Drawing.” *Edinburgh Evening News*, 27 June 1879, p.3.

“National Competition in Writing and Drawing.” *The Belfast News-Letter*, 21 July 1875, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

“New brooms proverbially sweep clean; and the recently-elected Principal Librarian of the British Museum...” *Whitby Gazette*, 19 October 1888, p.4.

“Ninety-five applications were received...” *Berks & Oxon Advertiser and Weekly Journal for Abingdon, Wallingford, Watlington & Neighbourhood*, 6 April 1906, 7<sup>th</sup> page.

“Ninety-five applications were received...” *East & South Devon Advertiser*, 7 April 1906, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

“Ninety-five applications were received...” *Northampton Mercury*, 30 March 1906, p.8.

“Ninety-five applications were received...” *The Beverley Recorder and General Advertiser*, 7 April 1906, p.3.

“Ninety-five applications were received...” *The Christchurch Times, Ringwood and Bournemouth Advertiser*, 7 April 1906, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

“Ninety-five applications were received...” *The Manchester Courier*, 30 March 1906, p.12.

“No literary man’s, or woman’s, library is complete...” [Under ‘Literary Chat’], *The Framlingham Weekly News, Railway Gazette and East Suffolk Advertiser*, 11 January 1908, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

“Notes on How to Write, Read, and Use a Book.” *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, 13 March 1895, p.3.

“Novel Writing.” *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette*, 24 February 1888, p.3.

“Novel Writing.” *The Shields Daily Gazette and Shipping Telegraph*, 9 June 1887, p.3.

“Novel-Writing as a Hobby. Some Comments by Joseph Lyons.” *The Tatler*, 18 September 1907, p.246\*.

“Novel Writing as an Art.” *The Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* from *Tinsley’s Magazine*, 21 March 1877, p.3.

“Novel Writing: How it is Done.” *Manchester Weekly Times – Supplement*, from *The Ladies’ Treasury*, 6 March 1886, p.4.

“Novel Writing – How it is Done.” *The Belfast News-Letter* from *The Ladies’ Treasury*, 11 March 1886, p.8.

“Novel Writing: How it is Done.” *The Ladies’ Treasury: A Household Magazine*, 1 February 1886, pp.83–86\*.

“Novel Writing in France.” *The Huddersfield Daily Chronicle*, 6 June 1888, p.4.

“Novel writing is not, after all, such a gloriously profitable business...” [Under ‘Notes on News’], *The Sportsman*, 12 November 1892, p.4.

“Novel writing seems to be a fatally attractive occupation...” [Under ‘Books and Magazines’], *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 21 November 1897, p.2.

“Novel Writing Not Remunerative.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 14 November 1892, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

“Novelists’ Ailments.” *The Belfast News-Letter* from the *Evening Standard*, 8 January 1891, p.7.

“Now here is a case in point...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 23 February 1906, p.3.

“Nursery for Novelists. Miss Florence Marryatt’s [sic] Scheme.” *Daily Mail*, 11 January 1897, p.3.

“Of the facts about the publishing business...” [Under ‘Occasional Notes’], *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 21 March 1892, p.2.

“On Some Difficulties of the Young Author.” *The Illustrated London News*, 7 February 1891, p.186\*.

“One of our newspaper magnates...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 15 February 1909, p.3.

“Other Fiction.” *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 15 December 1921, p.3.

“Our Children’s Column.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 23 August 1912, p.12.

“Our Children’s Column.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 5 September 1913, p.14.

- “Our Children’s Corner.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Post and Naval Chronicle*, 3 July 1914, p.16.
- “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 5 May 1894, p.10.
- “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 2 June 1894, p.10.
- “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 November 1894, p.10.
- “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 23 February 1895, p.10.
- “Our Literary Competition.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 22 June 1895, p.10.
- “Our Weekly Literary Competitions.” *Manchester Weekly Times – Supplement*, 18 November 1892, p.5.
- “Our Weekly Literary Competitions.” *Manchester Weekly Times – Supplement*, 24 March 1893, p.5.
- “Paper and Ink.” *The Illustrated London News*, 6 September 1884, p.226\*.
- “Passing Thoughts of a Working Man...” *Folkestone Express, Sandgate, Shorncliffe, and Hythe Advertiser*, 14 May 1890, p.7.
- “Passing Thoughts of a Working Man.” [Under ‘Literary Notes’], *The Sheffield & Rotherham Independent*, 14 August 1890, p.2.
- “Popular Lectures at the Limehouse Library.” *Borough of Stepney and Poplar, and East London Advertiser*, 31 March 1906, p.8.
- “Prize Local Stories for the ‘Observer’.” *The Western Daily Press*, 14 July 1883, p.5.
- “Public Libraries and their Abuse.” *The Standard* [London], 2 April 1895, p.3.
- “Public Library.” [Under ‘Southend Town Council’], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 22 April 1909, p.7.
- “Public Library.” [Under ‘Southend Town Council’], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 22 September 1910, p.8.
- “Public Library.” [Under ‘Southend Town Council’], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 23 May 1912, p.9.
- “Publishers Cry Aloud for Good MSS.” [Under ‘Gossip about Books’], *Daily Mail*, 8 September 1899, p.3.

- “Rather Embarrassing.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee], 13 October 1899, p.6.
- “Reviews.” *Middlesex and Buckinghamshire Advertiser, Uxbridge, Harrow, and Watford Journal*, 19 December 1908, p.6.
- “Royal Manchester Institution Lectures.” *The Manchester Guardian*, 26 October 1898, p.10.
- “Short Story Competition.” *Aberdeen Weekly Journal and General Advertiser*, 8 March 1899, p.4.
- “Sir Max Pemberton.” *The Stage*, 2 March 1950, p.12.
- “Sir Walter Besant on Literary Agents.” *The Globe and Traveller*, 4 December 1895, p.3.
- “Southend Council and Their Officials. Salaries Question Again.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 20 February 1908, p.2.
- “Southend’s New Free Library.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 26 July 1906, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.
- “Southend Town Council.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 18 August 1910, p.6.
- “Successful London author reads manuscripts...” [advert, under ‘General’], *The Evening News and Southern Daily Mail* [Portsmouth], 2 August 1913, p.7.
- “Sudden Death of Captain Kemp. Piermaster and Sea Captain: Interesting Career.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 7 March 1907, p.5.
- “That Indomitable Old Lady. By Stephen Springall.” *The Courier* [Dundee], 26 September 1908, p.7.
- “The Art of Authorship.” *The Manchester Courier Weekly Supplement*, 3 March 1894, p.1.
- “The Art of Story-Writing.” *Barnet Press, Finchley and Hendon News, Southgate and Edgware Chronicle, and General Advertiser for North Middlesex and South Herts*, 6 November 1909, p.3.
- “The Author’s Manual. By Percy Russell.” *The Colonies & India and American Visitor*, 21 May 1892, p.17.
- “The British Museum.” *The Bradford Daily Telegraph*, 7 September 1893, p.2.
- “The British Museum Reading Room.” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 21 June 1896, p.8.
- “The British Museum Reading Room.” *The Daily News* [London], 3 September 1894, p.6.
- “The British Museum Reading-Room.” *The Daily News* [London], 14 August 1902, p.3.
- “The British Museum Reading-Room.” *The Globe and Traveller*, 27 August 1880, p.1.

- “The British Museum Reading-Room.” *The St James’s Gazette*, 24 March 1890, p.11.
- “The Children’s Column.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 13 October 1883, p.10.
- “The Children’s Column.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 12 January 1884, p.10.
- “The Children’s Column.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 19 January 1884, p.10.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 9 October 1886, p.12.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 16 April 1887, p.12.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 17 August 1895, p.12.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 1 August 1896, p.12.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 18 September 1897, p.12.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 25 June 1898, p.12.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 25 February 1899, p.12.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 23 December 1905, p.12.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 21 April 1906, p.12.
- “The Children’s Hour.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Naval Chronicle*, 9 November 1907, p.12.
- “The Common Motives of Authorship.” [Under ‘Books and Bookmen’], *Daily Mail*, 23 May 1902, p.2.
- “The Education of Novelists.” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 March 1894, p.3.
- “‘The Encyclopaedia Britannica’ and the Public Library.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 28 February 1907, p.2.
- “The Errors of Authors and Artists.” *Star* [Guernsey] from the *Standard*, 21 April 1887, 4<sup>th</sup> page.

“The Funeral.” [Under ‘Death of the Deputy Mayor’], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 15 April 1909, p.5.

“The Gains of Authorship.” *The Gloucestershire Echo* from *The Spectator*, 21 August 1886, 4<sup>th</sup> page.

“The Glut of Fiction. A Stricter Test of Merit Wanted. Mr Heinemann’s Views.” *The Observer*, 1 March 1914, p.12.

“The Idea Machine.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee] from *The Pall Mall Magazine*, 15 February 1900, 6<sup>th</sup> page.

“The Ineffectual How.” *The Academy*, 13 April 1901, pp.327–8\*.

“The Irritable Author.” [Under ‘The World’s Press’], *Daily Mail* from *The Author*, 11 May 1903, p.4.

“The Joys of Novel Writing.” *The Newcastle Weekly Courant*, 25 January 1890, p.2.

“The Literary Agent.” [Under ‘Books and Booksellers’], *The Daily News* [London], 25 November 1904, p.4.

“The Literary Aspirant.” *North and South Shields Daily Gazette and Shipping Telegraph*, 18 September 1882, p.3.

“The Literary Aspirant.” *The Inverness Courier and General Advertiser for the Counties of Inverness, Ross, Moray, Nairn, Cromarty, Sutherland & Caithness* from *The Globe*, 9 January 1891, p.3.

“The Literary Aspirant.” *The Irish News and Belfast Morning News*, 30 October 1894, p.8.

“The Literary Aspirant and his Publishers. A Swindle Exposed.” *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 18 February 1892, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

“The Literary Competition.” [advert], *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, 21 July 1897, p.2.

“The Making of Books.” *The Dundee Courier and Argus*, 27 May 1891, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

“The Market in Fiction. A Guide for Would-Be Novelists.” *The Northern Whig*, 31 May 1899, p.8.

“The Master Villain: by Percy Russell.” *Leicester Daily Post*, 17 May 1907, p.8.

“The Mayor’s New Year Banquet.” *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 6 January 1910, p.5.

“The New Mephistopheles.” [Under ‘The Week’], *The Banbury Advertiser*, 7 November 1895, p.2.

“The New Novel-Writing.” *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 18 September 1897, p.122\*.

“The Novel Business.” *The Birmingham Daily Post*, 24 August 1886, p.7.

- “The Novelist’s Difficulty.” *The Newcastle Weekly Courant*, 24 November 1888, p.3.
- “The Parlous State of the Publishing Trade.” [Under ‘Book World Gossip’], *Daily Mail*, 11 August 1899, p.3.
- “The Perils of Authorship.” *The Leeds Mercury Weekly Supplement* from the *New York Graphic*, 5 February 1887, p.6.
- “The Profits of Novel Writing.” *The Daily News* [London], 26 December 1879, p.6.
- “The Rewards of Authorship.” *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, 15 August 1899, 4<sup>th</sup> page.
- “The School of Fiction.” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 25 October 1898, p.3.
- “The School of Literary Art.” [advert], *The Athenaeum*, 23 January 1897, p.98\*.
- “The School of Literary Art...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 23 January 1897, p.1.
- “The School of Literary Art...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 1 March 1897, p.8.
- “The story of the writer who, at an authors’ dinner...” *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 16 October 1901, p.4.
- “The Sweetest Maid in Glowton.” *The Halifax Guardian*, 17 March 1894, p.3.
- “The Sweetest Maid in Glowton.” *The Halifax Guardian*, 21 April 1894, p.2.
- “The Trials of Authorship.” *The Banbury Beacon and District Intelligencer*, 15 February 1896, p.2.
- “The Wages of Authorship.” *The Yorkshire Evening Post*, 6 May 1914, p.4.
- “The Whims of Authorship.” *The Tamworth Herald*, 28 November 1908, 7<sup>th</sup> page.
- “The will of the late Mr R. M. Ballantyne is well worth the attention of the enthusiastic literary aspirant...” *The Dover Express and East Kent Newspaper*, 29 June 1894, 6<sup>th</sup> page.
- “The woes of the minor novelist have been forcibly illustrated...” [Under ‘Literary Notes’], *The Observer* [London], 6 June 1909, p.5.
- “The worst thing connected with life in a newspaper office at this time of the year...” [Under ‘Town and Country’], *The Warrington Guardian*, 21 March 1903, p.4.
- “The writer who enlivens the pages of the ‘National Review’ with the confessions of a ‘Minor Novelist’...” [Under ‘Books and Bookmen’], *The Manchester Guardian*, 21 September 1912, p.6.
- “The Writer’s [sic] and Artists’ Year-Book’ is a publication which the aspiring writer...” [Under ‘Books and Magazines. Some Useful Annuals’], *The Mid-Sussex Times*, 30 December 1913, p.5.

“The Writer’s [sic] Year Book...” [Under ‘The Week’s Books’], *The Observer*, 24 August 1902, p.8.

“The young author has found a friend in the anonymous gentleman who has written ‘How to Write Fiction’...” *The Sketch*, 6 November 1895, p.86\*.

“There are always many literary aspirants...” *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 September 1885, p.7.

“This answer to an aspiring writer appeared in a humorous magazine...” [Under ‘Grave and Gay’], *Northern Daily Mail* [Hartlepool], 23 June 1908, p.3.

“To a Literary Aspirant.” [Under ‘Literary and Miscellaneous Extracts’], *Supplement to the Leicester Chronicle and the Leicestershire Mercury* from *Ladies’ Home Journal*, 6 August 1892, p.1.

“To Contributors. Original Stories and Sketches.” *Hampshire Telegraph and Sussex Chronicle* [in supplement], 7 May 1898, p.10.

“To-Day’s New Books.” *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 2 June 1890, p.3.

“Town Council’s Sympathy. Congratulations to the New King.” [Under ‘Death of the King’], *The Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser*, 12 May 1910, p.6.

“Twenty-One Years of Novel-Writing.” *The Graphic*, 6 December 1890, p.642\*.

“Two Guides for Young Authors.” *The Bookman*, May 1898, pp.47–8\*.

“Unprofitable Authorship.” *Nottingham Daily Express*, 28 August 1907, p.6.

“Well-known author...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 13 February 1897, p.8.

“Well-known author...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 18 February 1897, p.1.

“Well-known author...” [advert], *Daily Mail*, 1 April 1897, p.8.

“What a lot of petty grievances the would-be author has to put up with...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *The Banbury Beacon and District Intelligencer*, 1 March 1902, p.8.

“What a wonderful age we live in...” [Under ‘Readers and Writers’], *Islington Daily Gazette and North London Tribune*, 5 July 1907, p.3.

“‘While the Music Lasts’. A Book Which Did Not Appear. Literary Agent at the Old Bailey.” *Leicester Chronicle and the Leicestershire Mercury*, 9 November 1912, p.9.

“Why Ladies Take to Novel-Writing.” *The Evening Telegraph* [Dundee] from *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 4 March 1879, 4<sup>th</sup> page.

“Writers and Artists.” *The Framlingham Weekly News*, 29 January 1910, 3<sup>rd</sup> page.

“Writing a Novel.” *Pick-Me-Up*, 15 December 1894, p.165\*.

“Writing as a Profession.” *The Shields Daily News*, 11 August 1893, 2<sup>nd</sup> page.

“Writing Books.” *The Illustrated London News*, 17 September 1887, p.344\*.

\*Page numbers in these publications were cumulative.

NB: Page numbers are recorded as ‘1st page’ and so on where there are no page numbers printed.

## SECONDARY SOURCES

### Books and Book Chapters

Altick, Richard. D., *Writers, Readers and Occasions: Selected Essays on Victorian Literature and Life* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989).

Bassett, Troy J., *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Three-Volume Novel* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

Beetham, Margaret, ‘The Agony Aunt, the Romancing Uncle and the Family of Empire: Defining the Sixpenny Reading Public in the 1890s’, in Laurel Brake, Bill Bell and David Finkelstein (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

Berridge, Virginia, ‘Popular Sunday Papers and Mid-Victorian Society’, in George Boyce, James Curran and Pauline Wingate (eds.), *Newspaper History, from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day* (London: Constable, 1978).

Bingham, Adrian and Martin Conboy, ‘Introduction: The Rise of the Tabloid’, in Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the Present* (Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd, 2015).

Blair, Kirstie, ‘The Newspaper Press and the Victorian Working-Class Poet’, in John Goodridge and Bridget Keegan (eds.), *A History of British Working-Class Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Boos, Florence S., ‘At the Margins of Print: Life Narratives of Victorian Working-Class Women’, in John Goodridge and Bridget Keegan (eds.), *A History of British Working-Class Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

Brake, Laurel, *Print in Transition, 1850–1910: Studies in Media and Book History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

Brake, Laurel, *Subjugated Knowledges: Journalism, Gender and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994).

Brake, Laurel, Chandrika Kaul and Mark W. Turner (eds.), *The News of the World and the British Press, 1843–2011: Journalism for the Rich, Journalism for the Poor* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Brake, Laurel and Marysa Demoor (general eds.), *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Academia Press, 2009).

Brown, Lucy, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

Burnett, John, (ed.), *Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education and Family from the 1820s to the 1920s* (London: Routledge, 1994).

Burnett, John, (ed.), *Useful Toil: Autobiographies of Working People from the 1820s to the 1920s*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1994).

Burnett, John, David Mayall and David Vincent (eds.), *The Autobiography of the Working Class: An Annotated, Critical Bibliography*, 3 volumes (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984, 1987, and 1989).

Chan, Winnie, *The Economy of the Short Story in British Periodicals of the 1890s* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).

Colby, Robert A., 'Authorship and the Book Trade', in J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel, *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

Colella, Silvana, *Charlotte Riddell's City Novels and Victorian Business: Narrating Capitalism*. (New York: Routledge, 2016).

Conboy, Martin, *The Press and Popular Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

Copelman, Dina M., *London's Women Teachers: Gender, Class and Feminism, 1870–1930* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Coustillas, Pierre (ed.), *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist* (Hassocks: The Harvester Press, 1978).

Cross, Nigel, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-Century Grub Street* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Cross, Nigel, *The Royal Literary Fund, 1790–1918: An Introduction to the Fund's History and Archives with an Index of Applicants* (London: World Microfilms Publications, 1984).

Cuming, Emily, *Housing, Class and Gender in Modern British Writing, 1880–2012* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Davidoff, Leonore, 'The Separation of Home and Work? Landladies and Lodgers in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century England', in Sandra Burman (ed.), *Fit Work for Women* (London: Routledge, 2013).

Ehrlich, Cyril, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

Ferber, Michael, *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Flint, Kate, 'Sensation', in Kate Flint (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Gillies, Mary Ann, *The Professional Literary Agent in Britain, 1880–1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

Goldman, Lawrence, *Dons and Workers: Oxford and Adult Education since 1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

Goode, John, 'Introduction', in George Gissing, *New Grub Street* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Graham, Sarah 'Introduction', in Sarah Graham (ed.), *A History of the Bildungsroman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

Gray, F. Elizabeth (ed.), *Women in Journalism at the Fin de Siècle: Making a Name for Herself* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Griffin, Emma, *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013).

Halperin, John, *Gissing: A Life in Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

Hammond, Mary, 'Readers and Readerships', in Joanne Shattock (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1830–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Hammond, Mary, *Reading, Publishing and the Formation of Literary Taste in England, 1880–1914* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

Hancher, Michael, 'From Street Ballad to Penny Magazine: 'March of the Intellect in the Butchering Line'', in Laurel Brake, Bill Bell and David Finkelstein (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

Harte, Liam, *The Literature of the Irish in Britain: Autobiography and Memoir, 1725–2001* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Heathorn, Stephen, *For Home, Country, and Race: Constructing Gender, Class, and Englishness in the Elementary School, 1880–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999).

Heller, Michael, *London Clerical Workers, 1880–1914: Development of the Labour Market* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).

Hensher, Philip (ed.), *The Penguin Book of the British Short Story, Volume 2: From P. G. Wodehouse to Zadie Smith* (UK: Penguin Classics, 2016).

Hepburn, James, *The Author's Empty Purse and the Rise of the Literary Agent* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

Hilliard, Christopher, *The Littlehampton Libels: A Miscarriage of Justice and a Mystery about Words in 1920s England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

Hilliard, Christopher, *To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

Howard, Ursula, *Literacy and the Practice of Writing in the 19th Century: A Strange Blossoming of Spirit* (Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, 2012).

Hunt, Tristram, 'Introduction', in Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (London: Penguin, 2004).

Jackson, Kate, 'George Newnes and the 'Loyal Tit-Bitites': Editorial Identity and Textual Interaction in *Tit-Bits*', in Laurel Brake, Bill Bell and David Finkelstein (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

Jordan, John O. and Robert L. Patten (eds.), *Literature in the Marketplace: Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Kamper, David Scott, 'Popular Sunday Newspapers, Class, and the Struggle for Respectability in Late Victorian Britain', in Martin Hewitt (ed.), *Unrespectable Recreations* (Leeds: Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, 2001).

Kane, Penny, *Victorian Families in Fact and Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1995).

Keating, Peter, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875–1914* (London: Martin Secker and Warburg Ltd, 1989).

Kett, Joseph F., *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750–1990* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

Lacey, Nicola, *Women, Crime, and Character: From Moll Flanders to Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Law, Graham, *Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

Lawrie, Alexandra, *The Beginnings of University English: Extramural Study, 1885–1910* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Mangham, Andrew, 'Introduction', in Andrew Mangham (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

McDonald, Peter D., *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice, 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Miles, Andrew, *Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

- Mitch, David F., *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England: The Influence of Private Choice and Public Policy* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992).
- North, John S. (ed.), *The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals 1800–1900, Volumes 1, 6 and 7* (Waterloo, ON: North Waterloo Academic Press, 1997).
- Onslow, Barbara, *Women of the Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000).
- Peterson, Linda H., 'Periodical Poetry' in Joanne Shattock (ed.), *Journalism and the Periodical Press in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- Pettitt, Clare, *Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Poole, Adrian, *Gissing in Context* (London: Macmillan, 1975).
- Purchase, Sean, *Key Concepts in Victorian Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
- Pykett, Lyn, 'The Sensation Legacy', in Andrew Mangham (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Sensation Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- Reilly, Catherine W., *Mid-Victorian Poetry, 1860–1879: An Annotated Bibliography* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 2000).
- Reilly, Catherine W., *Late Victorian Poetry, 1880–1899: An Annotated Bibliography* (London: Mansell Publishing Limited, 1994).
- Robson, Catherine, *Heart Beats: Everyday Life and the Memorized Poem* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
- Rose, Jonathan, 'Education, Literacy, and the Victorian Reader', in Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (eds.), *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002).
- Rose, Jonathan, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes*, 2nd edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010).
- Rose, Jonathan, 'Workers' Journals', in J. Don Vann and Rosemary T. VanArsdel, *Victorian Periodicals and Victorian Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).
- Rose, Jonathan and Patricia J. Anderson (eds.), *British Literary Publishing Houses, 1881–1965* (London: Gale Research, 1991).
- Salmon, Richard, *The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
- Sinnema, Peter W., 'Introduction', in Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

- Smith, Roger, 'Individuality, the Self and Concepts of Mind', in Gregory Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
- Styles, John, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).
- Sutherland, J. A., *Victorian Novelists and Publishers* (London: Athlone Press, 1976).
- Sutherland, John, *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers*, 2nd edition (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
- Sutherland, John, *Victorian Fiction: Writers, Publishers, Readers* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995).
- Swindells, Julia, *Victorian Writing and Working Women: The Other Side of Silence* (Cambridge: Polity, 1985).
- Vance, Norman, 'Patterns of Literary Transformation', in Gregory Claeys (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).
- Vicinus, Martha, *The Industrial Muse: A Study of Nineteenth-Century British Working-Class Literature* (London: Croom Helm, 1974).
- Vincent, David, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiography* (London: Europa, 1981).
- Vincent, David, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- Vincent, David, *The Rise of Mass Literacy: Reading and Writing in Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000).
- Vincent, David, 'Working-Class Autobiography in the Nineteenth Century', in Adam Smyth (ed.), *A History of English Autobiography* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
- Waller, Philip, *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- Warren, Lynne, '“Women in Conference”: Reading the Correspondence Columns in *Woman*, 1890–1910', in Laurel Brake, Bill Bell and David Finkelstein (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).
- Wiener, Joel H., *The Americanization of the British Press, 1830s–1914: Speed in the Age of Transatlantic Journalism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

## Journal Articles

Baines, Dudley and Paul Johnson, 'In Search of the "Traditional" Working Class: Social Mobility and Occupational Continuity in Interwar London.' *Economic History Review* 52.4 (1999), pp.692–713.

Bingham, Adrian, 'Reading Newspapers: Cultural Histories of the Popular Press in Modern Britain.' *History Compass* 10.2 (2012), pp.140–50.

Blair, Kirstie, '“Let the Nightingales Alone”: Correspondence Columns, the Scottish Press, and the Making of the Working-Class Poet.' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 47.2 (2014), pp.188–207.

Burnett, John, 'The Autobiography of the Working Class.' *Labour History Review* 55.1 (1990), pp.14–15.

Colby, Robert A., 'Harnessing Pegasus: Walter Besant, *The Author* and the Profession of Authorship.' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 23.3 (1990), pp.111–20.

Goldberg, Gerald Jay, 'The Artist-Novel in Transition.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920* 4.3 (1961), pp.12–27.

Hammond, Mary, '“The Great Fiction Bore”: Free Libraries and the Construction of a Reading Public in England, 1880–1914.' *Libraries & Culture* 37.2 (2002), pp.83–108.

Hilliard, Christopher, 'Popular Reading and Social Investigation in Britain, 1850s–1940s.' *The Historical Journal* 57.1 (2014), pp.247–71.

Hilliard, Christopher, 'The Provincial Press and the Imperial Traffic in Fiction, 1870s–1930s.' *Journal of British Studies* 48.3 (2009), pp.653–73.

Hobbs, Andrew and Claire Januszewski, 'How Local Newspapers Came to Dominate Victorian Poetry Publishing.' *Victorian Poetry* 52.1 (2014), pp.65–87.

Ifill, Helena, 'The Female Professional as Orphan in Charlotte Riddell's *A Struggle for Fame*.' *Victoriographies*, 9.2 (2019), pp.129–46.

Johansen, Michelle, '“The Supposed Paradise of Pen and Ink”: Self-Education and Social Mobility in the London Public Library (1880–1930).' *Cultural and Social History*, 16.1 (2019), pp.47–65.

Jones, Aled, 'Tillotson's Fiction Bureau: The Manchester Manuscripts.' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 17.1-2 (1984), pp.43–9.

Kelleher, Margaret, 'Charlotte Riddell's *A Struggle for Fame*: The Field of Women's Literary Production.' *Colby Quarterly* 36.2 (2000), pp.116–31.

Lonsdale, Sarah, 'Man of Letters, Literary Lady, Journalist or Reporter? Contributions to the New Mass Press and the Evolving Role of the Writer, 1880–1920.' *Media History* 21.3 (2015), pp.265–79.

Matheson, Donald, 'The Birth of News Discourse: Changes in News Language in British Newspapers, 1880–1930.' *Media, Culture & Society* 22.5 (2000), pp.557–73.

Mitch, David, 'Literacy and Occupational Mobility in Rural versus Urban Victorian England: Evidence from the Linked Marriage Register and Census Records for Birmingham and Norfolk, 1851 and 1881.' *Historical Methods* 38.1 (2005), pp.26–38.

Peterson, Linda H., 'Charlotte Riddell's *A Struggle for Fame*. Myths of Authorship, Facts of the Market.' *Women's Writing*, 11.1 (2004), pp.99–115.

Pooley, Siân, 'Children's Writing and the Popular Press in England, 1876–1914.' *History Workshop Journal* 80.1 (2015), pp.75–98.

Rose, Jonathan, 'The Workers in the Workers' Educational Association, 1903–1950.' *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 21.4 (1989), pp.591–608.

Rose, Jonathan, 'Willingly to School: The Working-Class Response to Elementary Education in Britain, 1875–1918.' *Journal of British Studies* 32.2 (1993), pp.114–38.

Rowbotham, Sheila, 'Travellers in a Strange Country: Responses of Working-Class Students to the University Extension Movement – 1873–1910.' *History Workshop* 12 (1981), pp.62–95.

Stetz, Margaret D., 'Internationalizing Authorship: Beyond *New Grub Street* to the *Bookman* in 1891.' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 48.1 (2015), pp.1–14.

Sumpter, Caroline, 'The Cheap Press and the 'Reading Crowd'.' *Media History* 12.3 (2006), pp.233–52.

Witchard, Anne, 'Thomas Burke, the 'Laureate of Limehouse': A New Biographical Outline.' *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*, 48.2 (2005), pp.164–87.

## Book Reviews

Alborn, Tim, 'Review: London Clerical Workers, 1880–1914. Perspectives in Economic and Social History by Michael Heller.' *Journal of British Studies* 51.1 (2012), pp.229–30.

Birch, Dinah, 'Late Victorian Poetry, 1880–1899: An Annotated Biobibliography. By Catherine W. Reilly.' *The Review of English Studies* 47.187 (1996), p.460.

Blair, Kirstie, 'Heart Beats: Everyday Life and the Memorized Poem.' *Tennyson Research Bulletin* 10.2 (2013), pp.190–3.

Brake, Laurel, 'F. Elizabeth Gray (ed.), *Women in Journalism at the Fin de Siècle: Making a Name for Herself*.' *The Review of English Studies*, 64.266 (2013), pp.721–4.

Bristow, Joseph, 'Review: *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918* by Philip Waller.' *Victorian Studies* 50.1 (2007), pp.126–8.

Derus, David L., 'Reviews: An Autobiography by Edwin Muir.' *The Chesterton Review* 17.1 (1991), pp.68–73.

Finkelstein, David, 'Rose, J. and Anderson, P. eds., Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume 112, British Literary Publishing Houses, 1881–1965.' *Notes and Queries* 40.1 (1993), pp.124–5.

Gatley, David Alan, 'Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England, Andrew Miles.' *Sociology* 35.4 (2001), p.1001.

Golby, Alison, 'Review: London's Women Teachers by Dina M. Copelman.' *British Journal of Educational Studies* 45.2 (1997), pp.210–1.

Halperin, John, 'Review: London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist by Pierre Coustillas.' *The Yearbook of English Studies* 11 (1981), pp.339–40.

Heyck, Thomas William, 'To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain by Christopher Hilliard.' *Journal of Social History* 41.1 (2007), pp.198–200.

Hilliard, Christopher, 'Alexandra Lawrie. The Beginnings of University English: Extramural Study, 1885–1910.' *The Review of English Studies* 66.274 (2015), pp.391–2.

Hilliard, Christopher, 'Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1870–1918. By Philip Waller.' *Twentieth Century British History* 18.4 (2007), pp.537–40.

Hinton, James, 'Review: London's Women Teachers. Gender, Class and Feminism, 1870–1930 by Dina M. Copelman.' *The English Historical Review* 113.451 (1998), p.511.

Hughes, Linda K., 'Review: Serializing Fiction in the Victorian Press by Graham Law.' *Victorian Studies* 44.4 (2002), pp.688–90.

James, Simon J., 'Review: The Heroic Life of George Gissing by Pierre Coustillas.' *Victorian Studies* 56.3 (2014), pp.559–61.

Johnson, Paul, 'Review: Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England by Andrew Miles.' *The American Historical Review* 106.1 (2001), pp.262–3.

Koditschek, Theodore, 'Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England (review).' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31.4 (2001), pp.630–2.

Korg, Jacob, 'Gissing in Context by Adrian Poole; George Gissing: A Bibliography by Michael Collie.' *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 31.4 (1977), pp.462–6.

Kucich, John, 'Review: Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution by Emma Griffin.' *Victorian Studies* 57.1 (2014), pp.120–2.

Lambert, Miles, 'Clothing For All: Fashioning a New Plebeian Consumer Society.' [Review of *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England* by John Styles]. *Art History* 32.3 (2009), pp.649–52.

Latané, David E., 'Richard Salmon. The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession.' *The Review of English Studies* 65.270 (2014), pp.561–3.

Leventhal, F. M., 'Review: Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working-Class Autobiography by David Vincent.' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 14.4 (1984), pp.871–2.

Mulvihill, Thalia M., 'Review: London's Women Teachers: Gender, Class, and Feminism, 1870–1930 by Dina M. Copelman.' *History of Education Quarterly* 37.4 (1997), pp.461–2.

Sharpe, Pamela, 'Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution by Emma Griffin (review).' *Journal of Social History* 49.2 (2015), pp.474–6.

Stansky, Peter, 'To Exercise Our Talents: The Democratization of Writing in Britain by Christopher Hilliard.' *The American Historical Review* 111.5 (2006), pp.1604–5.

Stetz, Margaret D., 'Review: Crafting the Woman Professional in the Long Nineteenth Century: Artistry and Industry in Britain by Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi and Patricia Zakreski: The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession by Richard Salmon.' *Victorian Studies* 58.2 (2016), pp.364–6.

Sumpter, Caroline, 'Philip Waller. Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1870–1918.' *Literature & History* 17.1 (2008), pp.97–9.

Tabili, Laura, 'Social Mobility in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century England (review).' *Victorian Studies* 44.3 (2002), pp.515–7.

Tate, Gregory, 'Richard Salmon, The Formation of the Victorian Literary Profession.' *Notes and Queries* 63.1 (2016), pp.143–4.

Thompson, James, 'Writers, Readers and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain, 1870–1918 by Philip J. Waller.' *Economic History Review* 60.2 (2007), pp.411–2.

Waithe, Marcus, 'The Reading World.' [Review of *Writers, Readers, and Reputations: Literary Life in Britain 1870–1918* by Philip Waller]. *Cambridge Quarterly* 36.1 (2007), pp.90–4.

Zakim, Michael, 'London Clerical Workers, 1880–1914: Development of the Labour Market (review).' *Victorian Studies* 54.4 (2012), pp.721–3.

### Online Resources

Ashton, Rosemary, 'Why David Copperfield Became a Writer', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 2 May 2014, pp.11–12.

At the Circulating Library: A Database of Victorian Fiction, 1837–1901 ([victorianresearch.org/atcl](http://victorianresearch.org/atcl)).

Censuses for 1851, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, and 1911, and 1939 Register.

Dickson, B., “Swan [married name Burnett Smith], Annie Shepherd [pseud. David Lyall] (1859–1943), novelist.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

Donaldson, William, “Lang, Andrew (1844–1912), anthropologist, classicist, and historian.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 27 May 2010.

Flint, Kate, “Broughton, Rhoda (1840–1920), novelist.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

Flint, Kate, “Soulsby, Lucy Helen Muriel (1856–1927), headmistress.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

Hunter, Fred, “Crawford [née Johnstone], Emily (1831?–1915), journalist.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

Johansen, Michelle, ‘Social Mobility Behind the Library Desk’, [socialhistory.org.uk/shs\\_exchange/social-mobility-behind-the-library-desk](http://socialhistory.org.uk/shs_exchange/social-mobility-behind-the-library-desk), 1 April 2019.

McCrum, Robert, “The 100 Best Novels: No. 28 – New Grub Street by George Gissing (1891).” *The Guardian*, 31 March 2014.

Mitchell, Charlotte, “Montgomery, Florence Sophia (1843–1923), novelist and children’s writer.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

Murphy, N. T. P., “Pain, Barry Eric Odell (1864–1928), writer.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 23 September 2004.

Neisius, Jean G., “Marryat [married names Church, Lean], Florence (1833–1899), novelist.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 08 October 2009.

O’Leary, Paul, “Keating, Joseph (1871–1934), novelist.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 19 May 2011.

Phillips, D., “Simpson [née Spearing], Evelyn Mary (1885–1963), literary scholar.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 04 October 2008.

Queen Mary University of London, ‘The Palace Journal.’ Undated. [library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/digitised-records/the-palace-journal](http://library.qmul.ac.uk/archives/digitised-records/the-palace-journal).

“The School of Literary Art” [one-page prospectus], accessed on [florencemarryat.org](http://florencemarryat.org).

Tweedale, Geoffrey, “Carnegie, Andrew (1835–1919), steelmaker and philanthropist.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 24 May 2012.

UK Parliament, 'The 1870 Education Act.' Undated. [parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact](http://parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/livinglearning/school/overview/1870educationact).

Weiss, Lauren, Kirstie Blair, and Michael Sanders, 'Literary Bonds', [literarybonds.org](http://literarybonds.org).

### **Unpublished Resources**

Evans, Jonathan, 'People, Politics, and Print: Notes Towards a History of the English-Language Book in Industrial South Wales up to 1900.' (Unpublished PhD thesis.) Cardiff University, 2010.

Sage, Abigail, 'The Estrangement of the Artist: The Künstlerroman, the Writer and the Painter in England, 1880–1903.' (Unpublished master's thesis.) Birkbeck, University of London, 2014.