George Eliot's English Travels

Composite characters and coded communications

Kathleen McCormack

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George Eliot's more than fifty long and short journeys within England took her to dozens of sites scattered around the country. Revising the traditional notion that as a novelist she drew her settings and characters only from the areas of her Warwickshire girlhood, Kathleen McCormack demonstrates that English travel furnished the novelist with a wide variety of originals for the composite characters and settings she would so memorably create.

McCormack traces the ways in which George Eliot gathered material during her travels and also drafted long sections of the novels while away from her London home. She argues that by examining the choices George Eliot made in transforming, discarding or directly describing her English originals, we might take a significant step forward in the interpretation of her writings. Where other critics have tried to interpret characters as one-to-one renderings of living or dead models, for example, this study reveals more elaborate blendings of what George Eliot called the "widely sundered elements" that made up her fiction. McCormack also reaches the fascinating conclusion that the novels were a form of coded communication between the author and people in her life, including other prominent Victorians such as Edward Burne-Jones, John Blackwood and Barbara Bodichon.

Presenting fresh biographical information and original insights into George Eliot's writing strategies, *George Eliot's English Travels* promises a decisive shift in our understanding of one of the most important figures in Victorian literature.

Kathleen McCormack, Professor of English at Florida International University in North Miami, has written widely on George Eliot and other Victorian authors, notably her book on *George Eliot and Intoxication: Dangerous Drugs for the Condition of England*. She divides her time between London and Miami.

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For Mary Free and Meri-Jane Rochelson

'The Pride of the River'

Cadhay Manor

Contents

Preface

This project began halfway through a sabbatical year in London, with my realization that, beyond 142 Strand and 4 Cheyne Walk, George Eliot's first and last residences in the capital, I had not visited any of the sites where she dwelt during her adult life as a nominal Londoner. Fortunately, this awareness coincided with the publication of *The Journals of George Eliot*, edited by Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston, which include the helpful index listing "Travels in Britain".

My subsequent short District Line journey to Richmond Green, where the Leweses lived from 1855 through 1859, revealed that physical details of that Thameside suburb contributed to settings in the fiction, in particular *The Mill on the Floss*. Afterward, I had good reason to believe that the *Journals* would point to places beyond London, elsewhere in Britain, that also served in some way as fictional models: the far-flung Scilly Isles, the seaside towns to which the Leweses often fled for quick refreshment, and the many summer leases just south of the North Downs in Surrey. Several previous visits to Griff House and Arbury Hall had confirmed the directness with which George Eliot adapted Warwickshire sites in her early fiction, but my newly-undertaken part-pilgrimage revealed that everywhere George Eliot traveled she gathered material for her settings, drawing them not only from Warwickshire, but from places all over Britain.

The rewards of retracing George Eliot and George Henry Lewes's travels within Britain include biographical amplifications, interpretive implications, and happy personal memories of visits to venues impressive first of all because of the George Eliot connections, but also full of independent interest. While the places of George Eliot's life lived and travels do not match the Brontës' Yorkshire as lures for literary tourists, sites connected with her fiction have the advantage of being widely dispersed. Wherever you visit, from Edinburgh to Cornwall, there is some place nearby where she preceded latter-day travelers. In many cases, the same inns where the Leweses stayed survive and still let rooms.

Because the Leweses carefully chose their destinations for a variety of reasons that generally included interesting historical connections, ample aesthetic opportunities, and great natural beauty, following their itineraries has yielded some of the most pleasant research I have ever done. *Bon voyage.*

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Farther afield, individuals associated with various George Eliot-connected sites provided help and information. These include in particular: Lawrence Williams, who shared material on Titsey Place; members of the William-Poulett family, who showed me all around Cadhay Manor; and Mark Curthoys and Brian Harrison, who pointed me in the right direction (toward the University Museum) in Oxford. Thanks also to Michael Clapson and Fred Delves for creating the frontispiece. To my friends and family, I am grateful for all support, especially to my mother, Regina McCormack, who bought the books and read them to me. Finally, I feel positive that, as an American writing about English locations, I have somewhere in what follows mistaken something universally known in Great Britain as one thing for something else entirely. In this connection, I both beg pardon for errors and offer thanks in advance for corrections.

On a sunny afternoon in 2001, near Ottery St Mary, I directed my rental car down a shaded drive and at once knew I had found George Eliot's original for Lowick Manor in *Middlemarch*. Tipped off to Tipton St John, a few miles to the south, by the Victoria Listserv, and informed by a book on *Treasures of Great Britain and Ireland* that Cadhay Manor "is approached by an avenue of lime trees," I incurred a debt of gratitude then and there to an interesting yoking: the British National Trust and Patrick Leary, founder and listowner of Victoria.

Kathleen McCormack

Abbreviations

GEL	*The George Eliot Letters*, 9 vols, Gordon S. Haight (ed.), New Haven: Yale University Press.
GHLL	*The Letters of George Henry Lewes*, 3 vols, William Baker (ed.), Victoria: University of Victoria Press.
GHLJ	Unpublished journals X, XI, XII and diaries 1–8 of George Henry Lewes, Bienecke, Yale University.
H&J	*The Journals of George Eliot*, Margaret Harris and Judith Johnston (eds), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
SSS	*Sea-side Studies*, Edinburgh: John Blackwood.

1 Introduction

"English mutton, an English fire, and an English bed"

> Better by half go to by-places in our own lovely country, and drive in carts over breezy lovely hills than go moiling on railways to see places not comparable for beauty with what one leaves behind.
>
> George Eliot to Alice Helps (1874)

When Marian Evans and George Henry Lewes returned from their German elopement in the spring of 1855, they could scarcely have faced a more daunting combination of scandal, slander, and ostracism. Nevertheless, they found themselves pleased to be back home in England. They had thought Berlin, their last stop, cold and drab, and were savoring the comforts of the Lord Warden in Dover: "a first-rate English hotel" just on the dock, where they could relish "English mutton, an English fire, and an English bed" (Harris and Johnston 257, hereafter H&J). They briefly splurged on the "taste and quietude" of the four-storey Georgian hotel, and then moved to lodgings where Lewes left Evans on her own while he departed for Hampshire and London to arrange for their next residence and some remunerative journalistic writing projects. Even after he departed, Evans continued to enjoy the seaside.[1] She wrote him confident letters, climbed the white cliffs, and explored the castle (*GEL* 2:194–5). It was the first of dozens of seaside stops for the Leweses. Over the years they lived together, they visited many of the towns strung along the English Channel from Kent in the east to Cornwall in the west.

Four years after the couple's return from Berlin, in February of 1859, they moved from the small pair of rooms they had been sharing near Richmond Green, to Holly Lodge, a tall and spacious yellow-brick building set near the crown of a hill in Wandsworth, south London. This move signaled the change in their fortunes brought about by George Eliot's undertakings in fiction. After the huge success of her first full-length novel, *Adam Bede*, they enjoyed financial security for the rest of their lives.

The Leweses' prosperity permitted them to choose the amusements they enjoyed. Very often, they chose travel. They spent, indeed, about a quarter of the twenty years remaining to them traveling abroad, most often in Italy and Germany. But they also traveled frequently to English destinations for work and for play. At the seaside, at spas, in the country, they did their research and writing, took breaks

from these same activities, and attempted to recover the fragile health of one or both of them. Meanwhile, George Eliot gathered material for her novels and also wrote large chunks of them while on the road, both on the Continent and in England.[2]

Heretofore, the dramatic story of the couple's scandalous elopement to Germany has led biographers to dwell on their 1854–5 travel to Weimar and Berlin, while analysis of *Romola* has prompted authors Andrew Thompson, Deirdre David, U.C. Knoepflmacher, and Felicia Bonaparte to concentrate on their journeys to Italy. However, a closer look at the substantial periods spent visiting primarily English venues contributes to important new interpretations of George Eliot's novels, and of her life, and helps establish the length and complexity of her creative methods. Specifically, the originals she adapts as characters and settings in her novels come not only from her Warwickshire childhood as generally supposed, but also from experiences amidst scenery all over England.[3] The details she transforms, discards, or describes straightforwardly when adapting her English originals as settings in her fiction create patterns of emphasis relevant to her themes, her characters, and her narrators, whom she constructs as great travelers themselves.

Moreover, the travels reveal George Eliot's character construction not as one-to-one renderings of people whom she knew, but as composites: extremely elaborate assemblages combining traits of a neighbor at a lodging house in Devon, a child on a beach in Yorkshire, the landlord of an inn in Wiltshire, or an intimate friend. Previous attempts to create connections between, for example, Oxford don Mark Pattison and Mr Casaubon in *Middlemarch* have failed, not because George Eliot did not draw in part on the Victorian in question, but because she also drew on many other originals for elements of the same character.[4] Hence, not only settings, but characters as well, reveal the literary effects of her travels in England.

Together with the character composites she bases on details culled from dozens of acquaintances, the English sites George Eliot adapted serve to expand radically a conclusion about her creativity concerning individual examples that has so far been advanced only by individual scholars.[5] In 1997 Nancy Henry argued that in *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*, George Eliot conducts "coded communications" (Rignall 1997: 52) between herself and Lewes by including private jokes, secret references, and other details drawn from their lives together. My research reveals that all of George Eliot's fiction conducts such half-dialogs with her contemporaries: not only Lewes but also one or two close relatives, as well as a number of historically important Victorians. Whatever else they may be (masterpieces of the genre, Victorian cultural-historical documents, psychological studies), George Eliot's novels are also coded communications with numerous other Victorians.

The creative processes leading to each of George Eliot's novels thus drew on experiences both recent and distant in time, both connected with her girlhood home in Warwickshire and prompted by encounters with people and places all over England. In 1859, she wrote to John Blackwood a clear description of her creative process for "Mr Gilfil's Love Story," which she claims was "spun out of the subtlest web of minute observation and inward experience, from my first childish recollections up to recent years. So it is with all the other stories" (*GEL* 2:459).

Indeed, the widely scattered models for characters and settings she refers to here reveal her novels as less the products of inspiration than as a kind of literary pointillism, assemblages of small units that, when viewed from the proper distance, combine to yield representations of landscapes and figures.

Visual arts metaphors have always come easily to analysis of nineteenth-century British literature. Describing George Eliot's character construction, her quasi-husband Lewes, her biographer–widower John Cross, and the novelist herself all apply such metaphors. In her letters, George Eliot repeatedly insists that her fiction contains no single "portrait" (*GEL* 3:155), meaning no direct representations of living or dead people. When Cross connects George Eliot's mother with Mrs Poyser, he, too, draws on a painting metaphor, assigning a "dash" (JWC 1:10) of the *Adam Bede* character to Christiana Evans. George Eliot called on metaphors of light to describe her creative method to Blackwood: a combination of "subtle shadowy suggestions with certain actual objects and events" (*GEL* 2:459). Like the figures and landscapes of the impressionist artists who were at the time beginning their work across the Channel, George Eliot's characters and settings are assembled from small units that render the perceivable world convincingly out of dashes and daubs, but in her case drawn from places and personalities rather than from units of paint.[6]

In George Eliot's fiction, the number and variety of the dashes of originals that make up her composite characters increased as she continued to write, from the fairly direct adaptations of childhood neighbors in *Scenes of Clerical Life*, to the elaborately blended Dorothea Brooke and Daniel Deronda in the 1870s. A single character such as Dr Lydgate of *Middlemarch* might bring together elements of a Warwickshire family physician (John Bury), a chum of Lewes's (Neil Arnott), an Oxford don (Henry Wentworth Acland), the first doctor at Coventry's Provident Dispensary (Charles Nankivell), her stepson's father-in-law (Southwood Smith), a friend's husband (Eugène Bodichon), an author whose writing she reviewed (Andrew Combe), her brother-in-law (Edward Clarke), a professional associate of Lewes's (Thomas Clifford Allbutt), and her dissecting, microscoping non-husband himself.[7] Such material, combined with memories of Warwickshire, and interwoven with allusions to characters and plots from her hugely extensive reading, then received a philosophical overlay elicited from the author's scholarship, reflection, and dialog with Lewes. That George Eliot's creative method depended on elaborate synthesis rather than on—or in addition to—inspired genius makes her works no less remarkable as some of the most beloved and revered novels in the English language.

Industrious travelers

From the beginning of the Leweses' time together, travel was part of their life's plan. They alternated their journeys within Britain with longer trips to Continental capitals, to historic and artistic venues, and, at various times, to a series of watering places in England, France, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany. Whether choosing destinations in England or abroad, they rarely traveled for pleasure alone. In their

early years together, they designed their journeys to achieve specific professional goals, primarily for Lewes: research in Germany for his Goëthe biography and then specimen-gathering at English beaches for *Sea-side Studies*. All their lives, diligent touring of museums, cathedrals, galleries, and ruins occupied many of their traveling days, whether in England or abroad, often followed by theater at night. Their notebooks and journals bulge with detailed descriptions of the contents of galleries, sometimes almost work by work.

For the Leweses, their travel carried several social advantages not available at home. Leaving London, they could shed the burden of scandal that accompanied their position, and pass as as a married couple.[8] Their departures, far from creating opportunities for sexual license (traditionally connected with travel), instead liberated them into conventionality. When they arrived at a Welsh seaside or a Paris hotel, they had no reason to anticipate inquiries about their marital status. The spring and summer seasons of 1856 and 1857, in particular, spent at the coast and then on the Scilly and Channel Islands, permitted them long periods each year in which to pretend effectively that no irregularity singularized their relationship.[9] It was only after two full months of being regarded as a legal wife by her island neighbors that Evans finally revealed her relationship with Lewes to her family. She posted her letters to her brother and sister from the remote village on Jersey where she had sustained her identity as "Mrs Lewes."

The industrious occupations in which the Leweses engaged as they traveled also lent them a kind of dignity less easily available in London. Eric Leed's chapter on "Scientific travel" contains the assertion that, with the Renaissance, "Appropriating the world as information became the chief dignifying motive for travel" (1991: 193). Consequently, Lewes's science, like the opportunity for the couple to present themselves as married, gained them stature in their interludes away from home. In 1857 for example, their gathering of the specimens for Lewes's microscopic observation vividly dramatized the laboriousness of his science, and became something of a spectacle for the Scilly islanders. As the pair of them, dressed for the task in an assemblage of odd garments and old boots, made their way out to the cliffs to gather specimens, they felt the gaze of the Scillonians focus on their eccentricity. According to Lewes, "We are looked on as strange animals by the natives" (*GEL* 2:317). But their rattling basket of vials ready to accommodate the species chiseled from the granite rocks declared their scientific objectives clearly, and the long hours they spent there manifested strong scientific dedication.

Less obviously than Lewes, Evans too was "appropriating the world as information" during their travels, gathering material and then drafting her chapters. Her comprehensive allusions to the visual arts throughout her fiction testify to the assiduity of her museum and gallery visits.[10] Certainly, she and Lewes considered themselves travelers rather than tourists, primarily on the basis of their sophistication and industriousness.[11] In one letter written in 1871, for example, she contrasts her industrious tourism with "idle travelling (with the sort of culture which combines Shakespeare and the musical classes)" (*GEL* 5:174). Meanwhile, she composed the "Epilogue" to "Mr Gilfil's Love Story" sitting high on a fortified hill on the Scilly Isles, wrote many chapters of *Adam Bede* in German hotel rooms

and lodgings, and penned much of *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* in cottages leased for the summer in Surrey.

Eventually, George Eliot's accumulation of wealth and fame meant that travel no longer offered opportunities for anonymity. Sometime in the mid-1860s, the journeys became a sequence of occasions for potential lionizing, not all of it desired. With no control over who might enter their railway compartments, they sometimes had to devise means of escape, as on an 1869 journey in Germany when the wrong person (one Andrew Johnson) sat down and joined them (Haight 1968: 415).[12] But the haphazardness of travel by rail also carried social compensations, for the Leweses' travel promoted friendships with other well-off travelers along the paths of culture, as well as with literary–artistic members of expatriate groups, such as the English residents settled at Bellosguardo on the hill above Florence. When celebrity replaced anonymity, the Leweses' departures no longer included the soothing exclusion from comment concerning their morality. Rather than finding themselves freed from the scandal because regarded as conventionally married, they found themselves pursued by attractive, intelligent, well-off people who knew about the scandal, but did not care.

Indeed, the acquaintances the Leweses made as they traveled helped to elevate their social status at home, as they often sustained the friendships formed abroad when they returned to England. Visiting the Pyrenees in 1867, they took three days and traveled some fifty miles from Biarritz to Pau in order to solidify their acquaintance with the Frederick Lehmanns. Although Lewes first encountered the Cross family at an inn west of London in 1867, the friendship did not begin to develop until after a chance meeting in Rome two years later. In Bad Homburg in 1872, during the visit that prompted the opening scene to *Daniel Deronda*, they enjoyed their meetings with Lord and Lady Castletown and other members of the peerage (*GEL* 5:316). Back in England, several family groups—the Crosses, the Bodichons, the Congreves, and others—routinely exchanged travelers' tips about routes to take, summer leases, satisfactory inns, and sights not to miss. Exchanges of travel tips formed a significant component of these friendships because they all traveled for the same reasons—seeking health through better air, refuge from the conditions of London, creative inspiration, and cultural exhilaration.

As the Leweses aged, they sustained the diligence of their traveling, but added more destinations chosen primarily as health resorts.[13] Like most Victorians, they believed that change of air could improve their physical condition, and sometimes they were right. Many of their short jaunts into Surrey reveal the speed at which removal from the foul foggy air of London could revive George Eliot's health and spirits. For Victorians, good air did not depend only on the absence of smoky factories: nature, too, played its part. As late as 1878, one guide to Brighton attributes the salutary effectiveness of its air to the absence of nearby farmland that would produce the vapors of deteriorating vegetables (*Tourists' Picturesque Guide to Brighton* 63).

The benefits of travel have always coexisted with some discomforts. Generally regarded as among the most formidable of Victorian travelers (Haight 1968: 303), the Leweses put up with long, dreary train rides (she did not read on trains), such as

the fourteen-hour journey from Granada to Mengíbar in 1867.[14] They sometimes had to suffer poor accommodation, as in Chiemsee in 1858, where they endured a "fourth rate inn," in which "the sheets were so damp that I flung them away" (GHLJ, 7 July 1858). On one journey to Wales in 1859, they wandered from town to town unable to find a place to stay. In Naples, in April 1869, a thief snatched a locket from George Eliot's watch chain (GHLJ, 1 April 1868).

Although the Leweses never ventured beyond the borders of Europe, they continued to travel all their lives. Two weeks before Lewes's death, they made a last, ineffective, health-seeking visit to Brighton. George Eliot's last trip abroad, her disastrous honeymoon, followed a brutal itinerary of Ruskinian sights that nearly did in her new husband. The farthest north they visited was Edinburgh and the farthest south, Málaga. Budapest was their easternmost destination and the Scilly Isles the westernmost. Although their journey to Spain, in particular, took them farther from home than most Britons ventured, they never went to Ireland, America, Palestine, or Greece. But if their travel across the Alps was their most demanding route, the easier itineraries within England yielded as much or more material for George Eliot's novels. In the shires of England, she found people and landscapes that took their place in the English settings that dominate her fiction, from the *Scenes* through *Daniel Deronda.* Only *Romola* contains no English settings at all.

George Eliot at the seaside

George Eliot's journeys within England took her most often to watering places and country villages. In the mid-1840s, as a woman in her twenties named Mary Ann Evans, she began several decades of holidays at the seaside. Eventually, she visited nearly all the significant resorts along the English Channel and also ventured to islands well off the coast.[15] In these locations she stayed at hotels and lodging houses often constructed during the period when the Napoleonic Wars confined Britons to taking holidays on their own island. The ensuing popularity of destinations along the English coastline resulted in towns well-equipped for visitors, with hot and cold baths, assembly halls, lending libraries, and comfortable hotels. When the Continent reopened to English travelers, the seaside towns of Britain were left with a plenitude of holiday facilities available at reasonable prices and newly accessible by the railways.

George Eliot stopped at the Georgian hotels, strolled on the promenades, climbed the cliffs, and, on occasion, plunged into the sea from a bathing machine. Although she did not use these seaside settings directly in her fiction (for nearly all her settings lie well inland), she occasionally drew from them names for places, people, pets, parts of architecture, an original for a character, or one of the narrator's memorable images. The Leweses' dreadful health often drew them to English spas, but, like the seaside, spas provide the odd detail rather than a number of substantial originals rendered into people and places in the novels.

George Eliot's travel to English country locations, on the other hand, yielded dozens of recognizable models for both people and places in the fiction. The

Leweses chose these destinations, the majority of them in Surrey, primarily as refuges from London. As soon as George Eliot boarded the railway at London Bridge or Waterloo, she began to regain strength and health, sometimes within hours. The days of peace, fresh air, and vigorous walks enabled her to write efficiently, and the country also offered attractive landscapes where people engaged in activities such as preaching, politics, and courting—activities that make good events in plots.

From the beginning, Evans acknowledged the fruitfulness of her English travels. Of her roving ways, she wrote to Cara Bray from Jersey: "We like our wandering life at present, and it is fructifying and brings us material in many ways" (*GEL* 2:339). Sometimes, as in Lincolnshire in 1859 and Wiltshire in 1874, the traveling novelist set out on short journeys with specific needs in mind for her fiction: in the one case a suitable river for *The Mill on the Floss*, in the other a set of country houses for *Daniel Deronda*. More often, she and Lewes were spending periods in the country for respite and to execute specific scientific or literary projects, but had experiences that eventually reached the pages of the novels. While her first fictional country house, Cheverel Manor in "Mr Gilfil's Love Story," carefully repeats the details of Arbury Hall, the estate in Warwickshire on which she grew up, the later country house settings—Transome Court, Freshitt Hall, Lowick Manor, Topping Abbey, Brackenshaw Castle, Offendene—are recognizable versions of The Deepdene and Titsey Place in Surrey, Cadhay Manor in Devonshire, and Lacock Abbey, Corsham Court, and Spye Park House in Wiltshire.

Inevitably, a closer look at George Eliot's English travel expands and modifies versions of important events in her life. During her seaside holidays with her father, for example, they did not stay, as Kathryn Hughes asserts in *George Eliot: The Last Victorian*, in "dismal" (1998: 84) lodging houses, but instead in rather splendid hotels which impressed the young visitor from Coventry (*GEL* 1:239). The frequent holiday rendezvous with Barbara Leigh Smith/Bodichon solidify the artist's position as George Eliot's best friend because they often planned for their paths to cross. The Cross family, because of the marriage to Johnnie usually associated with George Eliot's very last days, actually entered her life well before she wrote *Middlemarch* and consequently created for the Leweses a country-dwelling, quasi-family group of the social status of the *Middlemarch* characters for several years before *Middlemarch* appeared. In such ways, George Eliot's English travels, often mentioned by biographers only in subordinate clauses, shift emphasis toward country and seaside scenes alongside the Warwickshire, London, and Continental locations most often associated with her life.

In the fiction as well as the biography, similar revisions result from closer attention to the English travels, revisions often connected with her composite characters. Whereas readers have traditionally accepted her and her brother Isaac as the only models for Maggie and Tom Tulliver, for example, the time spent at the seaside with Leigh Smith suggests that George Eliot constructed the scenes of sibling conflict from the relations of a second flesh-and-blood brother-and-sister pair. Although Haight, after a review of possibilities, concludes positively of the title character of her last novel that "Deronda was imagined" (1968: 489), George

Eliot's trips to Whitby and Wiltshire offer several likely originals for her last eponymous protagonist, including George Eliot herself and several very young men of whom she had actual or historical knowledge. Indeed, while Leslie Stephen could not resist proposing Edmund Gurney as one model for Daniel (*GEL* 6:140), Lewes himself wrote a playful letter to his friend (Viceroy) Robert Lytton (with whom the Leweses had dined in Vienna): "Does Lady Vicereine see a little of her viceroy in Deronda? I do" (*GHLL* 3:92). Like many of the destinations that led to fictional settings, the people encountered during her travels often contributed touches of this or that to George Eliot's characters. Often, the pointillistic dashes that make up the characters might draw on twenty or more recognizable originals, many gleaned from experiences in the country or at the seaside.

Originals and composites

The efforts to find models for characters in George Eliot's fiction started as soon as the *Scenes of Clerical Life* began appearing in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1857, and extended into the early twentieth century, propelled initially by the flurry of biographical interest following her death. The early biographies by Mathilde Blind, Oscar Browning, Leslie Stephen, and Cross himself all seek correspondences between people and characters, and, as long as a number of George Eliot's friends and contemporaries survived, their beliefs about originals prompted gossip on the subject. The habit of looking for models for George Eliot's characters waned when the Leavisite revival of her position in the literary canon coincided with the de-emphasis on biography prompted by formalist New Critical approaches to the novels.[16]

The earliest and briefest biographies of George Eliot, her obituaries, emphasize connections between her life and her characters that bear traces of validity side by side with inaccuracies and impossibilities. These conclusions resulted to some degree from both personal self-promotion and Victorian sentimentality. Not only did members of her audience who knew her claim to recognize parts of themselves in her characters, but the audience as a whole desired for the departed novelist a father as wise as Caleb Garth and as loving as Mr Tulliver, together with a mother as worthy and clever as Mrs Poyser, some of the models most frequently detected in the fiction. George Eliot's approach to character construction supports rather than contradicts Victorian claimants as originals. As composites, the characters could absorb the claims of many Victorians who thought they recognized themselves in as little as a characteristic gesture, a single comment remembered from a conversation, or a gown worn on an outing years before.

The first phase of model-finding, during which Midlanders recognized *Scenes* characters based on their neighbors, resulted partly from the strategies Evans and Lewes devised for achieving publication despite her anomalous social position as his non-wife.[17] Whatever the merit of her stories, nervous editors might well reject them because of the potential that her scandalous living arrangements would contaminate any moral themes she advanced. For three full years, Evans had been conspicuous in London as the de facto editor of the *Westminster Review*: soliciting,

accepting, rejecting, and revising submissions for one of England's most prestigious periodicals and participating in the literary social life at John Chapman's publishing establishment on the Strand. Other London editors and many contributors knew her well. By choosing John Blackwood, an Edinburgh publisher, she targeted a periodical with an editor less familiar with London publishing; at the same time she deflected too-curious London readers from speculating about the authorship of the stories. Her creation of a strong sense of place emphatically distant both geographically and temporally from contemporary London carried the same advantage.

In addition to targeting a non-London publisher and conceiving non-London characters and settings, the couple also concocted plans for the topics and formats of the stories. They hoped the apparent innocuousness of tales of clerical characters, together with a commitment to a series rather than an individual tale, would win Evans a lucrative and permanent place among Blackwood's small stable of authors. As Lewes wrote to his friend George Tugwell in 1856: "Blackwood is very critical; but when once you get your foot in his pages you are at ease forever" (*GHLL* 1:256).

Having decided on rural settings, Evans packed her first Warwickshire tales with locally recognizable characters. She not only adapts local lore concerning late or former Nuneatonions Sir Roger Newdigate (Sir Christopher Cheverel), Nancy and J.W. Buchanan (the Dempsters), John Gwyther (Amos Barton), and John Jones (Mr Tryan) for her main plots, she also describes a number of her most minor characters, nearly all of them based on Warwickshire originals, in great detail. At the clerical meeting in "Amos Barton," each of the clergymen who gossip about the Bartons receives at least a paragraph detailing complexions, eccentricities, hair styles, and preaching styles. Similarly, in "Janet's Repentance," the narrator describes each of the young people regularly in attendance at Milby church of a Sunday, complete with bonnets, jewelry, and furs. In both cases, these characters appear too briefly to justify the elaborate descriptions that introduce them. After the *Scenes*, George Eliot discarded these catalogs of characters who have only momentary and marginal relevance to the actions of the protagonists, and in doing so she discarded one-to-one correspondences between people and characters in favor of ever more complicated composites.

Evans's plan for deflecting curiosity away from herself in London by means of Warwickshire-based characters and settings succeeded all too well. Soon after the *Scenes* appeared in *Maga*, Blackwood became aware of proposed identifications for characters, settings, and plots in the most direct way possible. Encountering Sir Charles Newdigate on Derby Day at Epsom Downs in 1857, he experienced some dismay when the proprietor of Arbury Hall informed him that the *Scenes* were all about his own home and its environs (Haight 1968: 282). Meanwhile, letters from relatives of "Amos Barton" (John Gwyther) and "Mr Tryan" (John Jones), disturbed both publisher and author and prompted from Evans the response that her fiction contains no portraits, but rather assemblages of "widely sundered portions of experience" (*GEL* 2:459). The spurious Nuneatonian, Joseph Liggins, gained support for his claim of having written the *Scenes* under the George Eliot *nom*

de plume partly on the basis of their exact representations of locally recognizable characters.

Locating originals for Evans's characters thus began among Midlanders to whom Evans had given generously diverting details in *Scenes of Clerical Life*. It persisted into the early twentieth century, especially as long as some of the later candidates for key characters survived. By 1924, Isadore Mudge and M.E. Sears had collected Nuneaton manuscript lists, combined them with material from the early biographies, and concluded their *George Eliot Dictionary* with a list of some 185 people and places reputed to have supplied originals for the fiction. Three-quarters of these identifications reflect their origins in Nuneaton by offering models for George Eliot's earliest work: the *Scenes, Adam Bede,* and *The Mill on the Floss*. The search for George Eliot originals rarely extended farther from Warwickshire than the Derbyshire and Staffordshire locations associated with the settings in *Adam Bede*. At the same time, the unanimity of some of these choices for originals boosts the likelihood of their accuracy.

Victorian sentimentality, on the other hand, renders Victorian and post-Victorian identifications suspect. At the time of George Eliot's death, in particular, assessments of her life and work often expressed regrets that in her later career she departed too drastically from her rural roots.[18] Many obituaries lamented the philosophical bent of her later novels, including *Middlemarch*. Meanwhile, rumor combined with desire to bestow on a favorite novelist a happy childhood, including a warm and loving mother. C. Kegan Paul's obituary in an 1881 *Harper's Monthly Magazine* embodies a typically Victorian sentimentality about motherhood:

> Among the most interesting facts of Mary Ann Evans's early life is the deep love she clearly bore her mother. When she speaks of her in the autobiographical sonnets, however slightly, it is with the tenderest touch, and we can not but feel sure that the beautiful maternity of Mrs Moss, the upright rectitude of Mrs Garth, the tender spots in the heart of Mrs Poyser, the mature beauty of Milly Barton, are all recollections of the mother she loved and lost. We do not at all know what was Mrs Evans's age at her death, but we feel intimately persuaded that she was about thirty-five, the age at which Milly Barton died, and at which the still more beautiful and stately Janet repented, and became a noble woman.

As Christiana Pearson Evans died in her late forties, and George Eliot's nine volumes of letters are almost completely void of references to her, the "deep love" and "upright rectitude" both remain problematic.[19]

In addition to sentimentality, the suppositions about originals during the decades immediately after George Eliot's death can also reflect partisan motives for establishing identifications. From his position as a Methodist, William Mottram, for example, exaggerates the Dinah Morris–Elizabeth Evans connection. Cross himself gained much of his material from Isaac Evans, the model for Tom Tulliver and the least disinterested of all possible sources. When Isaac Evans met the widower in Warwickshire in 1881, he instantly agreed that Cross, a fellow

Old Rugbeian, should write the biography (ms letter, Beinecke, 22 January 1881). In his interviews with Cross, George Eliot's brother helped perpetuate positive characters as family originals. One of the page headings of Cross's biographical introduction to his collection of George Eliot's letters pointedly assigns the novelist that Victorian desideratum, a "Happy Childhood" (13). Such tactics helped prompt and carry forth popular but suspect notions that she modeled Dinah Morris closely on her aunt Elizabeth Evans, Mrs Poyser on her mother Christiana Evans, and Lucy Deane on her sister Chrissey Clarke.

During George Eliot's lifetime and in the decades just after her death, the friends who claimed identity with characters did not confine themselves to the admirable characters.[20] Oscar Browning is supposed to have fancied himself the original of Dr Lydgate, whom Haight calls the novel's most conspicuous failure (1968: 448). Charles Bray also claimed kin with an unadmirable character in identifying himself with Mr Brooke (Hanson 1952: 46), while his unsuccessful efforts to replace working-class drinking with improving reading and his early publication of an "Address to the Working Class on the Education of the Body" create similarities to Felix Holt (K. Adams 1980: 50).

As scholarly interest in George Eliot revived in the middle of the twentieth century, a few exceptional historically-based projects stood out among the more typical close readings of the texts themselves. Anna Kitchel's introduction to *Quarry for Middlemarch*, published in 1950 (Evans 1950), discusses models for Lydgate, partly because of the large proportion of material on medicine contained in its pages of notes. Kitchel likes the distinguished Dr Clifford Allbutt as a model for Lydgate and notices the importance of the British Medical Association meeting in 1868 (attended by Lewes) as part of the composition of *Middlemarch*. Haight differs from Kitchel, calling Allbutt's biographers careless readers (1968: 448). In "Golden Codgers" (1973), Richard Ellman also breaks the pattern by daringly proposing Johnnie Cross as an original for Will Ladislaw. In 1975,William Baker, writing on *George Eliot and Judaism*, endorses Emanuel Deutsch as the original of *Daniel Deronda*'s Mordecai and proposes Rahel Levin, who regarded her ethnicity as a "wound" (1975: 35), for the Princess Alcharisi.

Nearly twenty years after the appearance of Kitchel's *Quarry*, the publication of Haight's *Biography* generated an interest that also tempered the primarily textual preoccupations of formalism. During this period, Henry Auster and Catherine Middleton, although orienting their interest toward landscapes rather than people, nevertheless, like Mudge and Sears, assume that Warwickshire supplied most of the characters and settings that George Eliot derived from originals. But they also both make small moves toward the idea of composites when they observe that in *The Mill on the Floss* she blends memories of Nuneaton with observations of Gainsborough (Auster 1970: 54; Middleton 1981: 103–4) and that *The Mill* therefore began a practice of blending her memories and observations to create composite settings.

Meanwhile, feminist authors also helped return interest to connecting lives and works. When Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar made their groundbreaking contribution with *The Madwoman in the Attic* in 1979, they helped rehabilitate biographical

connections between authors' lives and their works, offering a strong case, for example, for the psychological implications of Mary Shelley's miscarriages in the composition of *Frankenstein*. For George Eliot, they begin by noting the many parallels between the author and her character Latimer in "The Lifted Veil." Other feminist scholars, such as Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall in *Sexuality and Subordination* (1989), Gillian Beer in *George Eliot* (1986), and Pauline Nestor in *Female Friendships and Communities* (1985), propose models from among George Eliot's activist friends, including Bodichon for Romola and philanthropists such as Clementia Taylor for Dorothea. Meanwhile, readers connected with Warwickshire often reinforce established connections, as does, for example, Kathleen Adams's recent series in the *George Eliot Review*.

Despite the accompanying air of frivolity, new suggestions continue to accumulate.[21] Ina Taylor's 1990 *A Woman of Contradictions* dwells on Maria Newdigate's similarities to Mrs Transome in *Felix Holt*. In *George Eliot and Italy*, Andrew Thompson proposes Dante Gabriel Rossetti as a model for Will Ladislaw (1998: 141). The addition in 2001 of a more complete group of letters to Jane Senior to the British Library manuscript collection has refocused attention on yet another of George Eliot's socially-conscious friends for Dorothea. Meanwhile, publication of the *George Eliot Journals*, Volumes 8 and 9 of the *George Eliot Letters*, and the three volumes of George Henry Lewes's letters also suggest previously unnoticed possibilities. Nearly all these efforts gain only partial success, not because of the dissimilarities they are forced to acknowledge, but because they try to make one-to-one connections between living or dead people and characters that are actually composites.

Although searching for originals in George Eliot's novels has not yet shed its suggestion of frivolity and its tendency to evoke well-founded suspicions regarding contemporary claims, it nevertheless achieves serious goals by yielding fresh implications about creative method and biography and, as I will demonstrate, new interpretations concerning settings as well as characters. When she bases a fictional setting on a particular architectural model or landscape, her inclusions and omissions of detail from the original help create emphasis. With authorial intentionality notoriously difficult to establish, the rendering of a Gothic arch or the neglect of a classical statue can indicate the author's romantic intentions (for example) with some reliability.[22] The narrators, too, gain definition from George Eliot's ways of integrating settings based on her travels. Because she occasionally transfers an English original to a European setting (as with the Rhine–Rhone contrast in *The Mill on the Floss*), her adaptations render the narrators as veteran travelers able to make observations about people and things both near at hand and worldwide.

Coded communications

Like the abundance of originals for locations and people George Eliot encountered outside Warwickshire, her inclusions in her novels of "coded communications" with people she knew also becomes apparent through attention to events that occurred

and people she met during her English travel. Living recipients of her fictionalized messages included, among others, her brother Isaac Evans, Barbara Bodichon's equally dictatorial brother Ben Leigh Smith, John Blackwood, Helen Faucit, Robert Lytton, and Edward Burne-Jones. Of all the people who contribute one or more details to her characters and for whom the novels contain coded communications, George Eliot calls most frequently on Barbara Bodichon and Georgiana Burne-Jones, who between them contribute aspects to Maggie, Romola, Dorothea, Mirah, Gwendolen, the Meyrick sisters, and Mrs Glasher.

In *The Presence of the Present*, eminent Victorianist Richard Altick describes a plenitude of "topicalities" prevalent in Victorian literature, which he defines as "references to people, events, or places that were present in the public consciousness, usually but not always as news items at the time a novel was published or within recent memory" (1991: 2). One species of such "topicalities," George Eliot's public references, meet Altick's definition, while many private references remain intelligible to only a very few people. As her career advanced, the coded communications became more likely to be part of the "public consciousness" because the widening circle of friends on whom she drew for models included public personages. The turbulent marriage of Edward and Georgiana Burne-Jones, for example, reached the public consciousness as London gossip, and George Eliot adapted aspects of the situation as plot elements in *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*. At the same time, she included many coded communications directed only at the Evans family group in Warwickshire, with whom she could sustain no other mode of communication.

Evans began including coded communications in her very earliest published work. Her first periodical publications, small pieces she wrote during her mid-twenties for her friend Charles Bray's newspaper in Coventry, began a lifelong practice of encoding individual messages in her published writing. Her contributions to the *Coventry Herald and Observer* include the playful "Vice and Sausages" (February 1847), for example, about meats of doubtful origin and the vigilance of Coventry Police Inspector John Vice in the matter. "Hints on Snubbing" (February 1847) inserts a phrase directed at Bray himself, an allusion that narrows her in-joke audience even further, to include only the group living at the family home at Rosehill. On her list of people with power enough to enable them to snub effectively, she mentions "editors of country newspapers, who feel themselves and their cause in a precarious condition, and who, therefore … cannot afford to keep a conscience" (11). While Coventry readers could identify the editor of the *Herald* (like Mr Vice) with ease, the exact nature of his compromises with his conscience lay beyond their knowledge. Evans had begun her lifelong habit of personal messages, jokes, and advice to individual members of her otherwise largely anonymous and eventually huge audience.

As George Eliot added to her fictional titles, her coded communications became the only form of intercourse left with her family, for after she announced the truth about her relationship with Lewes in 1857, they severed all contact with her. At this time, George Eliot was finishing "Janet's Repentance" and beginning *Adam Bede*, a novel described as her aunt's and her father's stories in her own "History of Adam

Bede." Although this novel most likely contains dozens of details recognizable to all the children of Christiana and Robert Evans who grew up at Griff House, one in particular clinches the deliberateness of her intentional communication with her family through her fiction.

In Chapter 19 of *Adam Bede*, the narrator reports the thoughts of the carpenter as he plans a particular project. Walking from one job to another, he amuses himself by mentally designing "a kitchen cupboard of his own contrivance, with such an ingenious arrangement of sliding-doors and bolts, such convenient nooks for stowing household provender, and such a symmetrical result to the eye, that every good housewife would be in raptures with it" (Ch. 19). Just such an article of furniture, designed and built by George Eliot's father, acknowledged prototype for Adam, survives today among the furniture from Griff House.[23] Whereas upright, capable carpenters from Derbyshire no doubt existed in numbers around the temporal setting of *Adam Bede*, the Evans family members recognized the cupboard as one among many details connecting this particular upright carpenter with the father who contrived the same wooden cupboard. When Isaac Evans asserted that only his sister could have written *Adam Bede* because it contained references to their father that only she would know (Haight 1968: 287), the exactness of the match between the father's solidly built cupboard and Adam's plan made a sufficiently exact and esoteric reference to support his statement.

Each of George Eliot's coded communications conveys differing meanings for the recipients, and also for students of Victorianism today. The private communications with the Evans family, once identified accurately, yield knowledge of her relationship with her alienated family and reveal a poignant attempt to keep them informed of her thoughts despite the alienation. When she extends the techniques employed in her earlier writing to the major novels and the models for their characters, the coded communications contribute to our knowledge of the period. By boosting the "presence of the present" in George Eliot's novels, they make her all the more a voice of Victorianism through her half-dialogs with some of its most important figures.

'Widely sundered elements'

I divide my conclusions about originals drawn from George Eliot's English travels into three categories: absolute certainties such as the identification of the model for Lowick Manor in *Middlemarch*, pretty good cases like my proposal of the Thames as the primary (or at least initial) model for the Floss, and alluring, probable, but irretrievably speculative suppositions, such as my imagined scene of George Henry Lewes meeting George Eliot's nephew, Frederic Evans, at Oxford in 1868, and during their conversation gaining material for her creation of Fred Vincy in *Middlemarch*.[24]

Chapter 2, "Points of departure," agrees with previous readers about George Eliot's Midlands models, but supplies additional examples that demonstrate how some parts of Warwickshire persist as settings in all her fiction even as she lived in self-imposed exile from the places where she spent her girlhood. It also describes

London both as a destination (during the forties) and, later, after her 1851 move, as a set of departure points for travel elsewhere. Chapter 3, about seasides, reports events from early and later holidays, which contribute to interpretations of several of the works despite George Eliot's sustained avoidance of seaside settings. Chapter 4, "Islands," describes the six months the couple spent far from home on the Scilly and Channel Islands in 1857. Chapter 5 reports the fictional consequences of short journeys to Lincolnshire and Surrey, while Chapter 6 concentrates on the English spas she and Lewes visited for their health, especially Malvern and Harrogate. Chapter 7 begins with the sequel to Harrogate in 1870—two weeks in Whitby, which contributed to the small Gothic revival in the last two novels, *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* – and goes on to deal with a variety of models for people and places in *Middlemarch,* including Lydgate, Fred Vincy, Lowick Manor, and others. Chapter 8, "Country Houses," finds models in Wiltshire for all the larger homes in the English half of *Daniel Deronda.*

In 1859, during the period when Midlands readers' recognitions of *Adam Bede* originals were jeopardizing George Eliot's anonymity, she revived the language of her assurance to Blackwood about the characters in the *Scenes* two years previously. To calm her anxious editor, she had then insisted that her creative imagination drew on "widely sundered portions of experience" (*GEL* 2:459). Two years later, she repeated this assertion when describing her creative techniques in *Adam Bede* to Barbara Bodichon: "the materials are much more a combination from imperfectly known and widely sundered elements than the *Clerical Scenes*" (*GEL* 3:129). The following month, she informed Charles Bray that she assembled *Adam Bede* not exclusively from her girlhood memories but also from "widely sundered elements" (3:155). While Midlands models appear often in the fiction, especially in the most distinctly Warwickshire-set works (*Scenes*, *Felix Holt*, and *Middlemarch*), their frequency has obscured the truth of her defensive assertion. Although Coventry, Nuneaton, Chilvers Coton, and Griff supplied more models than she cared to admit, she also, as she herself insisted, created her settings, plots, and characters out of far more "widely sundered" English elements gathered during an adulthood spent traveling frequently around the cliff-clinging, country-charming villages and towns of her native land.

2 Points of departure

> To get into a first-class carriage, fall asleep, and awake to find oneself where one would be, is almost as good as having Prince Hussein's carpet. This was my easy way of getting to London on Thursday. By 5 o'clock I had unpacked my boxes and made my room tidy, and then I began to feel some satisfaction in being settled down.
>
> Marian Evans to the Brays (1852)

Although George Eliot often complained about London noise, fog, traffic, heat, and crowds, and spent substantial portions of most years elsewhere, she launched her prosperous career there in 1851 and remained at least nominally a resident all her life. Consequently, when she departed to the country or the coast of England, her points of departure were the London railway stations, most often Euston, London Bridge, Paddington, and Waterloo. Long before London became a point of departure for Marian Evans, it served as her destination for journeys from the provinces to the capital. After a few sporadic visits as a girl, she picked up the pace because of the friendships she made after her move away from Griff House at the age of twenty. In the 1840s, she routinely traveled back and forth to London by train.

During these years, when Evans embarked on her travels, whether to London or elsewhere, she departed from her father's house in Coventry. Having made friends with Cara and Charles Bray, she began a series of annual visits to Cara Bray's sister, Sara Hennell, who lived in London, and she joined the Brays on their holidays in Wales, the Lake District, and Scotland. Along their ways to and from home, they made stops at a variety of interesting places—Stratford-on-Avon, Liverpool, Manchester—most often staying with friends or relatives of the Hennell–Bray clan. These trips around Britain during her early twenties introduced Evans to new experiences, new locations, and new people beyond the Warwickshire perimeters of her girlhood.

Toward the end of the 1840s, however, she had to give up the pleasures of her trips with friends because her father wanted her to holiday with him. This period began when Robert Evans broke his leg shortly after she departed with her friends for Scotland in 1845. His urgent message required that she cut short that journey and return home immediately, and from then until her father's death she took her summer holidays with him at the seaside, holidays during which Evans *père* achieved his goal of removing her from the society of the Brays and presenting her

as a dowered maiden to the company at a series of stylish watering places (Bray–Hennell Extracts). He planned their trips partly to ease his health, but also to marry off his daughter. Still unmarried, she resumed holidaying with the Brays immediately after her father died in 1849, this time for her first trip to the Continent, which she extended by staying through the following winter in Geneva. At this point, she had turned thirty years old.

After Evans's return to England and the move from Warwickshire in 1851, London rather than Coventry became her point of departure. While a single woman working on the *Westminster Review*, she returned to Warwickshire for family visits and took summer holidays elsewhere on her own, and with new and old friends. Her first trip traveling alone (after the Chapmans returned to London) was part of the disastrous summer of 1852 at Broadstairs, where Herbert Spencer visited only to disappoint her by rejecting her affection. In a letter to Clementia Taylor (*GEL* 2:52), Evans mentions her pleasure that the village, where Dickens lived during the 1840s, evoked for her the settings of *David Copperfield*. Unfortunately, in the outcome, the Broadstairs model for Bleak House, a grim square building standing lonely on a rock by the sea, related more suitably to her turbulent emotional experience there than did the benign model for Aunt Betsey's house (now a Dickens museum) a quarter of a mile away up the parade—its neat patch of donkey-free green out front.

That same year, Evans followed up Broadstairs with more successful journeys northward to Edinburgh and Ambleside. In these two spots, her hosts, George Combe and his family in Scotland and, in the autumn, Harriet Martineau in the Lakes, entertained her and made much of her (*GEL* 2:59, 62). She enjoyed it thoroughly: the friendships, the scenery, and the literary connections with Scott and Wordsworth. The next summer, emotionally free of Herbert Spencer, working hard on the *Westminster*, and newly involved with Lewes, Evans took her holidays in the south of England after spending a rural week in Surrey with some of her literary women friends. By the following summer, 1854, she was preparing for the most momentous departure of her life: her elopement with Lewes to Germany.

Although Evans and Lewes returned to England in the spring of 1855, they concealed their union from the Evans family until 1857. Then the announcement resulted in another drastic departure for the ostracized sister: her complete abandonment of the shire of her birth. Although she visited her sister Chrissey during the three-year interval that she kept her secret from her family, after her announcement she never again returned to Nuneaton, Coventry, or Griff.

At the same time that Evans made a permanent physical departure from Warwickshire, she was beginning an enlarging and enriching imaginative life there, for as she began writing fiction, she drew with most facility on material from long before. Although in her later fiction she assembled her composite settings and characters more and more frequently from among contemporary people and places, as a novice she depended on memories distanced by the fifteen years that had passed since she moved away from Nuneaton. Describing her own creativity in 1859, she verified that her Warwickshire girlhood provided her most easily tapped source of material: "my mind works with the most freedom and the keenest sense of

poetry in my remotest past, and there are many strata to be worked through before I can begin to use *artistically* any material I may gather in the present" (her italics, *GEL* 3:129). Among her Nuneaton-based fictional settings, those inspired by Arbury Hall and the surrounding area prove most persistent and survive throughout her writing career, from the *Scenes* through *Theophrastus Such*. Characters similar to Arbury's eighteenth-century proprietor, the well-traveled Sir Roger Newdigate, occur in both her earliest and her later fiction. Throughout her fiction-writing life, and especially after her death, her public identified her with Warwickshire and regarded her as a voice of the English provinces.

Arbury Hall and the Grand Tour

Although Evans did not begin her significant travels until she reached adulthood, and few well-traveled people entered her life when she lived at Griff House as a girl, she did see nearby a conspicuous monument to the grandest style of non-English travel, the eighteenth-century Italian Grand Tour. Arbury Hall, one of the estates which her father managed and on which she was born, stood as a proud suggestion of the fruits of travelling to exotic, distant, and unimaginably beautiful destinations that, at the time, young Mary Ann Evans had little hope of reaching herself. In the outcome, later in life, she made many journeys abroad to the same destinations which inspired Sir Roger Newdigate to transform his home into a grand Gothic cupcake. When the profits from *The Mill on the Floss* permitted the Leweses' first large-scale holiday in Italy, they planned it to duplicate Sir Roger's itinerary exactly.[1]

Sir Roger made his two journeys to Italy in the most lavish style: one in 1738–40 as a young man and a second in 1774–6 after the death of his first wife. When he returned to Warwickshire and married for the second time, he put his travels to use by renovating his home and filling it with his treasures. Delicately Gothicized outside and handsomely ornamented with vaulted ceilings inside, the Hall testifies to the aesthetic impact of Sir Roger's tours. Within, the Gothic ceilings arch above rooms that house the art objects he brought back with him. Engravings by Piranesi done from Newdigate's own sketches, a Neapolitan silk screen, watercolors he produced while traveling in Sicily, and cratesful of other decorative trophies fill the rooms of Arbury Hall.

In her fiction, George Eliot creates a number of settings which contrast the privileged lives of her wealthy characters with the limited spheres of the majority of her characters by positioning such impressive country houses within more humdrum local surroundings. The contrast between the two kinds of place—lavish home and humdrum village, town, or farm—carries gender as well as class implications. Privileged male characters, such as Sir Christopher Cheverel, Mr Brooke, and Henleigh Grandcourt, have often traveled extensively for pleasure, experience, loot, and knowledge—and also, occasionally, in the military—while George Eliot's women characters travel to escape some oppressive condition, as enforced exiles, or, if they can travel for pleasure, plagued by envy of the opportunities the men enjoy.

Accounts of the popularity of neo-Gothic architecture in Victorian Britain overwhelmingly identify the prototype of the trend as Strawberry Hill in Twickenham,

redesigned by Sir Horace Walpole in the middle of the eighteenth century. More recent challenges to the uniqueness of Strawberry Hill rank Sir Roger Newdigate alongside Walpole for his influence on British neo-Gothic architecture (M. McCarthy 1987: 118). Newdigate and Walpole undertook their renovations at about the same time, and, according to architectural historian Michael McCarthy, only their political opposition prevented Walpole's mentioning Newdigate as a fellow Gothicizer in his records of the renovation of Strawberry Hill (119).

McCarthy's descriptions conclusively remove Sir Roger from the ranks of eighteenth-century dilettante architect-aristocrats. He believes that Sir Roger had more talent than Sanderson Miller, the gentleman architect who worked on both Strawberry Hill and Arbury Hall.[2] The reciprocity of Sir Roger's relationship with Miller suggests his abilities. While Miller instructed Newdigate in drawing the Gothic arch, Newdigate called on his own talent and training to tutor Miller in perspective. Indeed, McCarthy credits Newdigate with substantial artistic work beyond his renovations at Arbury and with producing the "most exciting drawings of the early Gothic revival" (129). The fruits of his travel survived in Midlands locations elsewhere than in the Warwickshire neighborhood of Evans's birth. At Oxford, where he founded the Newdigate Poetry Prize later won by John Ruskin, Oscar Wilde, and Donald Hall, he left his architectural mark in the Hall of University College, whose fireplace duplicates his design from Arbury (McCarthy 1987: 133).

Because the Grand Tour was regaining its former eighteenth-century availability once the Napoleonic wars ended, it fits well in many of George Eliot's early nineteenth-century temporal settings. Her Grand Tour characters include Sir Christopher Cheverel, Mr Casaubon, Mr Brooke, Sir Hugo Mallinger, and Mr Grandcourt, all of whom fail to gain indisputable benefits from their journeys.[3] In addition to his creditable architectural ambitions, Sir Christopher brings back from the Continent Caterina Sarti, whose presence disrupts the estate he works to beautify. Mr Casaubon's trips involve him in fruitless research by permitting him access to the resources of the Vatican Library, while Mr Brooke gains a "too rambling habit of mind" (*Middlemarch* Ch. 1) on his visits to Italy and Greece. Sir Hugo spends his time trailing about in pursuit of the Alcharisi, and when he decides to settle down in England has apparently lost his chance to produce a male heir. Mr Grandcourt spends his time abroad in a period of adulterous dissipation during which he acquires ennui, arrogance, and his meddlesome appendage, Mr Lush.

Indeed, as George Eliot's career advances, she becomes increasingly severe on Grand Tourists, whose egoism usually places them among the insensitive characters who show no fellow-feeling. Their mobility helps sever their attachments to their own communities, and their domination over their retinues of attendants and the inhabitants of the countries they visit (most often regarded as racially inferior) results in increased arrogance. The patterns among the participants in such Grand Tours help revise traditional interpretations of George Eliot's traveling characters, because their faults become more serious and more closely involved with gender and class privilege when considered as Grand Tour acquirements.

Patterns among the Grand Tour travelers also contribute to reinterpretations of the less traveled characters in George Eliot's novels, including the women excluded from these genderizing privileges.[4] Hetty Sorrel becomes more decisively Arthur Donnithorne's victim through the contrasts between her journeying and his, whereas Dorothea Brooke, the Meyrick sisters, and Gwendolen Harleth all engage in direct (if ineffective) challenges to the genderizing effects of male travel. Mature characters such as Sir Christopher and Sir Hugo have acquired habits of tyranny that result from a lifetime of authority enhanced during tours that placed them in positions of perceived superiority to supposedly backward groups such as Italians. Back at home, they then extend their authority to the domination of another subordinate group—the women under their care.

In *Adam Bede*, Hetty Sorrel, one of George Eliot's most helpless victims, engages in a relationship with a man who does not enjoy a Grand Tour. Although Arthur travels for military reasons rather than for enrichment and pleasure, the mode of this travel marks him as a member of a certain group and links him with other members of the same group, such as Mr Casaubon and Mr Grandcourt. Not all Grand Tour characters waste their tours on profligacy. Not all profligate characters take Grand Tours. But grouping together characters who travel as privileged mobile males creates a substantial number of men, including Arthur, whose genderizing travel prepares them to make catastrophic errors when they return home. In the end, George Eliot punishes both Stephen Guest and Arthur Donnithorne with periods of pleasureless travel, Stephen wandering abroad and Arthur in the army, where he takes his only satisfaction in a fierce battle or a long march.

The fields of Warwickshire and *Adam Bede*

While Arbury Hall stood as a nearby example of the fruits of foreign travel during Evans's youth, she spent most of her leisure time as a child in a directly contrasting English environment—the fields surrounding Griff House. These domestic fields recur as settings most extensively in *The Mill on the Floss* and the "Brother and Sister" sonnets of 1868. Tom and Maggie spend most of Chapters 5 and 6 experiencing their mutual joys and conflicts among the fields, and "Tom Comes Home" ends with one of the George Eliot narrator's frequently noticed assertions of the importance of childhood memories of place, specifically of "the sunshine and the grass" (Book 1, Ch. 5).[5] The fields appear again in the last sentence of the last full chapter of *The Mill* which alludes to the bond formed by Tom and Maggie during the years they "roamed the daisied fields together" (Book 7, Ch. 5). They also supply the entire setting for the "Brother and Sister" sonnets.

At the same time that the George Eliot narrators consistently endorse the moral efficacy of childhood geographical roots, the English fields of Warwickshire, when adapted as settings, accommodate much non-pastoral, non-nurturing, even threatening action. Tom goes off to the fields with Bob Jakin after he quarrels with Maggie, and, years later, Maggie crosses the flooded fields to achieve her heroic rescue of Tom, but also to reach her almost immediate death. The fields in the

"Brother and Sister" poems differ from those in *The Mill* in one unpastoral detail. The noise of the quarries intrudes on the peace, and the canal conveys a boat likely to disturb and tangle the children's fishing lines. In both cases, the threatening aspects of the Arbury–Griff fields relate more directly to events in the area in George Eliot's writing than does the supposed pastoralism. Among the daisies, the child and then the girl found fear and frustration as well as discovery and joy. Her departures and returns there constituted a set of mixed memories distant in time and therefore, as she asserted in her 1859 letter to Bodichon, easily mined.

Indeed, the fields appear ominously in a far earlier literary effort, which was published in the *Christian Observer* in January 1840 and written at Griff when Evans was nearly twenty: her poem "Farewell." She describes the poem to her former governess as "the crude fruit of a lonely walk last evening" (*GEL* 1:27). In the poem, the fields across which the persona would "stray" (l. 1) issue an invitation to death that provokes stanza after stanza in which she names the earthly pleasures to which she repeatedly bids farewell. In this poem, in other youthful efforts, and in *The Mill*, the fields prompt imaginative wanderings seen as too-alluring escapes, while they also convey a sense of danger in and of themselves.

Most descriptions of Griff House and its immediate surroundings in George Eliot biography emphasize its charm and solidity, and ignore the strife acted out in its environs. But the history of the area includes many events that call into question any atmosphere of pastoralism. The name of the village of Griff, the tiny group of buildings among which Griff House stands, first appeared on maps in the thirteenth century (Gardner 1958: 26), and, despite its small size, at the time the Evanses lived there it had its own identity, as did Chilvers Coton and Nuneaton, the nearby village and town that now blend together.

George Eliot's pastoral portrayals in *The Mill* and the "Brother and Sister" sonnets select details from the area that largely obscure its industrial endeavors, which centered on mines and quarries. Named for "early coal-pits or diggings" (Gardner 1958: 26), by 1701 Griff supported six pits (Millburn 1863: 35) and, by 1834, a stone works at Griff Hollow, the site of the Red Deeps. As in *Felix Holt*'s Sproxton, the workers could choose from two public houses, the Griff and the Newdigate Arms ("Occurences," 1830). The tranquil canal along which the children linger in "Brother and Sister" carried off the products of the local quarries and collieries.

During the less prosperous periods of Evans's childhood in the 1820s and early 1830s, the working people of Warwickshire did not avoid the strife common elsewhere in England. Signs of hard times included soup kitchens and donkeyings. The kitchens sprang up when the ribbon trade was suffering from abrupt periods of mourning or almost equally abrupt changes in fashion. Donkeyings brought shame, humiliation, discomfort, and ridicule upon bosses perceived to be exploiting their workers. The donkeyers attached the victim to the beast's back stomach-down, with the man's head toward the tail. They then formed a procession of mockery and proceeded as far as they could before the constabulary arrested them.

Indeed, conditions connected with mechanization and labor strife helped create

serious agitation at the very doors of Griff House. Peter Croft cites the arrival of machines, always a much-feared occurrence, in a diary entry reporting a new steam engine in "Coton Coal Field … though this may have been at Griff" (1967: 67). In the major source of local history for the period, a document entitled "Occurences at Nuneaton" (*sic*), the diarist, said to be a Nuneatonian named John Astley, juxtaposes labor agitation and a serious fire at a coal pit contiguous to the property of Robert Evans (12 July 1833): "Destructive fire at Griff on Premises belonging to Mr. Evans—ab't ten Stacks grain etc. destroyed—damage done laid at upwards of £1000. Insured for 400—no doubt entertained of it arising from the fire at the Coalpit near to premises." As an agent who enacted the orders of the squirearchy, Evans was a likely target for the costly fire that burned out of control before the windows of his family home.

In addition, whereas the children of Griff House may have lived most of the time in a protected, pastoral atmosphere, the children associated with the local mines knew another Griff: "The report on the working conditions of children in 1843 shows that the system of working had remained substantially the same for 140 years, a ten-hour day shift, and a fourteen-hour night shift" (Millburn 1863: 35). Though Peter Croft reports no girls and few boys laboring in pits in the Nuneaton area, he also acknowledges that children of seven and eight worked at transporting tools for the laborers in various trades. Meanwhile, collier Thomas Arrott comments on reports of nineteenth-century child workers in a tone of misplaced pride: "There are none under ten in our pit; and there are very few employed at that age in this country and cannot be so useful now since engines have been introduced" (Croft 1967: 125). Indeed, because the labor and political strife in the area required the supposedly calming effects of a military presence, the canal boat which imperils the child's fishing line and diverts her imagination in "Brother and Sister" could be conveying Irish troops called in to quell possible violence rather than carrying rocks or coal.

Nor did Robert Evans personally avoid the troubles that disturbed the immediate vicinity of his home. The journals he kept over several decades chronicle significant family events, including sicknesses and visits to relatives, along with major and minor expenses, local occasions such as elections, and details of business activities on the estates he managed.[6] They reveal that, in addition to the skills and duties usually associated with George Eliot's father (valuing buildings and acreage, supervising timberlands, surveying roads), he performed more onerous duties. He collected rents, dunning the tenants and evicting delinquents. He supervised the unloading of canal boats and paid the navvies in money and beer. He grappled with the nuisance involved in converting a chimney in Arbury Hall into a privy. He instructed the Arbury farmers how to vote. He testified in nasty legal disputes. In 1836, he warned the noisy Mrs Picard of complaints from disturbed neighbors and insisted that she quieten down or face eviction. He fired the laborer Mr Hutt for drinking too much during the reaping. Together with the suspicious fire in 1833, such incidents suggest a varied, but scarcely an idyllic, existence.

In offering Mary Ann and Isaac Evans their playground, the fields of Griff and Arbury also provided a place for them to react to family and community conflicts. As George Eliot biographers have come to share fewer values with the sentimental,

positivistic Victorians who initiated their project, they have come to acknowledge the areas in which their predecessors may have applied sentimental stereotypes. Michael Wolff, Ruby Redinger, and Kathryn Hughes, for example, all regard the extremely early placement of the two youngest Evans children in school as possible maternal maneuvers to remove them from the house, rather than as benevolent attempts to provide them with a sound education. The picnic lunches packed for the children for their day-long expeditions in the fields encouraged them to find their pleasures out of doors, where they troubled their mother as little as possible. Consequently, the Evans children may have regarded the fields as places of forced exile as well as of pleasurable play.

Hetty's journey

In *Adam Bede*, the fields of Warwickshire make up part of the route Hetty Sorrel, one of George Eliot's least carefree travelers, takes on her journey to seek Arthur in Windsor.[7] The dreary, fruitless journey of the dairymaid exemplifies a kind of gendered travel carried on, in this case, within England: she embarks with little hope and no sense of adventure out of the necessity of finding help in her shameful circumstances.[8] Because of the war, Arthur is missing the Grand Tour he might have expected as the heir to Donnithorne Castle, and his idleness allows him to pursue sexual adventure in his own village, instead of on the Continent. The misery of Hetty's journey depends first of all on her sexual victimization by Arthur. Rather than for education and pleasure, she takes to the road seeking only respite from her fears about her pregnancy. Once on her way, however, she discovers additional sources of fear and misery, which stem from her constant need to make herself conspicuous in order to survive: to ask directions, find lodgings, and pick up rides. The adventures of the Grand Tourist, cared for by servants, bear leaders, companions, and couriers who dealt with the tedious logistics of travel, contrast strongly with Hetty's ordeal of loneliness, sexual vulnerability, dwindling money, and pouring rain.

The Warwickshire fields appear most enigmatically (but for that reason most provocatively) during Hetty's journey. George Eliot identifies Hetty with the fields through several events. Her walks to Donnithorne Castle to learn needlework carry her across the Chase and through the Grove, a route which allows Arthur to delight her by meeting her along the way. Discovered one evening by Adam as she returns from a tryst with her lover, Hetty covers her tracks by telling him she "had gone a little farther into the fields after coming from Treddleston, because she didn't want to go in, she said: it was so nice to be out of doors" (Ch. 20). She then enlists Adam to escort her to the Hall Farm so she can evade Mrs Poyser's scrutiny. A few months later, in November, she strays among the fields as she detours from a shopping trip to confront the reality of her pregnancy. The narrator takes the opportunity of her diversion to insert his allusion to the roadside crucifixes he has encountered traveling in Catholic countries and which he believes accord with the possible suffering humans endure "hidden behind the apple-blossoms, or among the golden corn, or under the shrouding boughs of the wood" (Ch. 35). The day of Adam's discovery of Hetty and Arthur kissing in the grove, tempestuous August winds detach still-green

leaves from the hedgerows and apples from their trees, and the farmers hope that "the corn were not ripe enough to be blown out of the husk and scattered as untimely seed" (Ch. 27). This highly sexual allusion to premature scattering of seed suggests Arthur's semen scattered on the fields associated with Hetty.

The fields gain additional psychological resonance on Hetty's journey because, as she leaves the fictional Stonyshire and enters Warwickshire, her route brings her among the very fields where her creator spent so much time as a child. After Hetty leaves her home shire, George Eliot switches from fictional to real place names, not only for Warwickshire, but for the towns where Hetty pauses, names drawn from the maps of the Midlands, including Leicester, Hinckley, and Stratford. At one point, the pregnant dairymaid chooses the wrong road, an error that brings her into the vicinity of Nuneaton. Instead of heading for Stony Stratford, she leaves from Hinckley in the direction of Stratford-on-Avon.

The narrator takes the opportunity of these real place names to address the audience directly: from Stratford-on-Avon to Stony Stratford "seems but a slight journey as you look at the map, or remember your own pleasant travels to and from the meadowy banks of the Avon" (Ch. 36). But it takes five days for Hetty. Along the way she is frightened by the driving of a drunken postilion who gives her a ride, and she repeatedly resents "going into the public-houses where she must go to get food and ask questions, because there were always men lounging there" (Ch. 36). She comes to believe that "this country of flat fields … must have no end, and she must go on wandering among them for ever" (Ch. 36). A line drawn from Hinckley to Stratford-on-Avon comes within five miles of Griff House.

Not only does George Eliot shift from fictional to real place names and direct Hetty's steps near the site of her own childhood, she returns her character to the fields between Stratford and Hinckley on the trip back from Windsor. In response to a memory of the fields, Hetty conceives a hope that they contain a suitable pool in which to drown herself. According to the narrator, she travels again to Stratford-on-Avon "because she had fixed her mind on the grassy Warwickshire fields, with the bushy tree-studded hedgerows that made a hiding-place even in this leafless season" (Ch. 37). The narrator mentions them again on the following page: "fields among which she thought she might find just the sort of pool she had in her mind" (Ch. 37). Indeed, a setting similar to Griff Hollows (the Red Deeps) recurs here, although less prominently than in *The Mill on the Floss*. Once "among the fields she had been dreaming of" (Ch. 37), she spots "a wild brake, where there had once been gravel-pits, leaving mounds and hollows studded with brushwood and small trees" (Ch. 37). The wandering victim's surname also emphasizes the fields she crosses, for, like the vetches and daisies mentioned elsewhere in the fiction, sorrel grows in such fields.

When Hetty finally finds a suitable pool among the fields north of Stratford, she abandons her suicidal intentions. She raises the spirit to curse Arthur, after which "she thought she could walk back across the field, and get over the stile; and then, in the very next field, she thought she remembered there was a hovel of furze near a sheepfold" (Ch. 37). The chapter concludes with Hetty back on the road "toiling along on her weary feet, or seated in a cart, with her eyes fixed vacantly on the road

before her, never thinking or caring whither it tends, till hunger comes and makes her desire that a village may be near" (Ch. 37). Its final sentence links the narrator and the audience as potential despoilers of dairymaids: "God preserve you and me from being the beginners of such misery!" (Ch. 37). These Warwickshire fields are far from pastoral, and they accommodate a journey as far removed as possible from the Grand Tour, the privilege of the class of young men to whom Hetty owes her predicament, the class George Eliot identified as the audience for her moral didacticism both within the *Adam Bede* narrative and in her correspondence with admirers (*GEL* 4:97).

The persistence of Arbury

Once a point of departure for Sir Roger Newdigate's Grand Tour, the Arbury estate was in its way a point of departure for George Eliot's own lifetime of traveling as well. After moving to London and enlarging her experience as a traveler, she began to find components for her characters as far away as Prague or Granada. But Arbury remained one of the memories that substantiate her claim that she wrote most easily out of the distant past, for parts of the estate contribute to her composite settings throughout her career.

The importance of Arbury is manifested in its survival in different ways in most of George Eliot's novels. *Adam Bede*, for example, supposedly set in Derbyshire, contains elements of Arbury-inspired description. After her to-do with Blackwood about his distaste for her raw-boned realism, George Eliot went on to deliver the pastoral and remote setting she promised him in her next fiction by ostensibly basing Hayslope on the village of Ellaston in Derbyshire rather than on Nuneaton or its surroundings in Warwickshire.[9] At the same time, she acknowledged that her father's youth as a carpenter provided material for the Adam character, while the famous "germ" (H&J 296) of the Hetty plot was the story her Aunt Elizabeth Evans told her of a prison visit to a condemned infanticide. Meanwhile, more of the "widely sundered elements" that comprise her fiction include landscapes drawn from the surroundings where she composed the beginning to *Adam Bede*: the seashores and valleys around the Channel Island town of Gorey.

Indeed, in *Adam Bede*, George Eliot's supposed removal of her setting to Derbyshire is only a decoy, for Donnithorne Castle and its grounds retain many details from Arbury Hall. During the planning for Arthur's birthday party, Mr Irwine describes the arrangement of space for the dinner party by naming architectural detail reminiscent of Arbury. Specifically, the Hayslope cottagers will eat in the cloisters while the farmers will dine above in the gallery, a gallery that Arthur, like Sir Roger, wants to "do up" in "first-rate style" (Ch. 22) when his grandfather's death allows him the necessary money and authority. Despite the differences manifested in Donnithorne Castle's Queen Anne architecture and its abbey remnant, neither present at Arbury, both houses have cloisters and a gallery suitable for dining at the heir's birthday dinner.

However, because stately homes all over England have both cloisters and long galleries, it is the grounds of Arbury Park that recur in *Adam Bede* more definitely

than does the hall. The path through the Fir Tree Grove where Adam appraises the value of the trees, and where he spots Arthur and Hetty kissing, resembles the wood that borders the lower edge of the Arbury gardens. Its soaring trees and dappled light create the indistinctness with which Adam sees the lovers. In addition, the Hermitage where Arthur has his meetings with Hetty lies at a slight distance across a rustic bridge, the same bridge Caterina crosses in "Mr Gilfil" to reach Mr Bates's cottage.

The larger area around Arbury also recurs in most of the novels. Although George Eliot took pains to locate *The Mill* in settings drawn from the neighborhood of Gainsborough, much detail of Arbury–Griff survives in this novel, including the Griff Hollow, Griff House, and the mill itself, firmly placed along the Ripple in the novel, but also persistently identified with Arbury Mill. One local historian identifies Raveloe in *Silas Marner*, so carefully depicted as vaguely remote, with Marston Jabbett, just a mile east of Griff House, while another associates it with Bulkington, which lies another mile or so south of Marston Jabbett (Ashmore n.d.: 14).[10] Sproxton in *Felix Holt* demonstrates a number of similarities with the village of Griff. As Felix walks to its public house, he proceeds along a branch canal which, like the Bermuda branch at Arbury, diverges from the main artery to terminate at a mining site. Again like Griff, Sproxton supports two public houses and a dame school. Although tradition attaches Middlemarch to Coventry, details from the Nuneaton area recur there, too. Mr Brooke's confrontation with his drunken farmer, which helps destroy his self-conception as a landlord revered by his tenants, assigns the name of a patch of trees on the Arbury estate, Dagley's Wood, to the rebellious tenant.

When John Walter Cross, as George Eliot's widower, journeyed to Warwickshire to search out material for his biography, he found only dullness in the countryside around his wife's birthplace: "nothing but a monotonous succession of green fields and hedgerows" (JWC 1:5); but these fields, along with the Gothicized mansion that rises among them, cradled the creative imagination of an author who continued to model settings based there throughout her career. They provided a point of departure for both the traveler, who never returned there, and the novelist, who returned there often in her creative imagination. As late as *Daniel Deronda*, the title character, who, like Hetty, contributes to George Eliot's novelistic re-visions of important aspects of the Grand Tour, goes on a one-way mission to Palestine, departing from a home in a Gothicized English mansion whose proprietor shares distinct similarities with Sir Christopher Cheverel of "Mr Gilfil." Sir Roger Newdigate's role as model, which establishes the prototype for Grand Tour characters in Sir Christopher, reaches as far as George Eliot's last novel. In life, London eventually replaced Warwickshire as the point of departure for George Eliot's travel, but it never replaced Griff–Chilvers Coton–Nuneaton as a major source for settings that recur repeatedly.

Up to London

In the beginning, London was not a point of departure for Marian Evans, but rather a destination, the city she saw on visits she made there occasionally during

her girlhood and more regularly during her mid-twenties. From Coventry, the London and Birmingham Railway made the journey in five hours or so, and she used its services to reach Euston Station, where she could hire a hackney to drive her eastward to the Hackney or Clapton homes of the Hennell family. After she first met Sara Hennell in the summer of 1842, she made annual visits to her London friend. Without exception, she wisely made these journeys in the summer and autumn, when Hackney looked its blooming best.

During the nineteenth century, Hackney was one of the areas that justify descriptions of London as an assemblage of villages. At the time of Evans's visits, its own shopping street, Mare Street, ran north–south from Clapton to Bethnal Green. Hardly a center of urban activity, Hackney did not attract many tourists. London's commercial city lay to the east, its cultural center to the west; but two features singularized the area and created a unique atmosphere. A remarkable variety of institutions—orphan asylums, ragged schools, almshouses, and the Elizabeth Fry Center—manifested the charitable intentions of the dissenting religious groups based there, while a number of plant nurseries preserved a pastoral greenery despite urban development. When construction of the North London Railway in 1850–52 (Simmons and Biddle 1997: 352) enabled travelers to arrive in nineteenth-century Hackney by train, they alighted at a station set in the middle of watercress fields. The Hennell family relished the greenery and, as Unitarians, fit in well on the Evangelical–Dissenting side of town.

While their father survived, the Hennells lived comfortably on St Thomas Square, amid various ecclesiastical properties, places for prayer and for burial. But James Hennell did not live long, and by the age of 33 was in his grave. The young widow and her seven surviving children, the youngest the two-year-old Cara, moved to the somewhat misnamed Pleasant Row. One of the Hackney streets that did not benefit from the area's nursery-garden industry, this location had, according to Sara Hennell, a view "more of bricks than of grass" (1899: 6). During their ten years on Pleasant Row, the Hennell children grew up and acquired enough knowledge and skill to contribute to the household finances. At that point, the family moved to a far superior location at 7 Hackney Terrace.

This spot completely satisfied Sara Hennell. She welcomed the green views on all sides. The range of houses, each with its round-arched eighteenth-century doorway, looked out across the way on a fully-curved crescent that provided an ample lawn and eventually accommodated a set of semi-detached and single houses, larger than the terrace homes and more impressive. To the rear they had their own garden, narrow in the urban fashion but unusually long. Beyond, Hackney Common reached around to provide a longer view and a background for their own narrow but deep patch of flowery greenery. Back bay windows on the ground floor took advantage of these views, while several of the houses in the group gained even better views through the installation of semicircular balconies on top of the protruding roofs of the upper-storey bay windows. On the front, at the center of the range, a pediment ornamented with flourishing branches and coats of arms spanned the two central residences to lend dignity and to unify the eighteen houses that made up the terrace.

Here, during the 1830s, the Hennell children reached maturity living philanthropy and learning languages, religion, and literature. They all acquired good German, and most of them wrote. Charles composed hymns and, later, his famous *Inquiry on the Origins of Christianity*, and Mary published a volume on *Social Systems*, still available today. The daughters all became governesses. In 1838, Sara Hennell could not resist an offer of "a situation in every way so desirable" (1899: 39) and became governess to the Bonham-Carter children at Ditcham in Hampshire. The family generally holidayed at the seaside, as in June of 1839 when they managed to gather nearly all the brothers and sisters for a special family interlude on the Isle of Wight.

The Hennell daughters idolized their brother Charles and followed all his activities with fascination. In 1890, Sara Hennell demonstrated the detail with which she had observed when she published privately a memoir in which she describes her brother as lively, clever, popular, and affectionate. When they lived at Hackney, he occupied himself by delivering lectures, composing hymns, and participating in theatricals, but he always remembered to write to his sisters when away. By 1842, the beloved brother had fallen in love. The young woman, the daughter of Dr Robert Brabant of Devizes, promised to fit easily into the Hennell family. She shared their intellectual enthusiasms, and during the courtship was working at translating D.F. Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu* from German to English. Although Dr Brabant had doubts about the tuberculosis that afflicted some of the Hennells, the large family at Hackney welcomed Rufa, and in 1843 she joined a party that included Charles and Sara Hennell and Charles and Cara Bray for a summer holiday in Wales. The group also included Mary Ann Evans.

The party chose as their main destination the holiday town of Tenby on the Welsh coast, a popular destination throughout the nineteenth century, visited by numerous Victorian celebrities. Happily, they found charming lodgings overlooking the tidy square harbor above which Tenby rises almost as steeply, snugly, and colorfully as Portofino or Positano.[11] At water level, Penniless Cove accommodated a harborside roadway backed by a stout wall cut through with seventeen stone arches. William Paxton, the energetic developer who also built in Tenby a theater, a set of assembly rooms, a number of private houses, and an elaborate suite of hot and cold baths, erected the wall early in the century to support a terraced road, which by 1843 he replaced with gardens. Behind the garden terrace, the wall reached up to the next level, Bridge Street, where the young party lodged. Beyond this range of sea-facing houses, several streets climbed up farther still to the town marketplace, where the spire of St Mary's Church supplied a visual accent often noted in guidebooks.

The holiday made an epoch for Evans who was not yet 24 years old. The members of her party took advantage of all Paxton's buildings. They visited the baths, went to the theater, and attended at least one ball. Sara Hennell overcame her physical frailty to join in on a long walk along the sea cliff to Monkstone Point (*GEL* 1:194). Charles Hennell and Rufa Brabant fell ever more in love. George Eliot referred to it all her life as a treasure of high-spirited fun, and she evoked it often in her letters to her Coventry friends (*GEL* 1:194; 2:43, 255). When she returned to

Tenby with Lewes in 1856, she still remembered the jokes they shared there, the walks they took, and the shops they favored, and she wanted to stay in the very same lodgings and patronize the same fishwoman. After the holiday, Charles Hennell and Rufa Brabant became engaged, an event that guaranteed Evans a future visit to Hackney when the couple chose her as a bridesmaid. In autumn of 1843, she made her journey to London in that role and there met Dr Robert Brabant, the bride's father, who urged her to extend her time away from Coventry with a visit to his own home in Wiltshire. The visit began with flirtation and ended with humiliation when Mrs Brabant ejected Evans as a marital threat; Mary Ann returned home to Coventry in early December, daunted and embarrassed (Haight 1968: 50).

The following summer, Evans made a quirky exception to her pattern of visits to Sara Hennell. She puzzled her friends in Hackney by a short stay in London that omitted a stop at their home. Charles Bray, then at the height of his phrenological enthusiasm, persuaded his young friend to have a cast taken of her head. He planned for them to travel to London to Deville's establishment in the Strand, where he bought the skulls with which he loaded his saddlebags for local journeys devoted to phrenological proselytizing (Taylor 1988: 50). The event had far-reaching results when Bray drew on the phrenological report delivered after her death to posit that she was "not fitted to stand alone" (quoted by Haight 1968: 51). Haight took up this phrase in his biography to account for George Eliot's relationships first with Lewes, then with Johnnie Cross, thus perpetuating a notion of her dependence on men that began to go out of fashion just about as soon as Haight's book was published in 1968.

Meanwhile, Bray had chosen the wrong days of the wrong month for a journey to London, which was sizzling in July heat. For their business, they might logically have stayed in John Chapman's establishment at 142 Strand. Bray and Evans completed their messy (for her) errand and returned to Coventry as soon as they could. The next Mechanics Institute on his itinerary perhaps viewed the cast of the cranium of the future George Eliot. In any case, Bray and Evans never reached Hackney. Cara Bray wrote to Rufa Hennell that her husband and her friend "had no minute to spare and glad they were to leave the hot city as soon as possible" (Haight 1968: 178). At least Evans did not need to sacrifice her luxuriant brown hair to make the cast, as tempting as the possibility might have seemed in the July temperatures.[12]

For several years, Sara Hennell and Mary Ann Evans corresponded both about their warm personal affection and about the translation of *Das Leben Jesu*. After Rufa Brabant turned the project over to the bridesmaid from Coventry, Hennell, as she wrote in her memoir of her brother, "continued my supervision" (1899: 119). She also supplied London books for the Coventry schools in which her friend and her sister took an active interest, including one called *Three Experiments of Living* concerning a physician and his wife who live beyond their means.[13]

The two women became ever more intimate as the letters went back and forth between Hackney and Bird Grove, and the pair themselves often traveled the same route as their letters. This is the period when they addressed each other in spousal terms. After they finished the translation, they promised themselves a celebratory

period for Evans in Hackney. With the translation in proof, they could mix work and play. At the beginning of 1846, Sara Hennell and her mother had moved one village northward to Clapton, into their own establishment on Clarence Row, leaving Hackney Terrace to the newlywed Charles Hennells, who promptly had a child.[14] Evans assured Sara Hennell that she especially looked forward to the new location for the sake of "being with you in your own home" (*GEL* 1:209). She anticipated their pleasures in terms of lively opposites: "next week and we will be merry and sad, wise and nonsensical, devout and wicked together" (1:218). Evans arrived in blooming Hackney on 26 May 1846.

Sara Hennell's "own home" was no more urban than Hackney Terrace. After a few days there, Evans reported to Charles and Cara Bray, who planned to join them in London, that they had "been to town" only once, and "are as ignorant as Primitive Methodists about any of the amusements that are going" (*GEL* 1:219). She claimed to have information only about the gigantic performance of *Judas Macabaeus* to be sung with a chorus of 500 voices at Exeter Hall on 5 June, the very day scheduled for her return to Coventry. So Evans proposed that she and the Brays split responsibility for locating suitable entertainment in the papers. They should look at *The Spectator*, while she would consult the *Morning Chronicle* during her visit to the Hennells and their month-old baby the next day.

The *Morning Chronicle* was advertising a variety of attractions that week in 1846, many of which would satisfy the Brays if, as instructed by Evans, they arrived in their "mischievous" and "theatre-loving" (*GEL* 1:219) modes. There was opera at the Drury Lane, *She Stoops to Conquer* at the Haymarket, and Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*) at the Olympic. The musical *Concerts d'Ete* were on at Covent Garden. If they cared for something less high-culture, they could go to Regent's Park to see a diorama of Heidelburg, to Chelsea to the flower show, or to a fancy dress ball. They could also have a look at General Tom Thumb.

All of these possibilities would require a trip to the West End. Whatever attractions the party managed (and in the end Cara Bray arrived without her spouse), they would need to venture from out from Hackney with a sense of heading for brighter lights.

Consequently, when Evans herself became a Londoner in 1851, her visits to the out-of-the-way Clapton and Hackney corners had not introduced her thoroughly to a place like the centrally located Strand. Meanwhile, Sara Hennell, usually associated with "the trio of Mary Ann's close Coventry friends" (Haight 1968: 46), was leaving for Warwickshire just when Evans moved to London. She had lived in Hackney all her life and was going to Coventry as Charles Bray's sister-in-law, making up the Rosehill "trio." The two friends passed like night-traveling ships on the London and Birmingham railway.

Aside from the sisters-of-an-adored-brother-with-more-privileges theme, which the Hennells embodied in Hackney and which recurs in George Eliot's fiction several times, only a few details of that destination enter her fiction, most often as tiny details. Because of its reputation as a center of Dissent, sections of *Felix Holt* and of Mr Bulstrode's plot in *Middlemarch* reflect some of the Hackney atmosphere, though without any specificity. Nevertheless, names from the area turn up in

fiction written at widely separated times. Just south of St Thomas Square, Tryon's Place cuts into Mare Street. In "Janet's Repentance" Mr Dempster's placards attacking the clergyman require a joke with potential for sexual innuendo, and for this reason George Eliot created a name susceptible to mocking by calling the vicar Mr Try-it-on (although "Tryan" varies by one letter). All around Hackney Terrace, several streets and buildings bear the name of the Cass family, which George Eliot assigns to the residents of the manor in *Silas Marner*. Two other nearby streets suggest names for *Daniel Deronda*: Gascoyne Road ran along the edge of Hackney Common, while Glaskin Road and Glaskin Street, both so close to Mr Gascoigne's birth name, Gaskins, intersected Frampton Park Road near St Thomas Square. At a slight distance, along Old Street, Rufus Street leads into Chapel Yard, a farther afield but still provocative possibility for the names in *Felix Holt*. Just past St Agnes Well to the southwest, Featherstone Street parallels Old Street.[15]

Points of departure: London

George Eliot moved from Coventry to London in 1851. It was the momentous year when the Crystal Palace Exhibition guaranteed for the visitor or new arrival the strongest contrast between urban activity and provincial quiet. In the following years, she remained in her city home only sporadically, and she moved a total of eight times. After 142 Strand, the many subsequent residences in the London area sort themselves out if divided as belonging to two phases: the places south of the river where she and Lewes lived together after their return from Germany, and the Regent's Park area where they moved after she had succeeded as a novelist. Because of the extent of her travel throughout her life, especially after she left Warwickshire in 1851, many of these places served more as *pieds à terre* than homes where she lived for long continuous stretches. During the twenty years she and Lewes lived in London, they often remained away from their urban addresses for months at a time, especially in the summer.

While a single working journalist in her early thirties, Marian Evans lived at 142 Strand and 21 Cambridge Street, one on the river at Waterloo Bridge, the other near Hyde Park. The 142 Strand building, famous as a meeting place for the literary celebrities of the period, sat on the busy street running directly between the West End and the City. If Evans looked to her left as she walked out the door, she could observe in the distance the refurbishment of Trafalgar Square where the statue of Admiral Nelson was going up. To the right, the dainty churches of St Clements Danes and St Mary's in the Strand occupied their diminishing islands in the middle of the road, with the noisy traffic going to either side. Theaters and publishing offices lay nearby, and to the rear, on the other side of Somerset House, Evans used to walk with Herbert Spencer on the terrace overlooking the spot where the Thames passes under Waterloo Bridge (Haight 1968: 112).

Evans lived at 142 Strand on and off for two years; then, after the romance-filled summer of 1853, she took her own lodgings alone, some distance away at 21 Cambridge Street. The advantages of Cambridge Street were its location just

north of Hyde Park, the meals cooked by the landlady, and its privacy (Haight 1968: 134). Her walk to the Park followed Hyde Park Street and Bayswater Road toward Lancaster Gate, coming out on the northwesternmost tip of the Serpentine. During the year leading up to their elopement to Germany, while Lewes lived near Piccadilly, the couple met often in Bayswater and began a routine they pursued for many years: long walks during which they offered each other professional encouragement and discussed their writing projects in collaborative exchanges. On a pretty day during the spring of 1854, they might stroll toward Kensington Gardens or go rowing on the Serpentine.

However, they lost many of the good days because Lewes remained in such poor health that their plan to travel to Germany grew partly out of hopes for a salutary season as he worked on his Goethe biography. By July they were ready to depart together, and the plans went into action on the 20th when Evans left Bayswater and proceeded to St Katherine's Dock. As she traversed the breadth of London from west to east, she passed near homes she believed would never again welcome her as a guest when the owners learned of her actions. Nevertheless, she remained steady in her purpose as she moved forward and rendezvoused with her lover aboard the *Ravensborne*, which lay waiting to depart down the Thames and across the sea to Belgium.

After the couple returned from Germany eight months later, they stayed briefly near the Bayswater location where they had laid the plans for their journey to Germany. Having paused in Dover, they had yet to establish themselves permanently in lodgings in London together. Soon they found they preferred living south of the Thames in suburbs with good local walks and a reliable train service.

They began their five years in South London with a brief stay in East Sheen. Here they liked the easy access to Richmond Park, a walk they would favor for several years. George Eliot's journal entry for 28 November 1857 contains two paragraphs of praise for that day's walk in the park: the colored leaves, blue mist, and sunset on the river (H&J 70–1). Three years later, having moved to Wandsworth, she wrote with nostalgia of a return walk "through the dear old Park" (H&J 83). In East Sheen, the short route toward the entrance carried them past Owen Lodge, where propinquity enabled Lewes to avail himself of its proprietor's scientific expertise (Haight 1968: 186). Lewes's respect for Richard Owen weathered many differences, and by the following year he was calling periodically at Owen Lodge, reporting and discussing his scientific conclusions.

The couple's next move placed them in rooms they would call home for three important years, and where they spent some of the happiest times of their lives. Park Shot runs parallel with Richmond High Street, just one block from the railway station. Toward the river it opens out onto the eastern edge of Richmond Green. Although in very small lodgings, the location enabled them to enjoy the pleasures of better-off people. On their walks, they could follow the path along the banks downriver toward Kew, or they could stroll upriver toward Twickenham past the elaborate houses on the sloping lawns and the remnant of Alexander Pope's grotto. Wherever they lived afterward in the London area, they complained that the walks did not match those at Richmond Green.

Richmond Green had one opportunity with which the couple was already familiar. As at East Sheen, their favorite walks lay in Richmond Park, which they now approached from the western end. They would climb Richmond Hill well conscious of the predecessors, notably Sir Walter Scott, who had enjoyed the same view (H&J 387). Passing the fancy Star and Garter Hotel where Dickens liked to escape from the city, and entering by the Richmond Gate, they had their choice among the many routes that lay before them where they could regard the deer as Evans and Lewes engaged in their usual pastimes of laying plans, developing projects, practicing languages, and other useful activities. They were never idle, even during the parts of their days they thought of as leisure.

In Park Shot they lived on the first floor, and worried about disturbing the lodger below with their musical frolics. They also worried about losing their appealing location if their landlady discovered their unmarried state. Repeatedly they took to task callers who inquired for "Miss Evans" (Haight 1968: 180). They preserved their welcome well. Having developed their plans for making Evans a famous fiction writer, they divulged them to Mrs Croft, who lamented that fame and wealth might take them away from her lodgings, as indeed they eventually did.

One of the queerest aspects of their life at Richmond Green was Lewes's main occupation during this time: his incessant dissection of his fellow creatures. Preparing the work he hoped would establish him as more than a mere book scientist, he spent nearly every day of his life dissecting things, mostly sea life, but also more complicated forms—kittens, mice, moles, "two newborn pigs" (GHLJ 26 September 1858), and, on one memorable occasion which gave him pangs, a puppy: "It was a pathetic sight, and I had some qualms at cutting him up. Put heart and nervous system in alcohol for subsequent examination" (GHLJ 7 July 1857). People they knew helped supply him with dead mammals: on one occasion the milkman thoughtfully delivered to Lewes a freshly-drowned chicken. In two rooms littered with animal corpses, microscope slides, and vials full of potential specimens, the atmosphere cannot always have been entirely pleasant.

Meanwhile, Evans was working on long articles for the *Westminster Review*. While in Park Shot she produced her most admired essays, including "Worldliness and Otherworldliness: The Poet Young," "Evangelical Teaching: Dr Cumming," and "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists."[16] At the same time, their frequent breaks in the country or at the seaside meant that she did much of this portable work elsewhere, and returned to Richmond with full notebooks and heavy pages of drafted articles.

The strategies the couple devised in Richmond Park to make Evans a novelist covered every step of the process. They decided on the clerical characters of the *Scenes*, chose carefully the periodical to which they would submit the first story, and explored possibilities for future clerical plots. Although absorbed by his *Sea-side Studies*, Lewes at this point interrupted his science to send a mediocre little romance called "Metamorphosis" to John Blackwood, a strategy, he confided to his journal, designed to open a correspondence in which he could conveniently insert a mention of a fiction-writing friend (GHLJ 7 January 1857). They also made the crucial decision to propose a series of stories. While a single appearance in *Blackwood's Magazine* could hardly secure George Eliot's place in Blackwood's small and

select stable of authors, a series could gain her a place in the group whose work repeatedly appeared there.

During the time at Richmond, the plans the Leweses laid for the creation of a fiction writer succeeded well enough to fulfill their most extravagant hopes. Not only did *Scenes of Clerical Life* achieve publication and attention, but *Adam Bede* became a huge national bestseller. At Park Shot they celebrated each success along the way and welcomed William and John Blackwood as visitors to their small rooms, where they eventually revealed Evans's identity as the author of the fiction they had been publishing (Haight 1968: 252).

But no matter how well their Thameside life pleased them, they spent long periods away from Richmond, traveling within the territory of Britain, although at some of its most distant perimeters. The summer of 1856 they went to Devon and Wales, and in *Sea-side Studies*, Lewes describes how, in the early spring of 1857, a fresh wind off the Thames perked him up as he returned to his lodgings and prompted in him the impulse to plan another period at the seaside (189). Overall, they spent no more than twelve full months at Park Shot and the rest, for seasons at a time, at seaside or island locations where Lewes had access to specimens for his research.

Success, moreover, brought the possibility of larger quarters of their own, and so when *Adam Bede* brought in some real money, they moved away from Richmond. They bought a substantial home in Wandsworth, and immediately the demands of the larger establishment, Holly Lodge, became a burden. They spent many weeks trying to find suitable servants and made trips north of the Thames to pick out furniture. Meanwhile, they found that the Wandsworth area could not match Richmond Green for attractive walks. Instead of the various directions available there, they had only Wimbledon Common, where they might walk with their pug dog, though the nearest entrance lay half a mile distant. Finally, the move exposed them to the loss of Evans's anonymity, because it suggested their newly-ample source of income to curious readers and neighbors, and thus encouraged speculations that only Marian Evans could have written *Adam Bede*.

Because they never really learned to like living at Holly Lodge, they did not mind when the time came, and the return of Lewes's oldest son from school prompted them to make another move. Their friend, Barbara Bodichon, lived in Blandford Square, and visits to her suggested this area as suitable for the parents of a young man who needed a convenient London location while establishing himself in a vocation. With Regent's Park and Primrose Hill nearby for walks, and able to count on at least one friendly neighbor in Bodichon, they advertised for a home in this specific location. The ad succeeded, and they lived for a short time in Harewood Square, then moved to nearby Blandford Square. The zoo in Regent's Park was also a convenience. Although its creatures lay out of reach of Lewes's dissecting scalpel, they were available for his inspection as they dwelt unmolested in their cages.

Finally, the Leweses moved their London home for the last time—to the Priory, where they lived for more than fifteen years and where they conducted their most active social life. On the North Bank of Regent's Canal, they remained close enough to Blandford Square to reduce the feeling of dislocation. Here, they acquired a house that compensated George Eliot for her departure from the area of

her birth, for the Priory duplicated, on a duly modest miniature scale, a number of the features of Arbury Hall. Like many houses influenced by neo-Gothic tastes, including the two cottages at Shottermill where the couple spent the summer months of 1872, it had the stylish ornamental pointy-arched touches that Arbury Hall's owner and architects helped popularize. In addition, it sat directly on a canal. Similar to the Bermuda branch at Arbury, the Regent's Canal was a working waterway where, like the persona of the "Brother and Sister" sonnets, the residents of the Priory could sit upon a bank and watch as "slowly the barges floated into view" ("Brother and Sister" 1.75). While infinitely more tamed and urbanized, the walks along the canal, across Regent's Park, and up Primrose Hill offered charms similar to the walks to Griff Hollows or across the park to Arbury Hall, walks that Mary Anne Evans had enjoyed as a child of Warwickshire.

After George Henry Lewes's death, George Eliot gave up the Priory, the miniature Arbury that she had shared with him. In 1876 they had broken their pattern of taking summer holidays in the country by buying their own home near Godalming, a large, impressive Surrey building set on a slope, with its own woods and an inspiring view. Here they entertained guests, including the Cross family, and made friends with some of the neighbors. When left a widow, George Eliot continued to spend much of her time in Surrey.

After George Eliot married John Cross, many of the things the new couple did repeated the activities she had shared with Lewes, just as the seaside visits returned her to holiday sites she had earlier visited with her father. Their Continental honeymoon, for example, followed almost the same route through France to Italy that she and Lewes took twenty years earlier. When the Crosses returned, they retreated to Surrey, as the Leweses had in 1871 while their London home was being prepared for them. However, George Eliot's last home in London was not in the neighborhood where she lived from the mid-sixties with Lewes. Instead, the Crosses chose a house in Chelsea, on the banks of the Thames.

The view from Cheyne Walk far eclipses what the Leweses had access to years earlier at the Park Shot lodgings, which, though within easy walking distance, had no view of their own of the river. Nevertheless, rowing on the river figures in the plots of two characters in novels written at widely separate times. The two rowers, Maggie Tulliver and Daniel Deronda, seldom linked or compared, in a way connect two distant sets of living circumstances for George Eliot: her first real home with Lewes at Richmond and her riverbank home in Chelsea.[17] Although George Eliot lived in Chelsea for but a short time in the autumn of 1880, she had at last returned to the river near which she and Lewes had laid the plans so gloriously realized by her career as a novelist as they paced the riverside paths that run from Park Shot to Richmond to Kew.

3 Seasides

Presentiment of better things on earth
Sweeps in with every force that stirs our souls
To admiration, self-renouncing love,
Or thoughts, like light, that bind the world in one:
Sweeps like the sense of vastness, when at night
We hear the roll and dash of waves that break
Nearer and nearer with the rushing tide,
Which rises to the level of the cliff
Because the wide Atlantic rolls behind
Throbbing respondent to the far-off orbs.
George Eliot, "A Minor Prophet"

Aside from the persona of this minor poem "A Minor Prophet," only one of George Eliot's inventions, her character Romola, ever has a scene on a beach within reach of the sea. Nor has she then the poetic persona's time or motivation to pause for a soulful look that might generate memories of a crashing night surf. Driven out of Florence by her own despair, she quickly buys a boat, secures herself a basic sailing lesson, and heads out onto the water, not caring if she lives or dies. Fortunately for the people in the plague village, she lives.

With this exception, most of George Eliot's settings lie inland. Even there, characters seldom get wet by choice. Rivers are to row on or to drown in. Canals are to walk along; the banks of brooks and pools, to play about or to sit on while entertaining serious thoughts. Whereas metaphorical waters abound—the Bunyanesque "river over which there is no bridge" in *The Mill on the Floss* or "Meeting Streams" in *Daniel Deronda*—lakes and waterfalls scarcely exist. Even spas, the most tamed and utilitarian of waters, occur only rarely, and the scene which opens *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot's most famous spa setting, is entirely dry, excluding water by taking place in late afternoon in the gambling casino. The spa created by Mr Jermyn at Treby Magna in *Felix Holt* fails badly because no one comes to take its waters, and it can scarcely be said to be a setting since it closes before the novel's action begins.

Nevertheless, watering places, both inland spas and seasides, attracted George Eliot and Lewes as destinations for their travels throughout their life together. As

with many of the country destinations the couple later interspersed with their seaside visits, the interludes spent on the shores of the English Channel often provided them with a serenity encouraging to the novelist's creativity. In her fiction, despite its general dryness, seaside visits yielded some scattered details of settings and various elements of composite characters over the body of George Eliot's work.

Along the south coast

Marian Evans first started going to the seaside during the late forties, long before she met Lewes. Three seasons in a row she took holidays at fashionable hotels on the south coast of England: at Dover, the Isle of Wight, and St Leonard's. Except for her occasional visits to London, these were her first excursions from the Midlands to the south of England. Her companion, her father Robert Evans, had reached his mid-seventies, with his youngest daughter still unmarried. From 1845 until his death, they holidayed together, and her only journeys without him were made to Sara Hennell's homes in London.

Partly because of the deteriorating health of Robert Evans, his daughter's responsibilities on these holidays were many and her pleasures scattered. Having had to relinquish her exciting and enjoyable journeys with the Brays, Evans found the lonely seaside visits compared unfavorably with her previous high-spirited jaunts full of historic sights and stimulating visits. With her father, walking, reading, regarding the views, and dining occupied most of the days among the parasols and bathing machines. Although the pair traveled in style and participated in many of the recreations described in nineteenth-century guidebooks, the periods away from Coventry did not enlarge the acquaintance of the daughter, now in her late twenties. Her travel with her father separated her from the dangerous free-thinking Brays, and presented her to the summer society as a woman with prospects; but they always set her yearning for the congenial company of her friends at home in Warwickshire, to whom she returned with relief after the holidays at the southern seasides finally came to an end.

While Robert Evans waited passively for his daughter to amuse him, the daughter wrote frequent intense letters back to her friends in Coventry.[1] The father–daughter touring went only slightly better. She complained to her friends that her father called for her constant attention, and then seldom responded pleasantly. On the Isle of Wight in September 1847, they toured the island on a three-day jaunt that took them via Shanklin and Bonchurch all the way to The Needles at the western tip of the island. The daughter loved the colorful cliffs at Alum Bay where stripes of purple, ochre, and deep brick-red sand streak down dramatically in wide veins to the blue water: "It was an enchanted land where the earth is of more delicate, refined materials than this dingy planet of ours is wrought out of. You might fancy the strata formed of the compressed pollen of flowers, or powder from bright insects" (*GEL* 1:239). But the father preferred staying put at Ryde, just across the Solent from the Hampshire mainland.

During the 1840s, Ryde was flourishing. Several publishers put out guidebooks

that described its amenities. They listed hotels, itineraries for island tours, and attractions and facilities, such as the market house and the baths. In 1847, the Evanses could choose from two hotels in Union Street and two opposite the pier (one of these, the Royal Pier, the more likely choice of the pair from Coventry). At any of the hotels they might hire a carriage, a cart, or a gig for a jaunt to Newport or Freshwater (*Mogg's* 1845: 34). Though already paved and gas-lit, the town still presented a pleasantly pastoral picture of tree-covered hills sloping up from the waters. Robert Evans was among the mainlanders who relished the comfort of the Ryde hotels.

But the pride and joy of Ryde was its pier. At the time, sixteen ferry arrivals and departures per day provided amusement for strollers and helped "to while away a day of little employment" (*The Tourist's Guide* 1846: 85). Bordered with a brightly painted iron railing and punctuated by conveniently placed "veranda seats" (85), it stretched from the Royal Pier Hotel and the "noble" ornamental pavilion at its land end to the ferry dock half a mile out in the Solent. Its distance from the land rendered it useful for docking, regardless of the level of the water. According to *Mogg's*, it was "well suited to an invalid" but also "has its attractions also for the healthful and the gay" (85). The utilitarian seaport pier appealed to her father who found it, his daughter reported, "delightfully lazy to walk on" (*GEL* 1:238). Five miles across the Solent, the Hampshire mainland lay at an escapist's reassuring but detached distance.

When intervals of good weather permitted, the younger Evans hoped to bathe in the sea, but often something prevented her. At Ryde, she found the condition of the water itself unappealing: "too dingy at this trafficking place. It looks like an emerald at a distance, but more like a moss agate when you come near to it" (*GEL* 1:238). At St Leonard's, she could not conquer her distaste for the attendants who helped tourists to swim from the bathing machines: "I had a luxurious cold bath this morning—a private one—for there is such a horrid savage of a man who tackles the horses to the machines and the women are such fawning hags that I cannot conquer my repugnance to a bath in the open air" (1:263). Together, the weather, the polluted waters, and the disagreeable staff decided her against the plunges she had anticipated.

In 1847, after the Evanses' circuminsular tour around Wight, the senior Evans so disliked the idea of leaving the comforts of Ryde that even the prospect of a short side trip to Shanklin alarmed his daughter "lest Father should become ennuyé" (1:238). Soon they departed for the mainland where the architecture of Brighton impressed the Warwickshire travelers with splendors that the young woman found unique in her limited travel experience.[2] She wrote to Sara Hennell that "I very much enjoyed the sight of that splendid place, the only one of its kind, I suppose, in England" (*GEL* 1:239).

The following year, at St Leonard's, the seaside holiday became still worse as the younger member of the two-person party fell into a deep depression. The hotel they chose that summer implies that Evans *père* planned their destinations around the possibilities for attractive rooms, rather than deciding on a seaside town and then seeking out a suitable hotel. The splendor of the Victoria Hotel, already the Royal Victoria Hotel because of an 1833–4 visit by the young Princess, reveals that

the Evanses made their summer excursions to the south coast towns in very handsome style, despite the length and rigor of the conditions resulting from the winding route and frequent changes. In mid-May of 1848, the train carried them from Coventry to London and from London to Brighton, where they changed to the Brighton and Hastings Railway, making this part of their "hot and fatiguing" (*GEL* 1:262) jaunt in a little more than three hours. At St Leonards station, omnibuses waited to take visitors to their hotels by the sea.

The west side of St Leonard's had flourished during the late Regency period as one of the projects of the successful London builder, James Burton. About half a mile from Warrior Square, at a spot where the steepness of the seaside cliff subsides enough to yield comfortable passage up and down, he created a cluster of buildings: a few small but gracious residences, a set of assembly rooms, a garden, and a hotel that eventually became the Royal Victoria. All of Burton's buildings have the symmetry, classical touches, and ice-cream colors typical of eighteenth-century architecture. They gather around a square created by the hotel (whose entrance lay on the north, the side away from the sea) and the public assembly rooms. Thus, the Georgian buildings border a little area sheltered from the sea breezes. The back of the hotel, facing the Channel, was freed up for sea views from the guests' rooms.

Seen from the beach, the hotel dominates its surroundings, set off by two courts, Burton's Way and Gardner's Way, which permit glimpses of the small buildings on either side of the main hostelry. In the 1840s, its wings housed private families—at the time of the Evans visit, the family of the Conte de Neuilly. Its six-storey bulk made it a sizable landmark among the lower and humbler buildings that overlooked the Marina Parade to either side. The hotel gained additional visual impact from two flanks of Doric colonnades creating shaded walkways in front of the shops on the land side of the seafront Brighton–Dover highway. Across this road, on the beach, a low Greek-inspired building accommodated not only the baths that Mary Ann Evans frequented, but also Southall's Library, "an establishment of much value to the visitors here" (*Hope's* 1846: 83). With no need to stray far from Burton's St Leonard's, the two visitors from Coventry could stroll, bathe, and look at the sea, and they found a supply of literary resources at the library conveniently placed between the beach and their hotel.

In June of 1848, however, the surroundings could not rescue Mary Ann Evans from her depression. The first week, the rain fell steadily and the cold made her feet ache. Her cantankerous, mortally ill father became even more difficult than he was at Ryde, so that his daughter did not "feel easy in following my own bent even for an hour" (*GEL* 1:263). Reports of the momentous political events in Europe arrived in newspapers only to "make me melancholy" (1:267) because they differed so from "the loathsome fawning, the transparent hypocrisy, the systematic giving as little as possible for as much as possible, that one meets with here at every turn" (1:267). She concludes her letter to her Coventry friends with the dismal comment: "I feel that society is training men and women for hell" (1:267). The promenading visitors at St Leonard's could not please the 29-year-old dutiful daughter from Coventry.

Nor did the magnificent hotel provide any comfort. Indeed, in her bitter letters

to her friends, she chooses specifically architectural and geographical metaphors for her low spirits. Despite the marbled brightness of her physical surroundings, mentally she feels as if she is "grasping" in a "dark, damp vault" (*GEL* 1:264). Rather than the Royal Victoria Hotel in St Leonard's-by-the-Sea, she reports her "address" as "Grief Castle, on the River of Gloom, in the Valley of Dolour" (1:265).[3] Yearning for a soul refreshed by "poetry or religion," which might create "a real ever flowing river," she finds only "an artificial basin, with grotto-work and goldfish" (1:264). The water feature in this description resembles the pool in St Leonard's Subscription Gardens, and anticipates Dorothea Brooke's discovery that during her "marital voyage" she will explore only an "enclosed basin" where "the sea was not within sight" (Ch. 20).[4] Situated on the land side of the Royal Victoria, the pool nestles away from the sea among the contrived rocks and paths of the Gardens. Not until the end of her stay, when the sun finally came out, and she began to recover her spirits, does Evans mention the English Channel on the other side of the Victoria Hotel as anything other than the ultimate destination of the falling rain.

Finally, with the time for departure drawing near, Evans rallied somewhat. As June came to a close, she described to Sara Hennell her condition more optimistically as the "sickly feelings" (*GEL* 1:269) that precede a molting or metamorphosis. She began to find some solace in her nursing, which diminished her sense of "insignificance," and she concludes that "it is blessed to be at hand to give the soothing word and act needed" (1:270). She read a new novel, *Jane Eyre*, and expressed her italicized praise and simultaneous reservations to Charles Bray who had recommended it to her: "The book *is* interesting; only I wish the characters would talk a little less like the heroes and heroines of police reports" (her italics, 1:268). It is in this context of nursing her father at St Leonard's and assessing *Jane Eyre* that she made the observation on which many readers have focused when they attempt to interpret *The Mill on the Floss*: "All self-sacrifice is good" (1:268).[5]

After the travelers returned to Coventry in July, Evans's spirits rose still further. Meeting Ralph Waldo Emerson at Rose Hill, she enjoyed his approval and described him in a letter in italics as "the first *man* I have ever seen" (*GEL* 1:270). Perhaps Emerson benefited a good deal in her opinion because of his appreciation of her intelligence and substance (Haight 1968: 65–6), as well as from the unlikelihood that the transcendental American would fit in among the society at the Royal Victoria Hotel any better than she had during the seaside visit from which she had just returned.

Summer of '53: starting off in Surrey

Although the seaside holidays with her father yielded young Marian Evans only the spottiest of pleasures, they did introduce her to destinations she remembered favorably in later years. During her single life as editor of the *Westminster Review*, she left London for periodic visits to Warwickshire, but also managed to spend some parts of her summers at the coast. When she began traveling with Lewes, she eventually returned for at least a week or two to all three places where she holidayed with her

father in the late forties: Dover, the Isle of Wight, and St Leonard's. Indeed, Haight believes that she and Lewes fell completely and seriously in love at St Leonard's in July of 1853.

That summer, Evans began her holidays in uncertainty. She had had a horrible spring, much of it staying with her friends in Coventry, but only for health reasons. With a cough she could not get rid of, she remained in Warwickshire for weeks at a time (*GEL* 2:100). Then, Bessie Parkes and Barbara Leigh Smith invited her to join them for an interval in the Surrey village of Ockley, located about an hour south of London by train, with an additional ten miles or so of road tacked onto the distance. In late June, when Sara Hennell's expectations of a holiday in Whitby fell through, Evans moved quickly to see that Hennell was included in the plans. On 28 June 1853, she wrote to both Parkes and Leigh Smith, already installed at the King's Arms Inn, to clear the inclusion of Hennell. To her Coventry friend she wrote, "Pack up your trunk and come to London on Friday" (*GEL* 2:106). She expected that Leigh Smith's Aunt Julia, also of the party, would get along especially well with Hennell because Julia Smith was aunt to the Bonham-Carter children, too, and Hennell cherished her memories and the friendships formed when she worked as their governess. Evans added encouragement by suggesting to her Midlands friend the possibility of a visit to the Crystal Palace on the way to or from Ockley.

The highly literary group that eventually assembled in the tiny Surrey village that summer included five women and a man, John Chapman, and most of them were, or soon became, authors of poetry, fiction, or non-fiction prose. During the time that had passed since Elizabeth Tilley and Susanna Chapman joined to eject the woman *Westminster Review* editor from 142 Strand, Evans had warmed to Susanna, and so both Chapman and his wife journeyed from London Bridge Station with the two Warwickshire friends, Evans and Hennell. They arrived at Dorking in the early evening, and Bessie Parkes met them at the train with the horse and cart that provided their transportation in and around Ockley. As the July daylight lingered, the cart carried them the ten miles south to their quarters in the King's Arms Inn at the northern tip of the elongated village green in Ockley.

Leigh Smith and Parkes had experience traveling together, notably on a European jaunt made without chaperonage the year before, and they had created a restful but industrious routine at Ockley. The watercolorist brought her painting equipment and carried it with her on outdoor excursions, as on their mandatory jaunts in the cart up Leith Hill, where she painted the tall firs on the hilltop. Parkes was preparing her volume of poetic *Summer Sketches*. She found local inspiration in the landscape and in the life of a local figure—Jane Scott, the woman founder of the school across the green from their inn.

Beginning with breakfast with Julia Smith at 8.30, the two younger members of the party filled the more leisurely portions of their days with reading Gervinus, Keats, and Ruskin, walking among the dandelions of the casually-tended fields, riding in the cart, and engaging in serious or playful talk. They ended them with meals together in their upstairs rooms, where they could hear from below the

voices of the village men who gathered for their evening ale in the bar of the inn or, weather permitting, outside on the edge of the green.

Parkes's *Summer Sketches* suggest that the three women at the King's Arms took pride in their independence and a subversive pleasure in imagining the effects were the villagers to learn of their politics. When the persona of the poems (Parkes) writes to her London correspondent (Evans) requesting that she post her some of the more radical newspapers, she creates a collusive tone: "I write whisperingly among/These woods the very flowers are Tory" (Parkes 1854: 28). From London, "Helen" forwards the most radical publications she can find, then cautions the persona against cherishing too-precipitous hopes for social and cultural change.

The inn at the narrow tip of the green made a quiet and inviting destination for the party that arrived from London on 2 July 1853. A few red-tiled houses, some of them more than two hundred years old, lay scattered about the perimeter of the green. From their front windows, the hard-working holidaymakers looked across the way at the lopsided triangle of Leith Hill, the highest point in Surrey, topped by a battlemented folly. Behind the inn, a prim garden provided a pretty view as well as a supply of foxgloves and gillyflowers to place in rustic jugs as decoration for the rooms the women leased (1). To the garden flowers they added ferns they found on Leith Hill, the most famous local tourist spot, visited by numerous important nineteenth-century authors (including, in 1861, Herbert Spencer and George Henry Lewes). The dandelion-covered green itself undulated gently downward and southwesterly from the inn, creating an invitation to its residents to walk out. The green widened the view for the visitors from the city and made a pleasant contrast with the pines, heather, and bilberries covering the slopes of Leith Hill.

If anything troubled Evans during the days of reading, writing, rambles on the hill, and talking with the stimulating members of this historic group, it was her uncertainty about the rest of the summer. She considered several options. She had already turned down George Combes who wanted her to join their family in Switzerland, and Haight believes she did this because she did not want to go too far away from Lewes at a crucial point in their relationship (Haight 1968: 133). She considered remaining in the utter quietude of Ockley. In early July she still had no firm plans for involving her untested romance in her holidays.

Meanwhile, the arrival of Chapman and his wife along with Evans and Hennell changed the character of the women's utopia that had so pleased Bessie Parkes. Leigh Smith was beginning each day with a visit to the rose border behind the low wall next door, where she gathered blooms to pin into her red-gold hair. Parkes makes these roses an affectionate leitmotif of the character Ella in *Summer Sketches*, and describes Stane Street as the "rose-fringed lane" (Parkes 1854: 10).

Among the roses, Chapman and Leigh Smith began to draw together. The following year they worked together preparing her *Brief Summary of the Laws Concerning Women* for publication on his press. Two years after the summer at Ockley, their exchange of loving letters was well underway, and Chapman began waging his campaign to make Leigh Smith his mistress. If the exclusively female society at the King's Arms helped initiate the relationship between Leigh Smith

and Chapman, and preceded a romantic interlude for Evans and Lewes, then Parkes's women's utopia did not deter its members from seeking exciting romantic relationships with men.

In mid-July, the larger part of the group disbanded and left Ockley. The Chapmans returned to London, Sara Hennell went back to Coventry, Bessie Parkes and the others set out for Bournemouth. Evans, still at a loose end, returned to the Strand for two weeks while she planned the second part of her summer. She decided to begin in a venue with an ambiance completely opposite to the industrious pastoralism of rural Ockley—the fashionable bustle of summer at Tunbridge Wells. Meanwhile, Parkes had finished some of her Ockley poem for which she sought Evans's opinion. On 12 July 1853, Evans responded: "I will read as many verses of your 'Poem preparing for the press' as you like to send me. Miss Hennell and I were heartily amused by your specimen" (*GEL* 2:109).

Parkes's *Sketches* begin with her departure from London Bridge Station, a setting which gives the poet the opportunity to reflect on some of her social concerns, in particular the condition of London children. She continues to express social concerns in her paean to "Jane Scott," founder of the Ockley school. As the poem goes on, however, Parkes's descriptions of life in Ockley suggest scenes in George Eliot's early fiction, notably *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss*.

Parkes's poem observes that, even in quiet Ockley, outsiders occasionally turn up. She mentions John Wesley's arrival there, not personally, as he was long dead, but in the form of pamphlets sent down from London (Parkes 1854: 10), and, although I can find no evidence that Wesley ever preached in Ockley, he began his three-day-long death with a sermon in Leatherhead, not far away to the north. The scene of Methodists gathering on a village green while a group of critical men look on from a nearby inn creates, in *Adam Bede*, a situation reminiscent of Ockley, and the responses of the women in the upstairs rooms at the King's Arms could have contributed to some of the narrator's satiric descriptions of the exchanges among the drinkers. A number of readers have speculated on the origins of the authenticity of George Eliot's public-house scenes.[6] A position at an upper window on a summer night in a small village would have provided her access to good examples of the rhythms of public-house discourse without obliging her to join the company. Indeed, six years later, when Leigh Smith (then Barbara Bodichon) became the only reader who immediately identified her friend as the author of *Adam Bede* (on the basis of passages she read in an unnamed newspaper together with the *Times*), she may have been surmising from memories of their shared experiences at Ockley as much as from the wisdom she claimed to recognize in the writing. The review in the *Times* for the appropriate date does excerpt the opening public house-on-the-green setting, making the Methodist connection through the preaching by Dinah Morris.

A second resonant couplet from *Summer Sketches* describes the visits of packmen from the North: "sunburnt pedlars with a bale/Of cotton, silk and wool for sale" (10). Procuring their wares in the manufacturing regions, they "bring Paisley, Leeds and Bolton here/And—charge commission very dear!" (10). Presumably such peddlers would regard a group of six women on holiday at the King's Arms as a promising set of potential customers. In *The Mill on the Floss*, Bob Jakin describes

how peddlers would often stop at a similar houseful of women: the maiden home of the young Dodson sisters. When Bob tempts Mrs Glegg with the goods in his pack, he revives her memories of dealings with the peddlers from whom the sisters were buying fabrics for clothing and table linen as they equipped themselves as well-furnished brides for the prudent young men of St Ogg's. Bob remembers the Dodson house accurately and describes it flatteringly: "Th' handsome young lasses all stannin' out on the stone steps" (Book 5, Ch. 2). Even if only one or two of the holidaymakers at Ockley purchased from the peddlers Parkes refers to in *Summer Sketches*, the stop at the King's Arms rewarded their efforts. As Northerners, the peddlers' working-class idiom, like the idiom of the village drinkers, provided a good model for dialog of characters infrequent in the more usual day-to-day experience of the London-based future novelist. Finally, in 1871, George Eliot paid tribute to one of the Ockley party, Leigh Smith's Aunt Julia, by assigning her name to Will Ladislaw's grandmother. As Dorothea's marriage deteriorates, she takes consolation from the miniature portrait of Casaubon's Aunt Julia because she sympathizes with the troubles of the bride disinherited because she chose to marry a poor man. The little portrait helps sustain Dorothea during the emotional struggles with herself that take place in her boudoir at Lowick Manor.

In love in St Leonard's

When Evans left Ockley, she still had not decided to go to the seaside. In the end, five years after the miserable month with her father at the Royal Victoria, she returned to St Leonard's, where her 1853 letters form a diametrical contrast with those written in 1848. Instead of severe depression in which she found "the hard, angular world of chairs and tables and looking-glasses staring … in all its naked prose" (*GEL* 1:142), she reports that "I find life very glorious" (2:115). This elation (which partly accounts for Haight's conclusion about Lewes's presence there) could not contrast more strongly with her state of mind during the earlier seaside experience in the same spot.

When the Ockley party disbanded, Evans decided to return to St Leonards only after a week in London and an intervening period in Tunbridge Wells. At the Strand, on Tuesday 12 July she was still considering joining the remaining members of the Surrey group on the next stage of their travels, which was to carry them inland toward Stonehenge. She wrote to Bessie Parkes about the possibility: "Would Bournemouth be any less pleasant to you for my being in it, supposing I felt in want of the neighborhood of dear, brave women friends?" (*GEL* 2:109). But two days later something had determined her in favor of Tunbridge Wells. In her letter to Parkes, she attempts to laugh off her capriciousness: "Why *will* you go to out-of-the-way places to which the Railway makes serpentine lines through all manner of country?" (her italics, 2:109). She decided to make the shorter journey to Sussex and, in doing so, remained closer to London.

Installed in the fashionable Pelham House on the Pantiles in Tunbridge Wells, Evans still was not completely satisfied: "I came to this place yesterday, wishing to keep inland for a little while. A very beautiful place it is, but so dear—this being the

fashionable season for it—that I don't think I can stay. There are plenty of Blanche Amorys and other worldliness about, but they are too insignificant to spoil one's impression of the large, free beauty nature has all round here. The greatest drawback is the fact of having to pay two guineas a week for two rooms. Ockley would have been better after all" (*GEL* 2:110). The Wells routine called for a morning dipperful of water from the Chalybeate Spring on Bath Square, followed by a walk on the Pantiles, the two levels of parallel walks edged with colonnades and ideal only for the most moderate strolling. But Evans did not begin to enjoy herself until she started to choose her walks outside the town.

In 1853, Tunbridge Wells Common, to the west of the Pantiles, boasted a sweeping horse-racing track that cut a broad circular path through the beech trees, and its occasional dramatic outcroppings of rock along the slope attracted many Victorian visitors, especially those equipped with cameras. At its northeastern corner, the Common rises uphill toward Mt Ephraim and, as it narrows to a point, its rocky shelves become flat ledges ample enough to support houses and also to create intriguing caves and niches behind and beneath. Evans liked to take this northward walk past Thackeray's house, Rock Villa (and her Blanche Amory reference proves that she was thinking of Thackeray at the time) in the direction of the village of Southborough which offered her "smooth-shaven green and wooded slopes and nothing ugly within sight or hearing" (2:110).[7] At this point in the summer, she described herself as "jolly; much the better for the air of this lovely place, which is growing into my affections" (2:110).

At the same time, she was not completely settled in. Since her 1848 holiday, a new railway line had gone through to St Leonard's and Hastings. It sliced southward through Sussex and offered direct access to the seacoast without the necessity for traveling through Brighton as she had with her father. She wrote to her friends of her comfort in Tunbridge Wells, but also of her uncertainty: "I am rather longing for some sea-breezes however and may run off to Hastings or St Leonard's which lie temptingly in a line with the station here" (2:110). As July turned to August, she yielded to the temptation, and the Hastings train carried her through banks of fern and flowers and across the historic battlefield to the town where she had suffered so severely five years before with her father.

Evans's experiences in St Leonard's help support Haight's belief that Lewes joined her at least sporadically there, and that they then committed themselves to each other with an intensity both serious and joyful (Haight 1968:134). On her arrival, she chose as lodgings Park Cottage on West Hill Road, which rises from the little square formed by the hotel and the public rooms. Soon she began writing to Coventry about her health and happiness: "I am going on as well as possible physically—really getting stout" (*GEL* 2:113). Nevertheless she was considering a move to other lodgings, specifically to lodgings closer to the spa facilities.[8] She explains her move to John Chapman as an act of generosity toward her landlady, Miss Wilkinson, at Park Cottage: "she has an opportunity of getting some permanent boarders, and I begged her not to put them off and run the risk of losing them on my account" (*GHLL* 3:32). Meanwhile, she was conquering her lingering cough and praising the warm weather.

After the move, she continued to thrive. Again in contrast to 1848, the sea contributed to her improvement. She bathed as often as she could and reported feeling "regenerated by baptism." She comments that, though her frequent dips go against the advice of a physician friend, "I am enjoying the sea extremely and find that, in spite of Sir J. Clark, it is just what I wanted" (*GEL* 2:114). On 9 August 1853, she writes to her friends about sitting on the beach and reading the *Coventry Herald* while laughing aloud at the jokes Charles Bray slipped into his newspaper. Happily, she picked up the comparisons the hotel keepers of St Leonard's liked to establish between Italy and the south coast of England: "This British Channel really looks as blue as the Mediterranean today" (2:113). And she goes on to mention another pleasurable activity: "Beer drinking! This latter sacrament I have taken to for the last week and find it very efficacious" (2:113). If Lewes had arrived to offer her his company at St Leonard's, his presence would account for her contentment, her vigorous enjoyment of the seaside, and her suddenly beginning to drink "efficacious" beer.

The move, too, makes more sense if Lewes visited. It took her to Spa Cottage, part of the complex created by Emil Grosslob just west of the Victoria Hotel. Grosslob's spa offered chalybeate waters advertised in *Hope's Pictorial Guide to Hastings and St Leonards*. Its components—chlorides of sodium, potassium, magnesium; carbonates of magnesia, sulphate and lime, "protoxide of iron, and silics"—had been analyzed by a London physician and listed in *Hope's*, along with testimonials and the assertion: "The action on the system is mildly laxative and tonic, correcting also acidity of the stomach, and is likely to be a valuable adjunct to the usual means of cure for many of those invalids who here seek restoration to health" (*Hope's*: 40–1). Like Evans, Lewes had been suffering from frequent illnesses and was in need of such remedies. St Leonard's offered the therapies of Tunbridge Wells and the seaside life as well.

The Spa provided another resource for Lewes, in that Grosslob, as Evans reports, claimed acquaintance with important German compatriots, specifically Schiller and Goëthe. Haight attaches considerable significance to this detail because Lewes was that summer in the process of writing his biography of Goethe: "One wonders whether she was reading Goëthe's works or whether his chief English exponent George Henry Lewes may not have been there occasionally, walking on the beach with her in the evening, giving her 'the look and the hand of warm affection' she craved so much" (Haight 1968: 134). When Evans and Lewes eloped to Germany the following summer, they chose their destinations to contribute to his Goëthe project. Meanwhile, when Evans returned to London in September she sought greater privacy, freedom, and independence in her circumstances—all, according to Haight, conducive to the continuing affair—by moving out of 142 Strand to take lodgings in Bayswater, just north of Hyde Park.

The Freudianism Haight elsewhere attributes to Evans's replacement of her father with her lover (1968: 135) surfaces as well in the contrast between the 1848 and 1853 summers in St Leonard's. The view from West Hill Road overlooks Burton's smaller buildings, the highway, the sea, and the Royal Victoria Hotel, the

loci of her earlier visit. Nearly suicidal with depression during that first holiday visit, she felt invigorated and joyful during the second one. Within sight of the hotel where she depended on her father's financial support, endured his taxing demands, and failed to fascinate the other guests, she later flourished in her relationship with Lewes. The contrast makes for a happy closure of a romantic narrative, and suggests that the pair fell conclusively in love in a seaside setting in the month of July 1853.

Eight years later, in 1861, Lewes and George Eliot, by this time a well-received novelist, spent ten days at Hastings, a town to the east of St Leonard's. They had one breezy day, then a far too windy day, then a delightful day for a stroll on the sands. Lewes's journal summarizes a visit to St Leonard's on that March Friday, but without any romantic nostalgia: "Up at 7. Read Bright, and went out for a delicious stroll on the beach, listening to the Band, and chatting. We then went up to Polly's old lodging and saw the old German, a Weimaraner who remembered Goëthe & Schiller, both of whom were kind to him as a boy" (22 March 1861). Lewes's tone here invites caution. He specifies Grosslob's establishment as "*Polly's* old lodging" (my italics, 22 March 1861) and refers to the anecdotes about Goëthe and Schiller as if he might be hearing them for the first time. At the same time, Lewes's journal tone is seldom enthusiastic and does not reveal conclusively either way whether he had met Grosslob eight years before during a momentous interlude in the history of the couple's relationship. Haight, moreover, believes that Lewes showed up only occasionally in St Leonard's and thus need not have stayed at Grosslob's (1968: 134). In either case, the journal does not commit itself, but sustains the probability of the couple's happiness together in St Leonard's, whether continuous or sporadic.

In addition to the sea and the spa, St Leonard's offered other attractive activities for adventuresome lovers. Beyond St Leonard's lay Hastings, with its castle, priory, and a set of caves often frequented by naturalists. Nearby, there were the gardens and the beach and a dramatic view of a shipwrecked vessel, the Amsterdam, off to the west. Just behind West Hill Road, the Royal St Leonard's Archers met to compete on the Archery Ground, "tastefully laid out in similar style to the Subscription Gardens, and having in the centre a lawn and butts for the exercise of the noble pastime" (*Hope's* 1846: 41). In describing the group as "a distinguished and select body, having as patrons, Her Most Gracious Majesty, and her August mother, the Duchess of Kent" (40–1), *Hope's Pictorial Guide* anticipates the adjective applied to the archers in *Daniel Deronda* when Mr Gascoigne is introducing his niece to the archery club in the neighborhood to which she and her family have just moved. Like the St Leonard's Archers, the Wessex group is, according to Gwendolen's uncle, "the most select thing anywhere" (Ch. 3). As in *Deronda*, the St Leonard's archers gained prizes and could join the group only through introduction of a member. Although of course archers practiced their popular sport in many locations frequented by Evans and Lewes over the years, the guidebook description of the fashionable club at St Leonard's matches the adjective she applies to archery in a novel begun twenty years afterward.

Ilfracombe

Sometime in 1853, George Henry Lewes determined to become a respected scientist, a determination that turned him toward scientific rather than biographical authorship (Ashton 1991: 147). Stung by Thomas Henry Huxley's review of *Comte's Philosophy of Science* in the *Westminster Review* (which Evans tried to suppress), Lewes decided to commit himself to fieldwork, microscopy, and dissection. Living with Evans in Richmond Green, he planned excursions to the seaside that would provide him with plenty of saltwater organisms. This work would make up his contribution to marine biology, and anticipate his later physiologically-based inquiries into human psychology.

Evans entered into his plans with spirit. Because she did journalistic work that she could complete pretty much anywhere, she had no reason to stay in town while Lewes roamed; but she went further. While he laid his plans, she selected clothing in which she could join him in his scavenging and prepared herself for climbing, wading, and boating trips accompanying him. Together, they shopped for baskets and vials to accommodate the specimens they hoped to gather. She also shared his preparations by taking her turn reading aloud about science during their quiet evenings.

Without question, their first stop was their best. Ilfracombe lies on the north coast of Devonshire overlooking the Bristol Channel. They arrived there on Friday 9 May 1856, by way of Windsor, Bristol, Exeter, and Barnstaple, where they left the railway and completed the last few miles by coach. Evans's "Recollections of Ilfracombe" describes their arrival as disorienting. She admits that when she alighted from the coach, she still had no idea in which direction lay the sea (H&J 263).

Because Ilfracombe High Street extends parallel with the seafront along the first ridge above the water, its location *vis-à-vis* the surrounding hills, some of which they had just crossed by coach, accounts for Evans's disorientation. The hills extend far out into the water on either side of the town, hence all its streets, whether looking toward sea or land, end in views of the surrounding slopes. In addition, the Capstone hill, the centerpiece of Ilfracombe geographically and aesthetically, further blocks off the view of the sea. Halfway between the harbor on the east and the tunnels to the sands on the west, this perennial tourist attraction divides the waterfront into two sides, so that to view an uninterrupted sweep of the channel one must climb the Capstone itself. It compensates by offering a rare point from which to look from the sea toward the town's seafront.

Evans and Lewes made the climb around the Capstone one of the first things they did. As to lodgings, the couple planned to follow the recommendation made by Philip Gosse in his 1853 *Rambles on the Devonshire Coast*. Northfield, his choice, lay along one of the streets heading down the hill from the High Street to the water. In keeping with their generally negative estimate of Gosse's work, the Leweses disliked the recommendation of their predecessor, and instead found Runnymede Cottage nearby. Situated in their lodgings just above the sea to the west of the Capstone, they came to know the jumbled seafront below, cove by cove. At the foot of their little hill, they found the spot where a small stream, the Wilder, flows into the bay, and a tiny

beach becomes accessible at low tide. Otherwise, at high tide, the couple could gather specimens near their lodgings by groping their way through the dark tunnels that permit the only other access to the margins of the water.

They began their stay that first evening with a grope through these tunnels. The passage permitted them to come out on the sands with a view of the waters amid which wedge-shaped brown rocks rise sharply from the waves and lean into the strong sea breezes. In "raptures" (H&J 264), they stopped only to gather a few shells and then retired for the night. The following day, a sunny Sunday, began with a promenade in the garden of their villa and a walk to the harbor. They climbed the Capstone on pathways installed at considerable expense to attract visitors. First impressions left them a poor opinion of the buildings of the town, grey and "factory like" (H&J 264). But to either side of the built-up area, knobbly hills invited walkers up for inspiring views that they came to love. Behind the town, the tors also appealed to walkers, but since an entrance fee was required, the couple seldom climbed there.

George Eliot's "Recollections of Ilfracombe" describes walks across the nearby hills in great detail—the flowering furze and primroses, the hillside springs, the cows, a donkey, a "sociable" pig (H&J 271), and the occasional meeting with a person. Its descriptive specificity, full of colors, textures, and incidents, contributes more to *Sea-side Studies* than to George Eliot's fiction. Indeed, the length of this passage from Evans's journal prompts Harris and Johnston to describe it as "a rare (if not unique) instance in which their collaboration can be documented" (261). In the fiction, on the other hand, traces of Ilfracombe are few, even though their first friend, the zoologizing curate Mr Tugwell, makes an attractive model for Mr Farebrother in *Middlemarch*. Their other Ilfracombe naturalist acquaintance, William John Broderip, is directly mentioned in *The Mill on the Floss* when the narrator compares Mr Stelling's pedagogy and the upstoppable dam-building tendencies of Binny, "Mr Broderip's amiable beaver" (Book 2, Ch. 1). *Adam Bede* also shows a little bit of Ilfracombe. Their neighbor's dog, Gyp, who accompanied them on walks, contributed his name to the carpenter's dog, a useful beast who provides more than companionship to Adam. He does his bit as a worker by carrying the carpenter's tools in a basket as Adam proceeds on foot from job to job.

Peace in the Crimea yielded another detail for *Adam Bede*. The festivities on 29 May 1856 included a maypole "of coloured streamers floating among boughs of laburnum" (H&J 269), refreshments at teatime in the High Street, races afterward, and bonfires on the tors in the evening. Evans's description of the boys' foot-races anticipates an event during Arthur Donnithorne's birthday celebration. The "Recollections" describe how "the melancholy foot-races of the boys suggested the idea that they were conducted on the principle of the donkey races—the slowest boy winning" (H&J 270). In the novel, actual donkey races are "conducted on the grand socialistic idea of everybody encouraging everybody else's donkey, and the sorriest donkey winning" (Ch. 25). The donkey race forms the climax to the series of afternoon games at Donnithorne Castle.

Most of all, the interlude at Ilfracombe confirmed the mutuality of the couple's professional interests, and set the pattern for future seaside working holidays.

During the summer of 1856, George Eliot undertook writing projects that biographers have long believed led to the commencement of her fiction writing. Lewes followed up his naturalism for many successive trips and sustained his correspondence with Tugwell. After Ilfracombe, they began a series of attempts to find a seaside they liked as well, unsuccessfully. Beginning with Tenby, their next destination, nothing was ever quite so good as the jumbled seafront, the knobbly hills, and the accumulation of good work they enjoyed in Ilfracombe.

To Tenby: cockles and molluscs

Evans and Lewes could look out from Ilfracombe over the Bristol Channel on clear days and see their next destination on the south coast of Wales, but they did not take a steamer that made a direct crossing. Rather, on Thursday, 26 June 1856, they traveled to Swansea by boat and then took the railway to Narberth Road. On the subject of their three-hour wait at Swansea, Evans's journal abandons any traveler's determination to remain cheerful: "Swansea looked dismal and smelled detestably" (H&J 273). In "Recollections of Ilfracombe," she converts the wait into a seaside set piece, her descriptive sketch of a Welsh fisherwoman, a popular subject for nineteenth-century visitors to the coast. Whether written about in prose or poetry, sketched or painted in pictures, or composed and printed as photography, women who gathered and sold fish appealed to Victorian artists. Like many other sentimentalized versions of the seaside working women, Evans's cockle woman has majesty of stature, dignity, and great strength.

After the long wait, Evans and Lewes proceeded by rail to Narberth Road. All the travel handbooks of the era insist that the Narberth–Tenby journey was made in perfect comfort. One guide praises the South Wales Railway: "now open from Gloucester to the Narberth Road Station, thirteen miles from Tenby; at this station well-appointed coaches convey the traveler with ease and celerity to the end of his journey" (*Guide to the Town of Tenby* 1856: 108). At the station, drivers from the various hotels passed among the new arrivals to locate passengers booked for the Coburg, the White Horse, the White Lion, the Albion, or the Commercial. Their coach set down the Leweses at the White Horse Hotel.

Evans immediately looked around to confirm her fond memories of the Tenby holiday she took with her Coventry–Hackney friends and Rufa Brabant in 1843. She found many new houses and "smarter shops" (*GEL* 2:255), and she recalled specific jokes by (and on) Charles Bray during the holiday there with her friends at the age of 24. With Rufa Brabant and Charles Hennell falling more in love by the day, and all the others along for the ride, 1843 at the seaside had been a romp of larking on the beach, going promenading, climbing the cliffs, and participating in the social life. But the mature Leweses had much more industrious objectives than the youthful holidaymakers, and no walk of theirs went forth without purpose. Everywhere they rambled, Lewes kept his eyes open for useful specimens.

Unusually among Welsh ports and seaside resorts, Tenby faces east. Enclosed within medieval walls on its squared-off landside perimeters, the rest of the nineteenth-century town spilled out onto a triangular peninsula bracketed by sandy

beaches on the north and south. On the east, at the apex of the triangle, a wide isthmus connects the town with Castle Hill, attached to Tenby like an oval pendant lying sideways out in Carmarthan Bay. The north shore of the isthmus, together with the beach-cliff of the town on the west and a stone quay on the east, creates the little square three-sided harbor, completely dry sand at low tide, in the nineteenth century a busy site of departures and arrivals when full of water.

Evans hoped to stay in "the very same house" (*GEL* 2:255) she and her friends occupied as young Midlanders at the seaside thirteen years before. Finding it already let, the couple settled on 2 Bridge Street nearby. A convenient and charming location, not too close to the fashionable hotels ranged on the cliff above the North Beach, part of Bridge Street overlooks the little square harbor where the cove had more the atmosphere of a fishing village than a seaside promenade. The one tourist attraction in the near neighborhood was Castle Hill, just opposite, where the stony ruin and the bandstand attracted strollers from the fancier hotels for its views of the sea and for musical performances in the evenings. Lewes objected to these obtrusive concerts with their faulty technique and limited repertoire of, he asserts in *Sea-side Studies*, a total of four pieces: "Partant pour la Syrie," "The Low-backed Car," "The Red and the Blue," and "God Save the Queen." Later, George Eliot praised Whitby because (unlike Tenby) she visited it when it had no German band.

Their first week in Tenby, the couple went to bed to the sound of the slapping water and awoke to bright sunrises that promised well for their scavenging (H&J 61–2). Each morning that week they gathered their baskets and jars and descended the Bridge Street hill to the isthmus. Here they would bear right, away from the promontory occupied by the castle, and farther downhill toward the South Sands. As they approached South Gate, they could see the rocky, grassy level peak of St Catherine's Island just ahead through the stone archway. Beyond St Catherine's, and beyond the tides, lay Caldey, a larger and more significant island where Cistercian monks maintained their abbey. On either side of the archway, parked on the sands, bathing machines invited customers to bathe in the sea—indeed, local law forbade any bathing on the nearby beaches *sans* machine.

At high tide in Tenby, the waters of the Bristol Channel completely surround St Catherine's Island, but at low tide they recede enough so that the Leweses could approach the imposing island on firm footing across sands strewn with shells and punctuated by winding tidal pools. The high slitted entrances to the caverns, which pierce all the way through to the other side of the pudding-shaped island, yawn one after the other along its sides. Caldey, on the other hand, lies farther out in the water and always required a boat trip, an excursion to which Evans looked forward from the beginning of their stay (*GEL* 2:256).

Lewes found scientific riches in the tunnels of St Catherine's. Philip Gosse describes the wealth of organisms clinging to the walls outside and inside:

> The sides of this fissure afford plenty of entertainment to the naturalist. The white shells of the Dogwinkle (*Purpura lapillus*) stud the rocky walls both within and without, in hundreds, and multitudes of the elegant vase-like egg capsules

> of the same species may be seen clustered about. The Smooth Anemone (*Actinia masembryanthemum*) is also scattered over the bristling point, and adhering to the walls, glossy and plump, like some ripe pulpy fruit, tempting the eye and the mouth.
>
> (Gosse 1856: 23)

Climbing over rocks at the entrances and wading through the clear pools within, Evans and Lewes marveled at the plenitude of the crusty covering of the cavern walls.[9] As the first sunny week at Tenby came to an end, however, small mishaps, spotty weather, and attacks of headaches began to modify their pleasure. Their arrival direct from Ilfracombe and the nature of Lewes's project called for comparisons that slighted Tenby in favor of their recent venue in Devon. In *Sea-side Studies* Lewes calls the Welsh town "a charming spot" although "the overpowering sense of disappointment assured me that Ilfracombe *was* the enchantress she had seemed" (his italics, *SSS* 5). Tenby, he goes on to assert, looks good only "under certain lights and from certain positions" (6). He finds it colorless, with "pale dingy grey houses," and the lines of it "are all rectangular and mean" (6). He dislikes the fashion and frivolity of the guests at the hotels, calling the men Bristol gentry and reducing the women metonymically to "flounces and shaved poodles" (6). He compares the ranges of hotels along the cliffs to factories that mar the slope of the green hill.

Sea-side Studies contains further hints of unsmooth times at Tenby. Adopting the tone of the tired, discommoded traveler, Lewes registers his complaints in his work-in-progress. Although full of hotels, Tenby lacks conveniences, he finds. Doing his banking requires a trip to Pembroke, and he makes quite a little comedy out of his attempt to locate suitable containers for mailing marine specimens to Tugwell in Ilfracombe. By Saturday, he had somehow hurt his foot. The following day, a sunny Sunday, his sick headache reduced his pleasure in the bright weather. Toward the end of their stay, Evans again joins him in describing the town negatively: "tame and vulgar" (*GEL* 2:259), and again in comparison with Ilfracombe. The unevenness of tone in these descriptions suggests that the couple were enduring emotional ups and downs.

Evans and Lewes had two visitors at Tenby. Barbara Leigh Smith arrived on 12 July 1855. Like Edward Pigott, their second guest, she had some family motives for coming to Tenby, where she planned to visit her father's oldest sister, Patty Smith. Five years previously when the young painter's eyesight became fragile, her father recruited his older sister to keep her from reading or painting. According to Pam Hirsch, "This duty hardly endeared her to her niece, who found six weeks of Aunt Patty, unrelieved by her usual pursuits, almost more than she could bear" (1999: 35). Like her sister Julia a single woman, Patty Smith was the oldest of the Smith aunts, seventeen years older than the young aunt who shared the holiday at Ockley in 1853.

Leigh Smith had written to Ilfracombe to suggest a stop there, but the plans did not work out. Persistently, she revised her destination and followed the Leweses to Wales. This flexibility indicates that the visit to her aunt she fitted in at Tenby did

not form her major objective, and that she was determined to see Evans. When she arrived on Saturday and checked into the Coburg Hotel, her worn-out appearance startled the Leweses (Haight 1968: 205).

Since the week they spent together in Ockley, Leigh Smith had remained busy both artistically and politically. She continued, of course, to paint, and her *Brief Summary of the Laws Concerning Women* appeared the following year, eliciting strong and often negative responses from the Victorian critics.[10] She also circulated her petition in support of the Married Women's Property Act, an effort that prompted her to contact the friends with whom she had shared the Surrey portion of her 1853 summer travel. Evans signed the petition and afterward expressed undiluted admiration for Leigh Smith's political activities on behalf of women's rights (*GEL* 2:211).

In the two years since the shared Ockley holiday, Leigh Smith had also fallen in love with the only male member of the Surrey party, to whom Evans herself had been romantically attached in 1851.

Haight's book on *George Eliot and John Chapman*, noting the timing of Leigh Smith's visit, suggests that a main motivation for the journey to Tenby was her need to talk freely to someone who knew her lover and his theories and practices regarding relations between the genders. Two years after the Ockley interlude, Chapman and his wife had moved to Blandford Square near Regent's Park, the very same square where Leigh Smith lived, and where Evans and Lewes were to move in 1860. At one point, the reassembly of the Ockley party in Blandford Square also included the introduction of Julia Smith as a boarder with the Chapman family. Since 1853, some members of the group had thus drawn closer and recombined geographically as well as emotionally.

Despite the continuation of his marriage, Chapman's love for Barbara Leigh Smith moved him to make elaborate and unrealistic plans to include her in his future.[11] Excitedly, he decided that she should come to live with him and in this way achieve physical health, passionate happiness, and, eventually, motherhood. As Smith demurred, he pressed his case, citing Lewes and Evans as examples of nonmarital felicity. He also anticipated that Leigh Smith's family, partly because her father and mother never married, might raise no objections to his ideas.

But Leigh Smith's family raised strong objections. Both her father and her brother Ben were horrified that she would even consider Chapman's plans. Intense discussions followed as Leigh Smith confronted her father, her brother, and her lover in turn. When she at last gave Chapman up, she also made the unpleasant discovery that she not only had to form her resolution, she had to maintain it. Leigh Smith did not seek Evans's advice immediately after the collapse of her dangerous romance, and the interval between the rejection of Chapman's proposal and her confiding conversations with her friend indicates that she still suffered from temptations. The previous year, when the renegade Evans–Lewes pair returned from Germany, Leigh Smith wrote Evans "a sympathetic letter" (Haight 1968: 204). A year later, she rightly expected encouragement in her resolution from Evans who had already praised her "renunciation" (*GEL* 2:255) in terms of admiration. It was Leigh Smith's need to fortify her decision to reject Chapman's proposal that sent her to Tenby.

Installed in the Coburg Hotel on St Julian's Street, the visitor began spending all her time with Evans. The intimate conversations they shared along the streets and cliffs and sands of Tenby have left the only description of the Leweses' sex life in George Eliot biography, and that one hardly direct. Leigh Smith's letter on the subject to Bessie Parkes reached Haight from the recipient's daughter, Marie Belloc Lowndes, in 1942. Haight reports that the daughter first destroyed the letter, then, within days, described its contents to him (1968: 205). They concerned the thoughtfulness and gentleness of Lewes as a lover, the couple's use of some unspecified form of birth control, and their decision to have no children. Intimate confidences such as these helped strengthen the friendship between the two women visiting Tenby.

As the days passed, and the friends exchanged more confidences, Leigh Smith also conquered the prejudice against Lewes that had been nurtured in her by Bessie Parkes. He most often left them to chat while he worked on *Sea-side Studies*, and within days Smith had learned to like him. Of course, for her, every journey offered new scenes for drawing and painting, and she had brought her equipment with her on the train. As part of the new mutual love-fest, Lewes put her to work making drawings of the marine species he was investigating. By the end of the visit, they were all friends for life.

The friendship between the two Victorian women, each of whom made hugely important contributions to the culture and history of the nineteenth century, was already perhaps a little closer than Haight suspects. Of the pair he asserts, "Though Marian had met her several times as Bessie Parkes's friend, they were not at all intimate" (1968: 204). However, the time in Ockley three summers previously suggests that at least a foundation for the intimacy was already developing. Hirsch dates their closeness earlier: "When Marian met Barbara in June 1852 she was immediately attracted to her" (1999: 61), while another, earlier author, Hester Burton, believes that Evans invited Leigh Smith to spend a day with herself and Lewes and consulted her about her elopement plans during the summer of 1854. Most scholars also emphasize the widely-accepted belief that George Eliot modeled her character Romola on Leigh Smith in her 1861–3 Italian novel (Rignall 2000: 51). I would argue that the events at Tenby suggest that elements of Leigh Smith's life reached the pages of George Eliot's novels in several cases beyond *Romola*, most notably in *The Mill on the Floss*.[12]

The autobiographical material in *The Mill* has resulted in the general acceptance of Isaac and Mary Ann Evans as the only models for Tom and Maggie Tulliver. However, the substance of the conversations shared by the painter and the author at Tenby suggest an additional set of siblings whose conflicts resemble Maggie and Tom's, especially during the third volume after they have grown up. If George Eliot based the brother and sister only on herself and her brother, then she drew the harshest scene in the novel, the scene in which Maggie returns to Dorlcote Mill after her aborted elopement, entirely from her imagination. Readers have generally believed that she imagined what Isaac Evans might say about her union with Lewes had they ever discussed it face to face.

Barbara Leigh Smith's situation, as discussed in detail at Tenby, also shows similarities with Maggie Tulliver's at several points in her story. The

granddaughter of a miller on her mother's side, Leigh Smith, as a child, required "frequent warnings" from her nurse "to keep away from a muddy pond" on the Sussex property where the family lived during her early girlhood. Nevertheless, the little girl "inevitably fell in and returned home cross and covered in mud" (Hirsch 1999: 16). Leigh Smith's most recent biographer, Hirsch, notes the parallels between the woman Ben Smith never married and George Eliot's character: "Anne Longden was, like Maggie Tulliver, a miller's daughter who had run off with a gentleman, had failed to get married to him and borne the social disgrace" (1999: 173). Adding the daughter's romantic crisis of temptation to the mother's social status creates a plot very similar to Maggie Tulliver's, and stories of childhood as well as youth, shared on the South Sands, would enable George Eliot to combine details of her girlhood with details of her friend's, especially from the similar brother–sister interactions.

Just as Leigh Smith shares similarities with Maggie, her brother Ben has points in common with Tom. According to Hirsch, Ben, born a year after his sister, had the talent and interest to become "a mining engineer" (1999: 96), but his father wanted him "to train as a lawyer" (96). Like Tom, he "had no talent for any kind of public declaiming" but was "a good shot" (96). When Chapman made his proposals for Barbara to become his mistress, she consulted her father, but her brother generally receives credit for demolishing any thought she might have of accepting him. Tom Tulliver's words would fit well in Ben Leigh Smith's mouth during a confrontational scene between brother and sister. References to their differing kinds and degrees of loyalty to their father would figure as part of the conflict, as it does with the Tulliver children, while the sexual matter of the disagreement provided at the very least an occasion for Ben Leigh Smith to employ words as harsh as Tom's. George Eliot's coded communications with both brothers would deliver her opinion regarding their inflexibility toward erring sisters.

John Chapman, moreover, resembles Stephen Guest in several ways. Like Stephen, he bases his seductive arguments on "natural law" (Hirsch 1999: 107; *The Mill on the Floss*, Book 6, Ch. 14). In her crisis, Barbara Leigh Smith considered religious consolation, specifically Catholicism. A few years later, having figured Maggie Tulliver's flirtations with romantic escapes as opium, George Eliot wrote her famous do-without-opium letter to her friend.[13] A rowing party on the Thames in 1857 (discussed more fully in Chapter 6) provides additional reasons for proposing Leigh Smith as a model for Maggie. I, for one, can easily envision Leigh Smith responding to the occasion of the row on the Thames as Maggie does: by expressing her resolution to acquire enough skill to manage the boat by herself. When *The Mill on the Floss* appeared in 1860, Leigh Smith told her friend that the brother-and-sister scenes made the book particularly apposite to her and her sisters' family experience (Hirsch 1999: 172).

Hirsch describes without comment events that create additional though much smaller connections with *Middlemarch*. In Rome in 1854–5, for example, Leigh Smith found herself disliking the current group of artists whose studios she visited and seeking refuge by escaping: "She herself hired a horse and rode most days in the Campagna" (Hirsch 1999: 103).

Another *Middlemarch* connection may concern Leigh Smith's husband, to whom she became engaged the following year, because of his education in Paris where, like Lydgate, he combined medicine and social idealism: "At the Ecole there was a focus on 'social pathology' or what we would now call public health issues. The emerging students were encouraged to see themselves as social leaders in a drive to improve the hygiene of the poor" (Hirsch 1999: 122). Together with the accepted identification of Barbara Leigh Smith as the model for Romola, parallels between the Tulliver siblings and the Leigh Smiths, plus the *Middlemarch* connection, suggest that George Eliot drew on the confidences she shared with her friend in Tenby throughout her creative life. Meanwhile, Chapman, the son of a drug salesman who wanted his boy to become a doctor but who became for a time a watchmaker, also shares similarities with George Eliot's character, Felix Holt.

The schooner *Coquette*

Edward Pigott was less punctual than Barbara Leigh Smith. Like her, he had originally intended to come to Ilfracombe, but postponed his visit. Lewes's colleague and owner of the *Leader*, Pigott came from a more privileged background than his editor. He grew up at Brockley Hall in Somerset, and attended Eton and Oxford. In Ilfracombe, he planned to rendezvous with his older brother John who had recently bought a yacht, a 47-ton schooner named the *Coquette*. After a sail across the Channel to Jersey, the *Coquette* had deposited passenger Herbert Spencer at Portsmouth on 11 June 1855. But cruising yachts keep to no schedule, and the *Coquette* never made it to Ilfracombe. Consequently, Ned Pigott postponed his own journey several times and revised his destination from Ilfracombe to Tenby. When he finally arrived there on Monday, the 28th, he waited four more days for the *Coquette* to appear.

The Leweses proceeded to entertain Pigott with a drive to Lydstep, another promontory around the coast to the south, which boasts caves, cliffs, and a broad beach of its own. They arrived at this destination at a time when the high tides precluded an inspection of the caves, a mysterious mishap since the height of the tides at Tenby would enable them to predict Lydstep's. Perhaps the drive took longer than anticipated. Because he did not want to miss seeing the *Coquette* approach Tenby from the sea, Pigott kept one eye on the horizon at all times.

That evening Lewes gained material for one of the odder insertions in *Sea-side Studies*: the incident of the Mormon preaching. Always more audacious in his agnosticism than Evans, he took delight in mocking the trio who showed up in Penniless Cove to further their mission. According to his description, the incident occurred at about nine o'clock in the evening, as the persona of *Sea-side Studies* and his friend smoked their after-dinner cigars at an open balcony window above the harbor. Below, Penniless Cove made a fine site for a preaching. Not only did Paxton's walls create an amphitheater surrounding the little bay, but the site had religious credentials. Off and on over the years, it accommodated a chapel where fishermen offered prayers for safety and a good catch before setting out for a day or a night of their perilous work (Shepherd n.d.: 34).

Lewes's attack typifies Victorian reactions to Mormonism, which focused on repugnance to polygamy. In his journal, he notes the disapproving comments of one of the Tenby boatmen about the religion that, at the time, permitted multiple wives. His correspondence with Blackwood reveals that the editor wanted Lewes to trim his version of the incident to omit the references to multiple marriages (*GHLL* 1:249). Lewes felt his report of the boatman's moral stance provided a frame that removed any scandalousness from the anecdote, but he obligingly deleted this part of the text from *Sea-side Studies* anyway. Nevertheless, Lewes's intemperate reaction and harsh language seem disproportionate and the preaching irrelevant to his work-in-progress on marine naturalism.

Lewes's journal entries about the week of Pigott's visit sometimes remain unclear as to whether Evans joined the two men on their outings, as after the preaching: "We then rambled on the sands, always so beautiful at night. The tide enabled us to pass into the second cavern of St Kaths, which looked very grand in the dim light" (GHLJ 28 July 1856). The next day, Lewes again does not mention Evans when he reports, "Pigott and I went *Dredging* off Caldy oyster beds" (29 July 1856, his emphasis). On Wednesday, he "Walked with Pigott to the Kneightston woods; and in the evening we ascended St Katherine's, where he sang. Looked down on the dark & gloomy sea, and the distant trawlers looking so forlorn. What a difference from the aspect of the sea by sunlight" (30 July 1856). Lewes's melancholy recurs on Thursday. His after-dinner walk concludes with a view of "a sighing sea!" (31 July 1856).

Like the drive to Lydstep, the rest of Pigott's visit did not go according to plan. There can be no doubt that, during the summer of 1856, the Leweses expected at least a day's sailing on the *Coquette*. In Ilfracombe, assured that the boat would meet them there, they were looking forward to a cruise around the Devonshire coastline. Evans mentions Clovelly, across Barnstaple Bay, as a possible destination for such a cruise in a letter to Sara Hennell (*GEL* 2:253). Having reviewed Charles Kingsley's *Westward Ho!*, she wanted to see its settings, specifically the strikingly picturesque village of Clovelly, which consists of a single street, the Up Along, that straggles fetchingly down a cleft in the cliff to the water. While at Tenby, she wrote a review of Charlotte Chanter's *Ferny Combes*, which takes a botanical look at the ferns growing in Clovelly.

But after the *Coquette* failed to arrive in Ilfracombe and showed up late in Tenby, no cruise occurred. The Leweses were invited aboard the *Coquette* for lunch, but then spent the rest of the day alone together. At night they went by open boat to St Catherine's by themselves, without Pigott. The next day, Lewes's journal describes Evans as "rejoicing" (GHLJ 2 August 1856) at the recovery of their solitude, a recovery that depended on the departure of the party aboard the *Coquette*. More noncommitally, her own journal reports simply that on Sunday morning she ate her breakfast and then walked out onto Castle Hill for the single purpose of assuring herself that the *Coquette* had weighed anchor and sailed off: "The Yacht was gone. So we are once more quiet and alone" (H&J 63). Lewes's after-dinner cigars with Pigott and the song-fests out on the hill would no longer take him away from the time the couple spent alone together.

Elsewhere, George Eliot's letters sustain a consistently positive, even affectionate, tone regarding Pigott, often described by his contemporaries as a kind and mild man, and their friendship lasted all their lives. So her aversion, if such it was, did not last long, or may have had to do with someone else. Perhaps the vessel's skipper was not forthcoming with invitations to cruise. She employs the first person singular to report her morning walk; evidently Lewes did not seek out with her the satisfaction of seeing the Tenby Roads empty of the *Coquette*. Both Lewes's and Evans's notes on the departure of the boat at least raise the possibility that Evans was fatigued with their visitor and relieved that Pigott and his brother and his brother's yacht were safely gone from Tenby. The only yachtsman among George Eliot's characters, Mr Grandcourt of *Daniel Deronda*, suggests a tempting, but hopelessly speculative connection between the skipper of the *Coquette*, John Pigott, and the owner of the nameless sailing yacht on which Gwendolen suffers her husband's relentless control.[14]

Somewhere around this time, Lewes entered a brief but intense depression. *Sea-side Studies* relates details of an evening during which its persona surrenders to a sort of cosmic melancholy. The passage personifies the sea as a seductive woman: "All through the day I wanton with her" (*SSS* 93), and at night, "I hear her mighty sighs answering the wailing night-winds. She lures me to her" (93). At this point the yearning soul descends to the beach because "I cannot go to bed. Let me wander along the sands and gaze upon that solemn gloom, stretching mysteriously afar" (93). Down at the quay he observes some fishermen preparing for a nighttime departure, and he views their work as demanding and ill-paid: "They will be out all night, toiling through the terrible waters to gain a few shillings" (93). His acute sympathy does not prevent his making his usual request for the remnants of their expedition if they should return with some cuttlefish. After bidding them good night, he continues to reflect on the depressing transitoriness of life.

The next morning, according to *Sea-side Studies*, Lewes's gloomy thoughts disappeared with the sunrise. As he looked out over the harbor, his good spirits returned. In his book he concludes, "Nature is joyous, clear, sunny; my mistress yonder is sparkling and singing in the light; while sails dot the distance" (94). Lewes's anecdote omits any mention of Evans, presumably left alone in her bed at 2 Bridge Street as he wandered moodily about the harbor.

Summer into autumn: reading and writing

The ups and downs of the summer at Tenby produced in Lewes vacillations about staying or returning home to Richmond. Meanwhile, each day that passed brought Evans closer to beginning her *Scenes of Clerical Life*. Both wrote copiously during their time there. He finished big chunks of *Sea-side Studies*. In addition to the *Ferny Combs* review, she wrote a review called "The Lover's Seat" for the *Leader*, the introductory portion of "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness: The Poet Young" for the *Westminster Review,* and completed her lengthy "Recollections of Ilfracombe." But Evans was also, meanwhile, preparing for her fiction by considering theories about how it should be written. Her articles on "The Natural History of German Life"

and "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" (published in July and October) offer positive and negative models for fiction; in the one case, descriptions of working people she imitates in *Adam Bede*, and in the other, descriptions of outlandish women characters she rejects for all her fiction.

Like her summer writing, Evans's summer reading, some of it shared with Lewes, offers examples of theories and characters both taken up and rejected when she began writing fiction. Lewes's entire project owed and continued to owe a good deal to his reading of the work of Philip Gosse, the notoriously evangelical father in his son Edmund's *Father and Son*. Not only does Lewes follow Gosse's itinerary and attempt to follow his recommendations, but he also adapts his jaunty, piecemeal style, combining science and extraneous material such as interpolated tales, instructions and advice on gathering specimens, hotel recommendations, descriptions of flora and fauna, the history of local attractions, and so on. Gosse's books provided the example, and much of the itinerary, for Lewes's journeys in the mid-1850s when he convinced Blackwood to undertake a series for *Maga* in the same vein, his own *Sea-side Studies*.

Edmund Gosse's doleful descriptions in *Father and Son* recount the events of his early childhood in the ruthlessly pious household where he faced poverty, numbing evangelical bleakness, and the death of his mother all before the age of eight. In the early 1850s, his mother was dying slowly, fortified only by her faith and lacking the comforts that money might have helped provide. Describing her long death, Edmund Gosse reports: "For nearly three months I breathed the atmosphere of pain, saw no other light, heard no other sounds, thought no other thoughts than those which accompany physical suffering and weariness. To my memory these weeks seem years; I have no measure of their monotony. The lodgings were bare and yet tawdry; out of dingy windows we looked from a second storey upon a dull small street drowned in autumnal fog" (1986: 72). The child was facing his mother's death, poverty, and tedium every day of his young life, that autumn in London.

Philip Gosse shared his wife's spiritual exercises as she prepared to die, and attempted to earn money to provide her with comforts by writing books on naturalism. He succeeded. In 1853, *Rambles on the Devonshire Coast*, a travel guide for amateur naturalists in a personal, conversational tone, won a large audience, including Lewes. By 1855, the book on Devon had succeeded well enough to prompt an advance for a similar publication about Tenby. And so, for six weeks, the Gosse family lived by the sea in Wales. In Tenby, the little son loved life. He reports that "my seventh birthday was spent in an ecstasy of happiness, on golden sands, under a brilliant sky, and in sight of the glorious azure ocean beating in from an infinitude of melting horizons. Here, too, my Mother, perched in a nook of the high rocks surveyed the west and forgot for a little while her weakness and the gnawing, grinding pain" (1986: 72). Like Leigh Smith, they stayed at the Coburg where, according to the father's account, "From our back door (Coburg) we walk through the narrow sandy paths of a little garden, gay with pinks and fuschias, to the brow of a sharp descent, which leads down to the spacious yellow beach of sand—the South Sands. A zigzag path winds down the hill from each garden in

the terrace" (1986: 11). He attributes a "curious effect" to the low walls of stone ornamented with seashells and admires the colorful parasols of the women, the children digging in the sand with their toy spades, the bathing machines, and the rapid tides.

When Gosse's descriptions of Tenby appeared, Lewes and Evans read them reluctantly but carefully. While Lewes dwelt on Gosse's method and style as a model for *Sea-side Studies*, Evans also made use of Gosse's *Tenby: A Sea-side Holiday*. Her 1859 novel *Adam Bede* takes as its mission the desentimentalization of the lower classes. In particular, Gosse and George Eliot differ about peasant jocularity. In the famous Chapter 17 passage about literary realism, the novel's narrator objects to authors who create picturesque, jocose farm workers—honest, loyal, and appealing.

In *Tenby,* Gosse maintains a chirpy, sentimental style, especially in one of his set pieces concerning the charm of the peasants he sees working on the cliffs: "Groups of haymakers, with rakes on their shoulders, passed me on their way to the meadows; and their rustic bows and cheerful salutations were not less pleasant than their hearty merriment and snatches of rural ballads" (1856: 200). Not only does George Eliot's narrator illustrate his ideas about realism and representation discursively in Chapter 17 through the example of working peasants, but her own characters, the guests at the Poysers' harvest home dinner, contrast sharply with Gosse's peasants with their "cheerful salutations" and "hearty merriment" (1856: 200). In her *Westminster Review* essay, the persona attributes a bovine mirthlessness to the workers, while in the novels, the narrator reports that "the mild radiance of a smile was a rare sight on a field-labourer's face, and there was seldom any gradation between bovine gravity and a laugh" (Ch. 53). For the "Harvest Supper" chapter of *Adam Bede,* George Eliot follows her own instructions on realistic art, as specified in "The Natural History of German Life" and in Chapter 17. These devices encode her objection to Gosse's sentimentalism in *A Sea-side Holiday*.

Gosse includes another detail about the peasants that George Eliot does not reject so decisively. He describes his morning encounter further: "More delightful still was to hear the low sound of sacred melody, the tune of a hymn or psalm gently hummed by one solitary peasant with a meek countenance, as he went forth to this daily labour". He repeats the very lines the worker sings:

> Nor will I to my labour go,
> Or any work presume to do,
> Till I have sought the God of heaven,
> And my first morning's tribute given.
> (Gosse 1856: 200)

If Evans rejects Gosse's sentimentalizations of peasants in general, she nevertheless adapts his singing worker in *Adam Bede*. The eponymous hero sings a similar song, Bishop Ken's morning hymn, while measuring and carving his wood. Moreover, Adam continues his song as he walks home, and the sight of the walking, hymn-singing workman introduces the traveler on horseback, whose observations of

Hayslope and conversations with the innkeeper in turn introduce the Donnithornes, the Bedes, the Poysers, and Dinah Morris. Hence the "Harvest Supper" characters of *Adam Bede* defy Gosse, although George Eliot repeats in Adam's own behavior a detail that also occurs in the pages of Gosse's account of Tenby, but elevating the class status of the singer from peasant to artisan.

The productivity of the working holidays at Ilfracombe and Tenby became a staple way of traveling for Lewes and Evans, for they rarely took a holiday in England that offered nothing but leisure. They both wrote substantial journal entries about their travels at home and abroad, and Lewes's entries include his notes on dissection and miscroscope observations, while both sets of journals contain details George Eliot later drew on for plots and characters.

When the Leweses boarded the steamer for Bristol in the little square-sided harbor at noon on 8 August 1856, even the departure from Tenby did not end Lewes's industriousness. After the steamer reached Bristol Bay, he passed the wait there by dropping a bucket into the water and pulling it back up full of "beautiful" medusae, an operation which enabled him to "while away the time very agreeably" (GHLJ 10 August 1856). They continued their journey inland, slept at Bath that night, and arrived back in Richmond on Sunday 9 August, after a busy three-month absence.

Both continued the work of the summer as well as they could through the autumn at home. Lewes, bereft of the seaside resources, exchanged specimens with Tugwell through the post, dissected what species he could obtain locally, and went scavenging in London ponds instead of on the edges of the limitless sea. Evans immediately went to work on her fiction, and by January the first section of "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton" was in print.[15]

By that time, Lewes was beginning to plan their next busy holiday. Confirmed in their procedures and inspired to exceed the achievements of Gosse, he aimed to cast his nets farther than he had already, and farther afield than Gosse could manage. He settled on another two-part working holiday—the spring in the Scilly Isles well off the Cornish coast, followed by a summer interlude in Brittany. Although they never reached Brittany, they spent a grueling yet productive season in the Scilly Isles, and remained far away from their London home by continuing on to Jersey and finishing the summer there. Five miles from the French coast, Evans took important steps both personally and professionally. When they returned to England, her family knew about her relationship with Lewes, and she had begun composing her first full-length novel, *Adam Bede*.

4 Islands

> Here was a little archipelago, such as Greek heroes might have lived in—bold, rugged, picturesque—secure from all the assaults of idle watering-places frequenters … Here one might write epics finer than the Odyssey.
>
> George Henry Lewes, on the Scilly Isles, *Sea-side Studies* (1858)

Two groups of islands far off the coast of England accommodated part or all of George Eliot's writing of three of her earliest stories. Having composed "The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton" and the beginning of "Mr Gilfil's Love Story" in London, she drafted the "Epilogue" for the latter, all of "Janet's Repentance," and the beginning of *Adam Bede*, during interludes on the Scilly and Channel Islands, well distant from the mainland, but technically part of England. By the time the couple returned from Jersey, George Eliot had completed her *Scenes of Clerical Life* and was making headway on the bestseller that changed their lives. This crucial period, which transformed Marian Evans, journalist, into George Eliot, renowned novelist, began during the autumn of 1856, but climaxed with the five-month period in 1857, which the couple divided between the rugged Scilly Isles to the west and the blooming Channel Islands to the south. While living on the island margins of Britain, George Eliot planned and wrote fiction set at its very center, the Midlands area that calls itself "The Heart of England." After completing the *Scenes*, she went on to draft *Adam Bede*, which she famously based partly on her aunt Elizabeth Evans's story of the condemned infanticide (H&J 296), but which also shows touches of both of the 1857 island destinations, Scilly and Jersey.

Scilly fiction

When the Victorians traveled by boat, it was usually a steam packet. Evans and her friends took one in 1843 to Tenby and another in 1845 when they went to Scotland; any Continental excursion always began with a cross-Channel journey by steamer. By 1857, the crossing to Scilly was still made by a sailing vessel, the *Ariadne*. Despite the short distance to St Mary's—thirty miles—the crossing presented many problems. The rocks of Scilly and the complicated channels leading to the harbors meant that piloting was a major occupation on this archipelago. A west wind slowed the trip

because of the need for the sailing vessel to tack constantly in order to make headway while still avoiding the rocks and finding the channels. The substantial tides required taking alternate routes at low- and high-water levels.

The destination of Scilly originated with Lewes rather than Evans. Continuing his research for *Sea-side Studies,* he went on reading extensively among the naturalists, and in September he bought a new Smith and Becks microscope, "with *four* powers" (his italics, *GHLL* 1:252). He advised his friend George Tugwell "to bestow the first loose cash in getting one. You don't use yours because of the bother & unsatisfactory result but if you had a good one you would never leave it untouched a single day" (1:252). In October, he wrote to Blackwood of a "slowly cherished scheme of mine to pass the spring months of next year at the Scilly Isles" (1:250). He conceived his sojourn on St Mary's in Miltonic terms. He expected a paradise, and to him a paradise consisted of a satisfying row of specimen-filled jars, his powerful new microscope in active use, and plenty of molluscs to get his scalpel into.

They did not, in any event, choose the Scilly Isles for the sake of convenience. In addition to the thirty-mile crossing from Penzance, the journey required reaching the Cornwall port in time for a Wednesday morning's scheduled sailing. Missing the boat would mean a potential disaster as Lewes was determined to reach the islands before the spring equinox (1858: 191). The railway from London in 1857 reached only as far as Plymouth. From there a coach route connected with Truro, where London travelers to Cornwall could join the railway line to Penzance.

The Leweses planned the stages of their trip to assure as much comfort as possible. To accommodate Lewes's "fixed idea" (*GEL* 2:354) of arriving at St Mary's before the spring equinox, they set out from Richmond on Sunday night, the Ides of March, 1857. They did not, however, travel far that night. Instead, they rested overnight at the fancy hotel at Paddington Station, and boarded their train on a sunny Monday morning. As they traveled to the southwest, Evans admired the "English landscape" (H&J 66) along the railway route, and when they arrived in Plymouth, praised its good harbor. That night they again stayed at their point of departure, this time the Globe Hotel, the terminus for the coach to Truro. The snippets of character and scenic description in Evans's journal of this trip demonstrate the novice fiction writer at work, taking notes on the humble people they encountered and whom she wanted to include in her stories (Haight 1968: 223).[1]

Rising on Tuesday, the couple began the eight-hour coach journey that carried them on a zigzag route through Cornwall, crossing and recrossing the railway line under construction. Although they found the chilly weather and the Cornish scenery pleasant at first, about halfway through the journey the clay mines began to spoil the view, especially for her, not only with their own functional apparatus for purifying and packing the clay but also because the mines polluted the water and made the streams "thick and coloured or else milky white" (H&J 66–7). The two-hour train journey from Truro to Penzance ended their day. They arrived dead tired, in the dark, at eight o'clock, and booked into the Union Hotel.

In 1857, traffic between Land's End and St Mary's lay largely under the control of Captain Frank Tregarthen, skipper of the *Ariadne*, and a member of an old

Scillonian nautical family. Walter White, author of the 1855 *A Londoner's Walk to the Land's End; and a Trip to the Scilly Isles*, describes the pleasure of his first view of the *Ariadne*: "An exclamation of surprise broke from me at seeing so pretty a vessel" (1855: 238). As White admired the *Ariadne*, Tregarthen accounted for its beauty by telling him that its previous owner was Lord Francis Godolphin. Since Godolphin died in 1785, Tregarthen was either skippering a very old vessel or having a little joke with his passenger from London.

Tregarthen tried to persuade the Leweses to make the crossing as scheduled on Wednesday, 18 March 1857. However, they gave him scant credit for his extensive local knowledge. Their decision cost them more than a week because Tregarthen deviated from his schedule only when compelled by the weather. Stuck in Penzance, they found the "nautical lodgings" (1858: 182) of which Lewes complains in *Sea-side Studies*, lugubriously decorated with marine paintings and relics of the drowned (he began an article on suicide the day they arrived). They avoided the supervision of their unamiable landlady by spending as much time outdoors as the weather permitted. On Friday, the 20th, they traveled a mile or so westward around the coast to the little village of Marazion where they could look across the causeway to St Michael's Mount.

Several times they took refuge from the sea breezes by going on inland walks that Evans describes enthusiastically in her journal. Meanwhile she wrote wryly to Sara Hennell: "The weather has been just what we wanted every day except those on which the packet has sailed" (*GEL* 2:311). Monday the waters lay so calm that "we could not hear the waves from our room in the morning" (2:311), and the following night they packed, optimistically anticipating a quiet Wednesday crossing. But on Wednesday, even Captain Tregarthen declined to set out. Finally, on Thursday morning, more than a week after their arrival in Penzance, he sent for his passengers just before daybreak, and they boarded the *Ariadne* in a "delicious light" (H&J 67). They had missed the vernal equinox, Lewes's tenaciously-held temporal goal, and endured awful lodgings, but had taken pleasure in their walks and much admired St Michael's Mount.

Despite the promising dawn, the crossing took a rainy six hours, and they were sick, as usual. Tregarthen kept a "ladies' cabin" which he considered "a tidy little place," but which his passenger White describes as "little enough, truly; a comfortable doll's house" (1855: 243). The Leweses remained below during their voyage, in a state, according to Lewes, "semi-delirious, icy cold, and with pain in the intestines of a very unpleasant kind" (*GEL* 2:312). Meanwhile, writhing in his bunk, he made mental notes for *Sea-side Studies*. At one o'clock in the afternoon they reached the islands, and the contrary sun emerged to offer a brilliant welcome.

Governed for hundreds of years by the Godolphin family, the languishing Scilly Isles had gained a new lord proprietor in 1834 when Augustus Smith, searching for a lifetime project to absorb his energy and fortune, obtained the lease (Bowley 1990: 87).[2] The deal called for £40 rent a year paid by Smith to the Duchy of Cornwall. He also promised a new church, whose clergy he would pay, and a new quay. Smith fulfilled these obligations and also invigorated the shipbuilding industry, redistributed the population, erected schools for the children, and

decided everything on the Isles. With his activities in full swing, the islands were almost thriving as a result of the efforts of an administrator most often regarded as a benevolent despot.

St Mary's, the largest of the islands, has a roughly oval shape with two adjunct peninsulas attached to its southwestern quarter. One of these, Penninis, protrudes almost due south into St Mary's Sound. The other, dominated by the fortifications of Star Castle and connected by a slender isthmus to the main island, lies to the southwest. The north side of this isthmus accommodates Hugh Town's principle street, which curves around the town beach until the quay extends its arc to create the sheltered harbor of St Mary's Pool. Although Tregarthen's own hotel, painted a bright white for maximum visibility from the sea, sat conspicuously and conveniently just on the quay (according to its brochure, Tennyson once stayed there), the captain recommended nearby lodgings at the post office to his passengers that March day in 1857. Somewhat surprised at the suitability of the set of large, low-ceilinged rooms, they took them at once (*GEL* 2:313).

After tea, the first thing they did was walk up Garrison Hill which, because of its view and its proximity to the post office, became a favorite spot. Queen Elizabeth built Star Castle on the high egg-shaped peninsula in the sixteenth century, during a period when Spain regarded the Isles as a promising spot for launching another armada. The couple passed through a bell-topped granite gate with the sea on their right, and climbed uphill toward the points of the star and the low peaks of the gunhouse roofs. Within its eight-pointed star, the compact castle housed the commander of the garrison, while artillery officers lived in the four gunhouses along the walls overlooking the hill down to the sea. Five invalids manned Star Castle that year.

From the castle on the top of the hill, the couple could view Hugh Town at the foot of the hill to their right, as well as a sweep of the other large islands—St Agnes, Bryher, Tresco, and St Martin's—which occupied the horizon from the southwest round to the northeast. Hundreds of additional smaller islands, some only big rocks, lie scattered everywhere among the larger group. In the Scilly Isles a rock is regarded as an island only if grass grows on its surface.

After all the time the couple had spent reaching a destination Lewes had chosen himself, he badly wanted to like it. In *Sea-side Studies*, describing first impressions, he maintains his customary tones, exuberance where possible, humor where not: "This was worth coming to! … The promontory on which stands Star Castle offered a fine breezy walk over downs resplendent with golden furze and suffered the eye to take the widest sweep. How thoroughly I enjoyed that walk! The downs were all aflame with their golden light. Ever and anon a rabbit started across the path or the timid deer were seen emerging from the clumps of golden bush" (1858: 187). Because of the island's compact size, less than four square miles of land, nothing on St Mary's lay beyond the hardy walking habits of the Leweses, but Garrison Hill invited them even on rainy days.

Their first week at Hugh Town, the Leweses sampled the island walks in every direction. In bad weather, they kept to southern slopes: from Garrison Hill on the west, to the Giant's Castle on the east. Although the bird most often associated with

these islands is the puffin, which at times in Scilly history has served as both currency and food, the couple were reading the poems of Shelley, which led them to pay more attention to the skylarks. Along their winding walks ascending and descending the mild hills, they could spot rabbits and deer, windmills and furze, but very few trees. On arrival, Smith had planted trees all over the islands, but by 1857 they had not yet had time to achieve much growth. When Lewes noticed one just in the center of the island at the spot called the Holy Vale, he treated it as an event (1858: 200).

The scale of it all captured Lewes's imagination and prompted the exuberance expressed in the chapter motto above. Evans, too, appreciated the rugged picturesqueness and applied gigantic metaphors. The rocks on the beach looked to her "like the huge eggs of some monstrous bird" (H&J 277); the waves, like "the horses of a mighty sea god" (277). The boulders on the beach at Porth Hellick make it appear "like a giants' playground" (277). She sustained the impression of a classical setting when she wrote to Sara Hennell of surroundings "just like one fancies Ithaca. We expect at every turn to meet a priggish young Telemachus" (*GEL* 2:313). In these spots, Evans relished the freedom of her walks, which she contrasted with the extensive but ultimately circumscribed routes through London's parks.

Although Evans and Lewes describe his choice of St Mary's as somewhat irrational, he had done his preliminary reading from a list that included both naturalism and tourist advice. In addition to Philip Gosse's books, Lewes read I.W. North's *A Week in the Isles of Scilly* which reassures the potential visitor that Scilly does have adequate facilities for visitors. More than "an assemblage of ship-destroying rocks and fisherman's huts," Scilly offers "several inns at St Mary's where every comfortable entertainment may be had" (1850: 4). Although North acknowledges that the journey to Scilly may not pamper the traveler, he promises good shops, adequate beef, and healthful "sanitary conditions" at the destination. Lewes also read William Borlase's *Observations on the Ancient and Present State of the Islands of Scilly*, written in 1756 in the form of a letter informing the Revd Charles Lyttelton about the state of the islands. He praises the daring of the pilots, measures the length of the cockroaches, and recommends the planting of trees. In *Sea-side Studies*, Lewes takes issue with him about ruins he believes Borlase mistakenly describes as Druidical (1858: 221).

The Scilly routine the couple established called for early morning inspections of the marine specimens in the glass vials, during which they discarded the many corpses that had not survived the night. They followed breakfast with an elaborate robing in sturdy clothing for the daytime on the carnes, the granite rocks of the clifflike promontories swept by the waves of the sparkling sea. While Lewes chiseled molluscs from the rocks, Evans, participating less actively than she had in Ilfracombe, read or wrote on nearby grassy patches. Afterward, Lewes organized the specimens in his glass jars and worked with his microscope. In the evenings, they read by candlelight, cozy in their lodgings, while the island winds funneled down the street outside (1858: 278).

The mail, depending on conditions, arrived at Scilly twice a week, according to Tregarthen's sailing schedule on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The first week, the

Ariadne brought little good news. A letter from Isaac Evans to his sister not only reported the death of their niece but also the critical condition of their sister, Chrissey Clarke, and another of her daughters. In early April came Barbara Leigh Smith's announcement of her engagement to Eugène Bodichon. Although Evans recorded this in her journal without comment (H&J 68), Lewes's notation reveals their feelings: "not quite satisfied" (GHLJ 4 April 1857).

The couple mostly kept to themselves, despite the unlikelihood that the Scillonians might suspect their anomalous living arrangement. When George Tugwell, who had himself visited St Mary's, offered Lewes a letter of introduction "to the Lord of the Isles" (*GHLL* 1:259), his friend responded that three other people had made the same offer. They did not immediately make use of any of them. As always, they feared burdensome acquaintance that would require participation in tedious and time-consuming social intercourse. But in tiny Hugh Town, such a conspicuous pair, who, moreover, stayed on and on, could not avoid receiving curious attention from the neighbors. Writing to John Blackwood, Lewes imagines the nature of this attention: "We are looked on as strange animals by the natives; but everyone is very obliging" (1:317). To his son, he calls on Shakespeare to dramatize himself as an alien species washed ashore and found by bewildered island-dwellers: "The other day they asked after me as 'the elderly gentleman'—so you see your pater strikes them as 'an ancient & fishlike monster' " (1:264). Lugging the basketful of rattling vials back and forth over the hills to the carnes, dressed oddly in high boots and wool stockings, Lewes's appearance and program of activities made him conspicuous in Hugh Town.

During the second week, as with Tugwell in Ilfracombe, Lewes befriended a local amateur, the "rubicund" surgeon John Grenfell Moyle, whom he described as a "pleasant man" and whom he goes on to mention favorably in *Sea-side Studies*. After a first visit to the post office lodgings on Sunday 5 April, Moyle called on them in the evenings twice more that same week. Both of them liked him and encouraged his visits. He brought them more books about Scilly, and in exchange they offered him their new number of the *Westminster Review*. Lewes, who thoroughly enjoyed what he was doing and often encouraged others, including his sons, to "go hunting" (*GHLL* 1:264), enlisted Moyle as a fellow enthusiast. In the following weeks they went on several specimen hunts together.

One problem of Scilly life, obtaining food, resisted solution from the start. Like Borlase, North, and White before them, they soon conceived the notion that the Scillonians were out to starve them. Beginning with Captain Tregarthen, who provisioned the *Ariadne* very lightly, they tried various methods of finding the foods they were used to, especially varieties of meat. The second day in Hugh Town, Lewes failed to discover any Harvey sauce for sale, so he picked up some cheese and pickles and decided to order the sauce from Penzance. Eager for any meat other than beef, they tried ordering from the mainland again. This turned out badly as the boat brought them back inferior goods: fatty mutton and tough chicken (H&J 276). They had wasted their money and had their hopes dashed for a decent meal. About this time, Lewes, driven, as he wrote to his sons, to desperation, "summoned impudence enough" to go to the hotel and confront Mrs Tregarthen

to "boldly ask her to *lend* me a steak which she did" (*GHLL* 1:263). He describes this incident again in *Sea-side Studies* (1858: 196). Often on short rations themselves over the years, the islanders never acquired the habit of offering food in abundance.

With Moyle providing an alternate companion for Lewes on his excursions to the rocks, Evans could turn to her own work with a freer mind. On one welcome sunny day, nearly two weeks after their arrival, basking in the pleasant weather, she took advantage of Lewes's absence with Moyle to write the "Epilogue" to "Mr Gilfil's Love Story." On the treeless hill of a treeless island, she developed the arboreal metaphor which describes Mr Gilfil's (and others') misproportioned lives as chopped-up trees whose limbs repair themselves with misshapen growths: "If you lop off their finest branches, into which they were pouring their young life-juice, the wounds will be healed over with some rough boss, some odd excrescence, and what might have been a grand tree expanding into liberal shade, is but a whimsical misshapen trunk" ("Epilogue"). The next day she joined Lewes out on the carnes, and, though subsequently a series of daily headaches set in, she also took a step that turned out of major importance to her creativity: she began reading Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë.*

Gaskell's book contains much material about Lewes and his correspondence with Brontë on such matters as melodrama and the literary marketplace; gender and literature; and (very uncomfortably since she blamed Lewes for destroying her anonymity) the implications of writing under a *nom de plume*. But what fascinated Evans was the story of Branwell: "What a tragedy—that picture of the old father and the three sisters, trembling day and night in terror at the possible deeds of this drunken brutal son and brother! That is the part of the life which affects me most" (*GEL* 2:320). The book arrived in the Wednesday mail. Evans began it the next day and had finished it within the week.

On Lewes's birthday, 18 April, Moyle took the celebrant on an outing across the Roads to the island of Tresco, again leaving Evans behind on St Mary's. This short passage rendered Lewes sick for two days, but it introduced him to Augustus Smith's pet project, his garden of subtropical plants, and, finally, to the Lord of the Isles himself. Regarded during the Middle Ages as a good spot for hermits, in the twelfth century Tresco became the site of the Benedictine Abbey of St Nicholas. The monks built the Abbey on the southern bank of the Great Pool overlooking Appletree Bay, a long freshwater pond reaching almost from coast to coast of the island, from Farm Beach on the west to Pentle Bay on the east. They remained there in dwindling numbers and under considerable hardship because of weather and pirates until the sixteenth-century dissolution of the monasteries.

Augustus Smith treated Lewes and Moyle to lunch and a tour of his garden. He had chosen the remains of the abbey kitchen garden and park to plant the seedlings brought to Tresco by sea from the distant places where they grew indigenously, and also from Kew Gardens. The abbey remains provided ornamental walls and Gothic-pointed arches that frame the vegetation: palm trees of different species, plump, spiky aloes from South Africa, and other exotic plants from Australia, New Zealand, and California (*SSS* 229). Smith welcomed all the visitors who reached Tresco with a sign cautioning them against committing any

nuisance, but also an invitation to enter by a palm-bordered path leading up a set of granite terraces toward an ornamental figurehead salvaged from one of the many local shipwrecks. In Richmond, in-between his two trips to coastal locations, Lewes had been taking an interest in the freshwater ponds accessible to him in suburban London. Indeed, he was conceiving an article, "Only a Pond," which appeared in *Blackwood's* in May 1859. Tresco therefore offered much to interest Lewes, although he paid for this birthday excursion with bad headaches over the next few days.

Evans's journal reports that she made good use of her time during Lewes's absence on Tresco, for on that same day she started writing "Janet's Repentance." On Thursday 12 May 1857, she commented in a letter to Sara Hennell about her satisfaction with the Brontë biography. Two days later, she began writing a story in which families and drunkenness form the bulk of the conflict. Perhaps encouraged by remoteness from her Midlands setting as well as by reading Gaskell, she created some of her starkest locations and faultiest characters for her third Warwickshire setting, characters again based on recognizable local originals. She modeled Milby closely on Nuneaton and set the opening in the very heart of her old town, at the Bull Inn, which she renames the Red Lion. A coaching inn as well as a tavern, the Bull Inn occupied a site just off Nuneaton Market Square. On the windy, wreck-strewn islands at the edge of the kingdom, Evans was writing again about life in the landlocked "Heart of England."

Despite the remoteness of the Scilly Isles from Warwickshire, the setting of one scene, in particular, shares similarities with both Hugh Town and Nuneaton: the scene in which Dempster drunkenly ejects Janet into the street in the middle of the night. Partly because Evans modeled the Dempsters on Nuneaton residents J.W. and Nancy Wallington Buchanan, the Buchanan house on Church Street in Nuneaton has sustained its reputation as the model for the Dempster home (Mudge and Sears 1924: 256). And, indeed, with no street-front access to the rear quarters, the fictional and real houses share a key feature that contributes to Janet's predicament by eliminating the possibility of arousing someone from her own household, a group of servants already well acquainted with the domestic chaos in the family.

A number of the homes in Hugh Town, like the house on Church Street, provide no access to the service quarters in the rear, and the cutting wind that sobers Janet up and pierces her flimsy nightdress, although common enough in Nuneaton, also suggests the Scilly Isles because of Evans's frequent references in her journal to the fatiguing winds that seldom let up (H&J 278). Because of the wind, Janet must abandon any hope of concealing her humiliation. She cannot possibly survive out of doors until morning when she might re-enter without anyone knowing of her condition, alone and drunk in the streets of Milby in her nightdress. Instead, she must throw herself on Mrs Pettifer's mercy, waking her up, disturbing the household, and exposing herself. The stony streets of Nuneaton, the original of Milby, do not differ all that much from the stony street in front of Mrs Scadden's lodgings at the Hugh Town post office where George Eliot conceived the scene. The windy street near at hand augmented the vividness of the one that survived in memory.

With "Janet's Repentance" underway, and time running on, their Scillonian cicerone, Moyle, persuaded the Leweses to call on their next-door neighbors, the Buckstones. Once they met, they continued calling despite Evans's harsh opinion of the wife: "a silly, ill-bred woman without the slightest presentiment of anything in existence superior to herself" (H&J 278). On the other hand, they liked Mr Buckstone and his father enough to accept invitations, including one for dinner as well, although this may have had something to do with the difficulty of provisioning for themselves. In return, Mr Buckstone, whom they regarded as "stupid, goodnatured, unaffected" (H&J 279), returned their equivocal liking enough that he wanted them to meet his friends too.

Towards the end of April, Buckstone arranged an excursion for the discriminating visitors. He took them to the waterfront for a look at one of Augustus Smith's current building projects. The eventful nautical history of the Scilly Isles includes dozens of spectacular shipwrecks, and in the nineteenth century the inhabitants were still building lighthouses, even though the shift from sail to steam gave boats approaching the islands more control over their routes. From Garrison Hill, the Leweses could see across a mile or so of water southwest to St Agnes where a venerable lighthouse built in the sixteenth century, and painted bright white to increase its conspicuousness, rose 74 feet above its site at the center of the island (Bowley 1990: 128). The hazards of the local waters meant that the Scilly Isles could never have too many navigational aids.

Buckstone walked the Leweses the short distance beyond the Hugh Town quay to Rat Island (said to deserve its name) to view the progress on a new lighthouse destined for a tiny outcrop of rock at the farthest western edge of the island group. Bishop's Rock lies five miles beyond St Agnes, and the first attempt to maintain a lighthouse there had failed badly in 1850 (Bowley 1990: 128). While still being built, this lighthouse, constructed of iron, was demolished by a storm. The replacement, it was decided, would be made of Cornish granite rather than iron, and on Rat Island workers prepared the rocks from Cornwall for shipping to the small island of Rosevear where they lived in "huts" and ventured out daily to Bishop's Rock to work at anchoring the base firmly before building it up (Bowley 1990: 130–3). The process fascinated Evans: "Every morsel of the structure is prepared and fitted before it is carried to the spot, and the lighthouse is thus temporarily built up and taken to pieces again" (H&J 278). The Scillonians illuminated the Bishop's Rock light for the first time the following year.

Despite such attentions from the Buckstones and the friendship with Moyle, Evans maintained an attitude of amused condescension toward the Scillonians at the same time that she gathered more widely sundered elements for her composite characters and settings. Her journal reports being told repeatedly about a local marriage, a repetition which she attributed to provincial narrowness, because she assumed that the Scillonians expected her to recognize the names of the couple (H&J 279). But references to the Lemon–Hall marriage have a purpose Evans missed. Hugh Town takes pride in one of the houses along its own Church Street, which they regard as a graceful example of eighteenth-century architecture. This house received its name as the home of a local couple, according to Bowley, a *Mr*

Lemon and a *Miss* Hall. In her journal Evans reverses the genders: she remembers being told about Miss Lemon and Mr Hall, often, though when she adapts the name for Rosamond's school in *Middlemarch*, she calls it *Mrs* Lemon's School. The point of the reference repeated to the Leweses, however, depended on the name the couple devised for their house: Lemon Hall. Evans's habit of regarding the Scillonians as somewhat quaint interfered with her understanding of their mild delight in the name of the eighteenth-century residence on Church Street.

Down to their last weeks in Scilly, the couple began to anticipate departure. In some ways, the Scilly Isles disappointed them. Lewes did not find specimens as plentiful as he had anticipated. The incessant winds tired them. The bareness did not feed their souls. They dreaded the news from home. Because of her sister's sickness, Evans continued to watch the infrequent post for letters, and eventually received some, but the news continued unreassuring. Other letters concerned the Brays' move from the fondly remembered Rosehill to their reduced circumstances in Ivy Cottage. Finally, word came that Chrissey Clark and her daughter were recovering (H&J 68).

In contrast, they had good news about the reception of the fiction, while Evans did a good deal of work and took a cheerful attitude toward their being there. During the last weeks, she especially enjoyed a favorite spot called Carn Leh (H&J 278). Near to Hugh Town on the south, the area she preferred was a dip covered with grass and thrift, still high above the water, where she liked to stretch at length while Lewes chiseled. Although dramatic cliffs swept by the sea do not become settings for George Eliot's novels any more than do seaside resorts (such as Tenby) with their promenades and castles, the notation "Scilly Isles" appears on the list of notes William Baker describes as "George Eliot's Projected Napoleonic Wars novel" (Smith 1980). If, as her 1879 list suggests, she intended the Isles as a setting in a novel she never came to write, she was reaching far into her memory to create it.

The details of their Scilly stay that George Eliot adapted for her fiction, she restricts mostly to a few names. In addition to Mrs Lemon's School in *Middlemarch*, John Cross, in a rare footnote, points out a second connection, this one with *The Mill on the Floss* (1:332). When Buckstone introduced the couple to the Scilly Controller of the Customs, the man brought along his dog, which Buckstone disparaged: "Oh, I wouldn't have a cur,—there's nothing to look at in a cur!" (332). Cross notes these words as the source for the criticism of Bob Jakin's dog in *The Mill on the Floss*: "Why Toby's nought but a mongrel—there's nothing to look at in her" (Book 4, Ch. 3). Another Scilly name appears in *Felix Holt* where George Eliot applies the name of their frugal, "bland," and "honest" landlady (H&J 276) to the appalling Mr Christian, born Harry Scadden. The cross-channel travels of the characters in Annette Ledru's plot less specifically evoke the settings along the way of the Leweses as they proceeded by boat from the Scilly Isles to Jersey, just off the coast of France.

The journeys to and from St Mary's also yielded a small but detectable source of material elsewhere in *Felix Holt.* Their view of St Michael's Mount from Penzance made vivid the oldest legend associated with the tiny island, which features the Giant Cormoran, a fearful monster with a heart of stone who harassed the sailors

on the bay and the villagers ashore, until he became a victim of Jack the Giant-Killer. Supposedly, he lies buried on the island. In *Felix Holt*, Esther mentions the monster to Felix when he first calls at Malthouse Yard. After he discovers that she has been reading Byron's poems, Felix chooses harsh words to describe the poet's characters as "the most paltry puppets that were ever pulled by the strings of lust and pride" (Ch. 5). He challenges Esther to "justify" her opinion of Byron, but she demurs: "You have such strong words at command, that they make the smallest argument seem formidable. If I had ever met the giant Cormoran, I should have made a point of agreeing with him in his literary opinions" (Ch. 5). Esther's jibe draws attention to Felix's forcefulness as well as to his massive size. It also casts herself in the role of Jack the Giant-Killer, smaller but cleverer and ultimately triumphant over her large antagonist. While an Englishwoman's knowledge of the Giant Cormoran would not require a visit to Cornwall, Esther's mention alludes to a figure from the general region that forms the setting for much of her mother's plot in the novel.

As their stay on the Scilly Isles drew to a close, Lewes, who claims in *Sea-side Studies* that as a boy he wanted to be a sailor (1858: 1), became apprehensive about their return on the *Ariadne*. When the couple decided to move on to Jersey, he reports that the very stones of Scilly have grown tired of him and his singing (1858: 196). By this time they had discarded the idea of going to Brittany and substituted the Channel Islands. Scilly had been a pig in a poke, but, having attended school in St Helier, Lewes had certain, if dated, knowledge of their second island destination, and therefore more confidence in their expectations. The journey to Brittany they had planned waited until 1865.

The *Ariadne* carried them to Penzance smoothly enough, but events ultimately justified all the anxieties about its seaworthiness. Records in the Maritime Museum at Greenwich mention that the *Ariadne* did not end its service as a picturesque abandoned vessel. Rather, like so many nineteenth-century working boats, it sank to the bottom of the sea.

Jersey cows

The Leweses' journey from Scilly to Jersey, though the remainder was accomplished mostly under steam, took a full five days: from Hugh Town to Penzance to Falmouth, and then across the Channel. Somehow, the five-day journey did not completely annihilate them. They arrived at the port weakened by seasickness and sleeplessness but began immediately to set themselves up. When Lewes saw the town where he had gone to school as a lad, he could scarcely recognize it. St Helier had changed indeed since his schooldays (Haight 1968: 226). Its harbor, where two large docks, Victoria and Albert, had opened in the interim, had become actively commercial. Up the hill and around a bend, they were grateful to find that Royal Square had changed far less. Here they based themselves while they went to seek a place to live during the early summer months they intended to spend on Jersey.

Once the bustling center of St Helier, Royal Square had become quieter. Rectangular rather than square, its edges do not form neat, even lines. Rather, it takes

its shape from buildings that protrude according to their own nature into a roughly-shaped central oblong occupied by some greenery and a startlingly bright gold statue of George II in the garb of Caesar. The surrounding buildings are punctuated by bullets from the Battle of Jersey in which young Major Pierson fell dead in his moment of victory in 1781. The theater, a thrilling attraction for the dramatic young Lewes, still stood to the left as they looked out from their hotel. They booked into the Union where, for the brief time they intended to remain there, they could revive Lewes's schoolboy memories.

They did not linger to rest, but walked immediately to St Aubin's to the southwest of St Helier. Disappointed there because of insufficient possibilities for obtaining fish, they next tried Gorey to the northeast (H&J 699). During the winter months, the oyster trade was in full swing, a business worth an estimated £30,000 (*Island of Jersey* 1859: 48) and which supplied London with the bounty of bivalves consumed so frequently in Dickens's novels. In one day, they found the Amy family and arranged to lease Rosa Cottage. They then returned to St Helier, bought the chair and the bath they needed, arranged to transport these bulky items, and were settled in at Gorey for three months.

The Amys' house lay near the southern point of the crescent-shaped string of buildings that curves around the bay before climbing the hill toward St Martin's Chapel.[3] High to the north, Mont Orguiel, topped with its ruined castle, created a dramatic view and a barrier, blocking off Gorey from the rest of the northern coast. Across the way, a grassy common stretched off toward the south, creating a green band separating the sands from the road to St Helier. They could look out over the harbor at the idle oyster boats sitting hard aground at low tide, tipping uncomfortably on their hulls like fish out of water.

The beaches at Gorey present some challenges for walkers. They have the extreme tides to be expected just across the bay from Mont St Michel, and at low tide the water recedes for miles to reveal heaps of rocks covered with dreary brown seaweed stretching to the horizon. The occasional Martello towers that punctuate the scalloped bays and highlight these views do not relieve their dimness and grimness.[4] The Leweses walked along the beach but complained of the quality of the sand. On the other hand, they loved the inland walks. A favorite led them up the hill toward the church at the top and into Queen's Farm Valley on the other side, where they reveled in the orchards, the picturesque farm buildings, and the wild flowers (H&J 280). Arriving at the season when the ubiquitous orchards were flowering, they felt especially refreshed after the barrenness surrounding them at Hugh Town.

After the first week-and-a-half at Gorey, Evans began the pursuit of two important correspondences, one with her family in Warwickshire and the other with John Blackwood. Fracturing her life into personal and professional spheres, these exchanges began in mid-May, ten days after their arrival, and both had decisive results. Beginning on Saturday 15 May 1857, a series of rainy days left time for careful composition of the letters she posted to her family on the following Wednesday. Evans enclosed a letter to her sister Fanny Houghton in one she addressed to her brother Isaac informing them both in a roundabout way of her

living arrangement with Lewes, whom she describes as her husband. Less than a week later, she mailed the first part of "Janet's Repentance" to her publisher.

The Leweses had now sustained their pose as a conventionally-married couple for two months. Otherwise, the way they were passing their first days in Gorey provides no explanation as to Evans's timing of her long-delayed announcement. She was working on the beginning of "Janet's Repentance," taking beautiful spring walks, and reading *Emma* outdoors up on the castle hill. Lewes was scavenging in the Channel and establishing a fruitful connection with his landlord's brother-in-law, one of the family boat owners. Nor does the content of the letters explain the timing, although money may have had something to do with it, as Evans needed a check forwarded for deposit in Lewes's account. She had been fretting over Chrissey Clarke's health, and was looking for a method of providing her sister with a small part of her own income.

On Monday 8 June 1857, John Blackwood wrote from London about his initial reactions to "Janet's Repentance." The following day Vincent Holbeche, her brother's attorney, wrote in response to her announcement about her relationship with Lewes. On Thursday, the 11th, she replied to Blackwood; on Saturday, the 13th, to Holbeche.

The temporally parallel correspondences have similarities. In both cases Evans stood up to a powerful man. Since reaching adulthood, she and her brother had never recaptured the closeness of their childhood. He saw himself clearly as in authority over his sisters, and they had several quarrels after Evans returned from Geneva. The Jersey–Warwickshire exchange of letters severed a relationship, indeed several relationships. Meanwhile, the other exchange weathered the difficulties it expressed and confirmed the durable author–publisher association between Blackwood and herself. As it did so, it sent Evans's writing in newly prosperous directions, both financially and artistically.

The dynamics of the exchange with Blackwood have interested many readers, including Roland Anderson and Rosemarie Bodenheimer, who detect its effects in the fiction. With "Mr Gilfil" and again with "Janet," the author retained her conception of her stories, although willing to omit and alter certain things. Usually, Blackwood's reservations stemmed from a more complacent world view than his author's. He found the first part of "Janet's Repentance" "harsher" (*GEL* 2:359), and picked out for praise what he saw as the gentler comedy in the scene of the women preparing lending library books at Mrs Linnet's. Partly in reaction, she decided (and he concurred) to end the series of *Scenes of Clerical Life* and begin a full-length novel. Meanwhile, Lewes wrote to Blackwood suggesting he keep quiet about any aversions to George Eliot's writing unless they were serious enough to decide him against publishing the story.

This exchange resulted in efforts that produced the most commercially successful of all George Eliot's fiction, *Adam Bede*. After she returned to London, she described the full-length project to Blackwood in oddly bucolic terms: a "country" story full of "the breath of cows and the scent of hay" (*GEL* 2:387). Meanwhile, in Gorey, the presence of "the breath of cows and the scent of hay" helps explain the weirdness of promising her publisher fictional cow breath. The Queen's Farm

Valley walk in particular brought her close to the cows, whose name has become one of Jersey's most recognizable exports. As the couple walked through the valley, with its clear brook, woody slopes, and "*perfect* pond" (her italics), they would stop "to pat the mild cows tethered with a view to those long grasses" (2:368). Having experienced the "breath of cows" in Jersey, there remained but the "scent of hay," which became conspicuous around 8 July 1857 when George Eliot's journal mentions haymaking "in all the meadows" (H&J 70).

Although Queen's Farm itself does not make a particularly good model for the Hall Farm (placed in Warwickshire by Mudge and Sears, 1924: 256), the description of the walk through the valley closely resembles the description in "The Hidden Dread" chapter of *Adam Bede*, where the narrator remembers a landscape similar to the one in George Eliot's Jersey journal. He recalls traveling away from England, but among English-looking "woods rolling down the gentle slopes to the green meadows," and among "clustering appleblossoms" where "a clear brook was gurgling below" (Ch. 35). Although the narrator contrasts this non-English memory with the February English countryside in "The Hidden Dread," the scene of Hetty's decision to run away, its details match the late-spring setting of the favorite Jersey walk: "we began to descend always by the wood side, with the birds singing and the sunlight shimmering in the boughs above us … until we came quite to the depth of the valley, and [wound] our way along a narrow path with a clear musical brook running between banks fringed with long grasses and ferns" (H&J 280–1). Similarly, the "*perfect* pond" in Queen's Valley resembles the pond by which Hetty sits considering, but rejecting, the idea of drowning herself: a pool with grassy banks and an oak tree against which she reclines.

Meanwhile, George Eliot was expanding her descriptive powers by learning the names and individuating features of the wild flowers that she delighted in as the scenery turned from the flowering orchards, to the carpets of fruit-tree blossoms fallen to the ground, to the fields of iris and vetches (H&J 281). The descriptive passages of all her novels gained from the assiduousness of her botany in Jersey, where she consulted several books on the subject.[5]

Although Evans confessed to her friends that she had trouble matching the pictures with anything that actually grew in Jersey, she did succeed with the woodspurge and the yellow iris. One of the sources on which she drew, Agnes Catlow's *Popular Field Botany*, describes English flowers according to the months in which they bloom. In Jersey, she noted, they bloomed on average a month earlier than Catlow indicates (H&J 68). The woodspurge appears in "March" and is illustrated with a delicately-colored plate at the lower left-hand corner of a page quartered into pictures of three other plants in tinted colors. The paler green of the woodspurge petals stands out against its "oblong" leaves, colored on their undersides in a contrasting pinkish red. Green of both petal and leaf, according to Catlow it stands tall, "almost shrubby" in "woods and thickets" (1852: 70). George Eliot found it in Queen's Farm Valley, and in her journal mentions it by its Latin name: *Euphorbia*. The yellow water iris also bloomed in Queen's Valley. Catlow's description suggests that identification was easier in this case: "Its sword-shaped leaves, and large, deep yellow flowers render it very conspicuous" (189). Later, the

journal identifies another species among the fields—"the red sorrel" (*GEL* 2:368). Indeed, Hetty's surname turns up regularly in the records of Jersey residents, and, in the novel, her French-sounding ancestry accounts for some of her vagaries, at least to old Mr Poyser.

In addition to Hetty's surname and the Queen's Valley setting for "The Hidden Dread," one more detail associates her with a Jersey view. The 1859 guide, *The Island of Jersey*, describes the oyster-fishing boats: "It is a most charming thing to witness the fleet of oyster-boats with all sails spread, making for the harbor" (*Island of Jersey* 1859: 39). At Gorey, the Leweses lived overlooking a bay full of moored or beached oyster vessels. The narrator of *Adam Bede* compares Hetty's tormented decision to marry Adam to "the motions of a little vessel without ballast tossed about on a stormy sea. How pretty it looked with its particoloured sail in the sunlight, moored in the quiet bay!" (Ch. 31). Neither the seafront at Ilfracombe with the obstruction of the Capstone, nor the steep three-sided harbor at Tenby, nor even the shipwreck-strewn harbor at Hugh Town matches this description of a tranquil bay so well as the bay on Jersey where the oyster boats rested both day and night in the summer season.

Finally, a vivid direct trace of the Scilly–Jersey journey appears in an important contrast of settings in *Adam Bede*. George Eliot's journal mentions the shock of traveling from the barren granite of the Scilly Isles to the blooming orchards of the Channel Islands: "The orchards were all in blossom—and this is an island of orchards. They cover the slopes; they stretch before you in shady, grassy, infinite extent through every other gateway by the roadside; they flourish in some spots almost close to the sea. What a contrast to the Scilly isles!" (H&J 280). Early in *Adam Bede*, the narrator takes the focalization of Colonel Townley, the traveler who crosses the line between Loamshire and Stoneyshire, to report: "in two or three hours' ride the traveler might exchange a bleak treeless region, intersected by lines of cold grey stone, for one where his road wound under the shelter of woods, or up swelling hills, muffled with hedgerows and long meadow-grass and thick corn" (Ch. 2).[6] The Colonel goes on to pass hanging woods similar to ones in Jersey: "not yet deepened into the uniform leafy curtain of high summer, but still showing the warm tints of the young oak and the tender green of the ash and lime" and admires "the feathered grass and the tall red sorrel" (Ch. 2). In her "Recollections of Jersey 1857," Evans writes, "When we first saw this valley it was in the loveliest springtime: the woods were a delicious mixture of red and tender green and purple. We have watched it losing that spring beauty, passing into the green and flowery luxuriance of June, and now into the more monotonous summer tint of July", when "the grasses mingled with the red sorrel" (281). In *Adam Bede*, George Eliot's landscapes repeat much of the diction of her Jersey descriptions of Queen's Valley.

Evans ends her Jersey journal with a reference to an "amusing" (H&J 282) outing. She and Lewes, strangers to the commonness of the gambling life, attended the horse race meeting in the middle of July just a week before they left the island. Facing the conclusion to their six-month island season, they were varying their walking recreations and outings. They had already indulged in a day of touring by carriage, a rare and expensive treat, which took them to two of the bays to the

north where the scenery changes from that around Gorey. Driving to Bouley Bay and Rozel Bay, they traveled roads of deeper greenery than the orchards and farms near Gorey. On the northeast corner of the oblong island, the bays ebb and flow toward steep slopes of creviced verdure, rather than the slightly less steep slopes of orchards or cultivated land.

Their second purely recreational outing, this one completely out of character, again provides a detail that is possibly one of the multitude of tiny snippets of description George Eliot collected throughout her life for *Middlemarch*. The Jersey horse races have attracted several painters to depict the subject—the high-spirited people, arriving vehicles, and promising racers on which hopes are pinned. In 1850, Philip John Ouless painted the scene as it occurred a few years before the Lewes's visit. His view looks north toward the village of Gorey where the curve of the bay terminates in a far-distant brown bulge indicating Mont Orguiel Castle. In the foreground, a white horse the size of a camel requires restraining. Rows of colored tents topped with banners standing stiff in the sea breeze provide the festive touch. The tide, along the right edge of the painting, is in.

In the middle of July, after long months of work on her fiction and conflict with her family and her publisher, George Eliot and Lewes spent not one but two days at the race meeting. Regarding themselves on this occasion as class tourists, they found the meet "amusing" (H&J 282) as they moved among the crowds. They watched the gambling at gaming tables as well as on the horse racing and, rather than enjoying the performance, they observed "the *crowd* [my italics] round a company of mountebanks" (H&J 282). John Raffles, loping unwelcome into *Middlemarch* years later, would fit well within the group at the Jersey event. Caleb Garth registers his astonishment at Raffles' appearance in his remark: "Bless my heart! What's this fellow in black coming along the lane? He's like one of those men one sees about after the races" (Ch. 53). Having observed "a little of Jersey human nature" as they "strolled about the ground" in the intervals "between the races" (H&J 282), George Eliot could deftly place Raffles in the company of gamesters who frequent race meetings.

However, the most indelible impression of the island recorded in "Recollections of Jersey" is of the blooming landscape, in particular the orchards, always part of the more pastoral scenes in George Eliot's fiction. Although a common part of any English landscape, they impressed her most strongly when viewed in Jersey. The effect of their unending extent, which she describes in her journal (as quoted above), remained an aesthetic standard at least until 1863 when she wrote to Sara Hennell again referring to their "luxuriant green" (*GEL* 4:89). Indeed, the views of the cultivated flora of Jersey, together with her study of Catlow's and Thomson's books on wild flowers, preceded the writing of fiction newly thick with flowers and trees. Whereas much of "Amos Barton" takes place during the drabbest seasons, and the flowering landscape of "Mr Gilfil" is largely limited to the Cheverel Manor rose garden, in "Janet's Repentance," written in Jersey, the narrator describes the contents of Mr Jerome's gorgeous garden with great specificity, naming species: "red-streaked apples, russets, northern greens (excellent for baking), swan-egg pears, and early vegetables" (Ch. 8). The flowers in this same garden make up a

delightful jumble that manifests her botanical study: "anemones, auriculas, wallflowers, sweet-williams, campanulas, snapdragons, and tiger-lilies" (Ch. 8). Cross later reports that his wife had mastered botany and frequently showed an almost professional expertise on the subject of wild flowers (3:343), an expertise manifested in her fiction beginning with "Janet's Repentance," but continuing throughout.

The Isle of Wight

Evans and Lewes never returned to these distant island destinations, but, like many Victorians, repeatedly holidayed on an English island much closer to the mainland. The Isle of Wight, though highly tamed by Victorian tourism, still offered spectacular cliffs and wildness enough to make it refreshingly different from the mainland coast. At five miles distance, it remains visible from the Hampshire mainland, and its location and shape evoke physical spaces from the third section of *Gulliver's Travels*, specifically the airborne floating island of Laputa.

This English island destination, the 1847 venue of her series of summers with her father, and one to which she later returned several times with Lewes, left almost no detectable traces in George Eliot's novels. After Evans's return to St Leonard's in 1853 and pause in Dover in 1855, the Isle of Wight was the only one left to revisit, of the summer spots where she stayed with her father. She enjoyed a springtime interlude in Niton in 1859, a post-*Romola* break in 1863, and a two-week holiday in the summer of 1869. On holidays with Lewes, however, she did not choose to remain at Ryde as her father had preferred. Indeed, she did not again return to stay in Ryde itself until 1870 when the point of the visit lay more in visiting Barbara Bodichon than in revisiting the town with the long pier. Bodichon invited them to recover at her lodgings in Swanmore after Thornie Lewes's death in 1869. Demurring on that occasion, they accepted Bodichon's invitation the following winter and spent Christmas with her at Swanmore Parsonage, just over the hill from the Ryde harbor.

Indeed, the lack of Wight-related settings and characters in George Eliot's novels suggests that this island served more purely as a holiday venue than any of the others she visited. The island developed rapidly during the decades the Leweses were visiting there. Quirky Victorian architecture flourished at Ryde, where a Wemmick's Castle-type home might go up at any time on any corner. Solent yachting attracted sailors. The royal visitors at Osborne Castle lent the island the fashionable appeal always imparted by visits from the Queen. Photographers learning their new art loved to shoot the rocky coastline, the beaches, and the shipping.

Like many visitors, George Eliot found Niton the loveliest spot on the island, and her 1859 visit occurred in April when the high slopes above the sea are at their most beautiful. From lodgings set into the middle of the hill, the couple could look upward toward the brilliant yellow furze that crowned them (which Lewes particularly enjoyed), or downward to sea-washed cliffs punctuated here and there with shelves of green meadows. In April, the blooming camellias, bluebells, and pink-blossomed cherry trees tumbled from terrace to terrace, while an occasional palm

tree emphasized the mild climate. Still beyond the reach of the railway, the terrace of the Sandrock Inn stretched from gable to gable across its front and made a perfect spot for tea. From there, the Leweses could take their walks toward the beach or plan a jaunt as far as Freshwater. They revisited, much more happily, the colored cliffs at Alum Bay that had provided a high point for the devoted daughter of Robert Evans in the 1840s.

I can detect no particular settings modeled on any Isle of Wight site. But Niton and the surrounding coastal area make much of their nautical history. Victorian photographers fixed many images of ships wrecked on the rocky cliffs, while paraphernalia and relics connected with fishing, shipping, smuggling, and drowning hang on the walls of inns and taverns. The seventeenth-century Buddle Inn, just down the hill from the Sandrock, claims to have welcomed both smugglers and customs agents to its parlors on alternate nights, and, like the terrace at the hotel, its yard overlooks the busy and treacherous waters of the Channel.

Consequently, one detail of *The Mill on the Floss* could have been immediately prompted by the Lewes's 1859 interlude at Niton: the chapter title "Daylight on the Wreck." The frequency of shipwrecks as a subject of art rarely includes such unpicturesque craft as the other important boat in the novel: the little rowboat which overturns to drown Maggie and Tom. Meanwhile, the commercial content of the chapter, which concerns Mr Tulliver's vague responses to his losses, suggests the wreck as a merchant vessel rather than a pleasure boat. The drowning that ends *The Mill* occurs on a river many miles from the Humber Estuary and the open sea into which it eventually empties, and the craft involved is a rowing boat used for recreation and not for shipping. Hence, the kind of wreck alluded to in the title of the chapter about Mr Tulliver's bankruptcy differs significantly from the drowning catastrophe it anticipates. The wreck-strewn coast of the Isle of Wight makes a better source for the chapter title than the trip to the River Trent the couple made five months later.

The Scilly Isles, in size, in scale, and in appearance, differ entirely from the Isle of Wight as they first visited it together in 1859—one wild, bare, and remote, the other a pretty and popular seashore with bathing machines and conveniences. In the Channel Islands too, however built up they had become since Lewes's school days, the couple chose to live in the remote village of Gorey, quiet in the summer interlude in the oyster business and from which they seldom strayed. George Eliot, however, paid the Isle of Wight one of the best compliments she could when she observed to Sara Hennell that it reminded her of the idyllic place where she started to write major fiction, the orchard-covered Channel Island of Jersey (*GEL* 4:89).

5 Brief stays in country shires

Gainsborough's purse-proud people
Built a new church to an old steeple
Local saying

George Eliot's scattered two- and three-day excursions away from London, designed to gather material or to work on specific projects, not only contributed directly to settings in the fiction, but, along with much longer summer leases, also contributed to the tranquility that facilitated its composition. Without the railways, the Leweses could not have managed several of their richly useful shorter stays in the country. As well as providing swift transportation, the arrival of the railways improved the chances for cheap lodgings, because, like the seaside hotels left over from the Napoleonic wars, now-superfluous coaching inns provided plenty of available rooms in more remote locations.

Among the briefer journeys, a three-day research trip to Gainsborough in 1859 and a series of short stays in Surrey in 1861–3 contributed to George Eliot's novels in different but equally fruitful ways, in the one case by providing local color for *The Mill on the Floss* and in the other by facilitating the research and writing of *Romola*, especially during the hectic last months of its serialization. In 1874, she repeated the tactic that succeeded well with *The Mill on the Floss* by making a four-day jaunt into Wiltshire to gather material for *Daniel Deronda,* discussed in Chapter 8.

Gainsborough's "purse-proud people"

The trip to Gainsborough in 1859 demonstrates how George Eliot could turn just a few days of travel to tremendous purpose in her writing. In Lincolnshire she was seeking a model for the town and river of her novel-in-progress, *The Mill on the Floss*, a novel heavy with detectable originals and coded communications with her brother Isaac. What she and Lewes saw in Gainsborough provided the Lincolnshire overlay designed to divert attention from the Warwickshire-based material in *The Mill.* By enhancing the strong sense of place in George Eliot's second novel, the Gainsborough local color helps disguise events and characters adapted from models recognizable in Warwickshire, one of her goals ever since the early fiction created embarrassment for herself and her publisher. It also adds to

traditional and current interpretations of the narrator, the narratee, and some of the characters. Two characters in particular, Maggie Tulliver and Philip Wakem, gain additional nuances from considerations of their placement in settings that George Eliot's English travels helped her create.

During the 1860s, mostly toward the end of the decade when George Eliot was writing *Middlemarch,* the Leweses varied their usual southern routes in England with a few northern ones. They traveled to Harrogate in 1864, and to Leeds and Sheffield four years later, with stops along the way. The first of her journeys northward, however, occurred in September of 1859, and, like the later ones, had specific detectable effects on the composite settings in *The Mill.* The possibility of such a quick trip to Gainsborough, a destination 150 miles from London, resulted directly from the railway, which had reached Lincolnshire in 1849. The rapid transportation made possible a good deal of productive sightseeing, even though the couple left home on Monday morning and returned on Wednesday night. The geography of the Gainsborough area added much substance to George Eliot's descriptions of the River Floss's flat banks and its floods and tides. It also prompted narrations of the history of St Ogg's and references to the town's wharves, roofs, and gables. Finally, Gainsborough contributed to the novel one of its most important settings: the hall where the bazaar takes place just before the climactic aborted elopement of Stephen and Maggie.

George Eliot and Lewes had been planning the 1859 trip since the early spring, and during the months before its realization, she continued to work on *The Mill*; but first a visit from John Blackwood, then sickness, then the likelihood of bad weather, led to repeated postponements (*GEL* 3:69). Finally, in September, after fruitless visits to Wales and Dorset, the couple were able to find the time for their third attempt to locate the right river.

Back in London three days later, the novelist began to make changes and additions to her manuscript. In April 1859, George Eliot recorded her intention of revising "the two first chapters" (H&J 77) of her novel-in-progress. In June, she noted having reached page 85 (H&J 77). This rate of progress suggests that the Lincolnshire material made up the additions and revisions she had planned. The specificity of her descriptions of Gainsborough, the Trent, and the Old Hall in the completed novel indicate that her revisions included adding more water, adapting several new place names from the Lincolnshire map, dwelling longer on the history of St Ogg's, and planning the Gainsborough Old Hall as a setting for climactic events of the third volume. In the part of the book already written, she added long paragraphs to the beginnings and ends of sections, so that the Gainsborough material appears in the shape of introductions and conclusions, rhetorically privileged parts of the text.

Leaving from Euston Station on Monday morning, the travelers made their first overnight stop at Newark, some thirty miles south of Gainsborough. As an erstwhile stage along the coach route from London to York, this riverside market town supported many inns. Local tourist literature indicates that the Clinton Arms (when still called the Kingston Arms) had housed Byron during his meetings with his publisher and that Sir Walter Scott often stayed at the Saracen's Head, which he included as a setting in *The Heart of Midlothian;* but by the time of the visit by the

Leweses, the town had lost the liveliness imparted by the coaching business. Instead of a vital halfway point between London and York, it became just another station on the railway. Indeed, the trains that made it an easy stop for Victorian travelers also contributed to its decline. Within a short time after the arrival of the railways, none of the coach routes formerly stopping at Newark survived.

Deciding among Newark's many hotels, the Leweses chose the Ram (*GEL* 4:473), an inn established on the old market site not far from the river. Tradition dates this market from the reign of King John who supposedly created it to dispose of Crusaders' loot returned to England by Richard the Lionheart. When transformed into an inn, its spaces provided an unusually roomy building for dining, drinking, and accommodation, and its high redbrick façade dwarfed the thatched and whitewashed Royal Oak next door. Across the road, guests at the Ram had a clear view of the ruins of Newark Castle standing imposingly between the inn and the River Trent.

Since George Eliot specifically mentions this view in her journal, it probably helped attract the couple to the Ram on the night of 26 September 1859 (H&J 80). At the same time, the castle ruins—the remnants of half-demolished towers, gray battlements, and empty arched windows—helped render Newark unsuitable as a setting for *The Mill*. The problem lay in its grandness, for the narrator describes the Dodsons and Tullivers as the opposite of grand, indeed as the opposite of the inhabitants of castles. The Rhine–Rhone passage, which begins the chapter "A Variety of Protestantism Unknown to Bossuet," contrasts the fierce but dashing inhabitants of the Rhine castles with humdrum Rhone flood victims and aligns the residents of St Ogg's with the people of the Rhone. In this way, Newark's castle enters *The Mill* by negation, for George Eliot transfers the castle–village contrast from Lincolnshire to the Continent, at the same time rejecting Newark as a setting for her novel, despite its history of catastrophic flooding.[1]

The Eagre

The next day, Tuesday the 27th, the couple traveled on to Gainsborough. Here, the beautiful September weather helped make their explorations pleasant as well as productive. The Gainsborough waterfront where, instead of romantic ruins, they found serviceable commercial wharves, helped carry forth the grand castle–plodding village contrast. In tribute to the town's commercialism, the traditional Lincolnshire rhyme quoted above refers slyly to "Gainsborough's purse-proud people" who "built a new church to an old steeple." In a passage in *The Mill*'s Chapter 12, the narrator refers directly to an ancient "bit of wall now built into the belfry of the parish church" (Book 1), while the wharves along the Trent suggest the accuracy of the mercenary adjective applied in the rhyme. Thus far, Gainsborough's "purse-proud" commercialism answered the need for a non-Warwickshire setting in which to dramatize Maggie Tulliver's passionate inability to fit in with her neighbors' (and her brother's) plodding acquisitiveness.

The Leweses followed their initial impressions of Gainsborough with one of the most fruitful activities of their visit, a voyage northward on the Trent. Their hired boat carried them with the tide to the point where the river meets its tributary, the

River Idle. There, they left the little vessel in order to explore the surrounding level, hedgerowed terrain with a view toward placing a fictional mill on its northern bank. Afterward, they trekked more than three miles back to Gainsborough. Showing considerable mercy toward her characters, especially Tom Tulliver who makes this same walk on the discouraging day he goes to ask his Uncle Deane for employment, George Eliot shortens the distance by placing the Ripple "just by" (Book 1, Ch. 1) St Ogg's, rather than a two-hour walk away.

The excursion to the Idle yielded all of the Lincolnshire-based description of the River Floss, including the descriptive dashes in the novel's impressionistic opening. Flowing northward and forming the boundary between Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire, the Trent eventually meets the River Ouse, which flows in from the west. The joined rivers turn east into the Humber Estuary, which then empties into the North Sea. Along its way, the Trent welcomes some poetically-named tributaries, including the Idle, and offers good fishing. George Eliot describes its strong tides as a major cause of prosperity because they contribute their own natural force to carry commercial vessels to and from St Ogg's. The narrator mentions the tides of the Floss in the introductory sentence of *The Mill*, and they suit the Trent as a setting for a novel George Eliot had been planning to set on a flood-prone river for nearly a year (H&J 76).

Indeed, the Trent boasts a tide of its own, the Eagre, that singularizes it as a river and clearly identifies it as the original of the Floss.[2] Writing in 1855, geographer Samuel Lewis Jr describes how the Eagre carries before it toward Gainsborough a mass of water which "flows in a white curling wave, varying according to circumstance from one to four feet in perpendicular appearance" (1855: 381). According to Lewis, it moves at nine miles per hour and creates "noise" and "commotion." George Eliot's retention of the romantic name of the Eagre pins down her location as Lincolnshire even though she fictionalizes many of the novel's place names, notably St Ogg's, the Ripple, and the Floss itself. In addition, she adapts this description of the Eagre in Volume 3 as a metaphor applied to the privilege of Stephen Guest over the other young men of St Ogg's. At the bazaar, his contemporary, Torry, applies a common but especially apposite analogy when he notes that Stephen "is a privileged person in St Ogg's—he carries all before him" (Book 6, Ch. 9). He sweeps through St Ogg's society as forcefully as the Eagre sweeps toward Gainsborough from the Humber Estuary.

Because George Eliot had nearly finished the first volume of *The Mill* before going to Gainsborough, she added the local color she gathered there most often at the beginnings or ends of sections already completed. In a substantially new first chapter, the narrator dreams of standing on a bridge over the Ripple to observe the surrounding plain, the mill, a returning wagon, and, finally, Maggie herself. In this chapter, the tides facilitate shipping, and the narrator eroticizes the action between the rush of the river toward the sea and the rush of the incoming tides toward St Ogg's. The "loving tide" meets the flowing Floss and "checks its passage with an impetuous embrace" (Book 1, Ch. 1). Four chapters later, "Tom Comes Home" ends with three paragraphs of happy companionship between Maggie and Tom on the banks of the Ripple and the Floss.

As the conflict between the children builds, George Eliot replaces the erotic ship-bearing tides with the narrator's reference to the Eagre, which arrives, not like the loving tides of Chapter 1, but rather "like a hungry monster" (Book 1, Ch. 5). After this description, seven Warwickshire-oriented chapters center mostly on the episode of Maggie and the gypsies until the opening of Chapter 12, "Mr and Mrs Glegg at Home." This chapter begins with a history of St Ogg's that culminates with the narrative of the saintly ferryman and his passenger, the Blessed Virgin. Hence, in the beginning of the novel, the chapter openings and closings provide the decoy material George Eliot based on the River Trent landscape that she accumulated during her three-day stay in September of 1859. After the visit, she turns to writing a chapter that draws all of its material from her Gainsborough jaunt.

Although she changed the names of the novel's major town and its two rivers, George Eliot took names for many minor settings in *The Mill* from maps of the Gainsborough region. The Mosses live in Bassett, which shortens the name of Bassetdaw, just over the bridge from Gainsborough. North of Gainsborough lies Morton; Tom Tulliver goes to school at King's Lorton, often shortened to "Lorton." In Volume 3, the characters mention "Luckreth" and "Tofton." The first of these names borrows a syllable from where the Leweses explored the Idle and the Trent by boat and on foot that weekend in September 1859. In the novel, Walkerith becomes Luckreth. The second river village includes a syllable from nearby Toft next Newton (or indeed from its neighbor Newton by Toft) as a destination for the young people's rowing parties. Composite characters and settings, retaining some Gainsborough names and adapting others, help reduce the number of details from the Nuneaton–Griff area where she and her brother experienced a shared childhood similar in a number of points to Maggie and Tom's, but lacking a river.

The stone bay window

In addition to the river material in Volume 1, George Eliot added to her novel-in-progress a second setting that, like the Eagre, clearly identifies St Ogg's as Gainsborough. The Old Hall, first the residence of Lord Burgh and later the home of the seventeenth-century Hickman family, has long formed the town's major attraction for tourists. The narrator of *The Mill* depends on a description of the Hall to emphasize that one trouble with St Ogg's is its forgetfulness of its own past, for the Old Hall represents that past strikingly in its bricks and beams. In the early pages of Chapter 12 the narrator's first-person plural instructs the audience that "we must enter the town of St Ogg's" (Book 1) and then personifies the historical stages through which the town has passed by means of "Roman legions," a "Saxon hero-king," the "dreadful heathen Dane," and the Normans, to whom she attributes the building of the hall (Book 1, Ch. 12). According to the narrator, the Hall's combination of its original timbered architecture with later stone-and-brick Gothic wings requires that "we look with loving pardon on its inconsistencies" (Book 1, Ch. 12), because they instructively embody successive eras of Lincolnshire history.

Although carbon dating calls into question George Eliot's conclusions about chronology, in her scheme the Hall's three materials—timber, stone, and brick—

make distinct these historical stages, and George Eliot describes them in *The Mill* with scrupulous fidelity. (According to Gainsborough tourist information, carbon dating violates her scheme by definitely identifying the Hall's builders as fifteenth-century rather than Norman.) She repeats the Hall's design faithfully by placing the banqueting room at the bottom center of a U-shape, with the later brick east and west wings attached at right angles on either side. Within the banqueting rooms of both fact and fiction, a stone bay Gothic-arched window curves outward, oddly, from the upper end of the large high-ceilinged rectangular central hall. Like the window's shape, its gray color marks it off distinctly from the white walls and oak timbers of the main part of the building. Its distinctive shape and color make it conspicuous both within the large room and when viewed from the outside.

Although the introductory passage in Chapter 12 of *The Mill on the Floss* describes the Old Hall without setting any action there, one draft of this early section records George Eliot's intention to make it an important setting later in the narrative. The deleted passage promises the reader that "you will enter [the Hall] some day" (1961 665). That day arrives after just one passing remark by Bob Jakin when he brings his choices from the bookstall at the fair to Maggie in Book 6. Bob's comment on the ladies going to balls in the Old Hall acknowledges the site of the building and its nineteenth-century function as a community center. Not isolated within a large park, but rather positioned centrally on a flat plot not far from the river, it became a civic building easily accessible for meetings and other activities such as the balls Bob mentions. When Stephen escapes Philip's accusations about Maggie by visiting the town library housed in one of the wings, he is seeking out the quiet of a section devoted during the temporal setting of the novel to yet another community function.

In the third volume of *The Mill*, the hall gains impact by contributing to fuller interpretations of the actions of two important characters, Maggie and Philip. Maggie's position in the Old Hall emphasizes her differentness from her neighbors by setting her apart from them in the curve of the curiously placed Gothic bay window, while Philip's position overlooking the scene casts doubt on the integrity of his love by associating him with one of the Hall's early visitors, Richard III.

By the day of the bazaar, Maggie has become tortured by the conflict between her passion for Stephen and her loyalty to Lucy. In the Old Hall, where the event goes forth, George Eliot places Maggie in the curve of the stained-glass window, while the rest of the St Ogg's people gather in the main banqueting area. Like her simpler clothes, this position separates Maggie from the social group. Whereas they bustle about under the supposedly Saxon–Norman timbers, she sits apart, touched by the light from the Gothic stained glass, and her expression of agonized weariness contrasts with the eager buying and selling in which her neighbors engage. Her isolation in the protruding window thus intensifies her alienation at the same time that it makes Maggie more Pre-Raphaelite. It also creates foreshadowing because, like the window the narrator describes in the earlier chapter, Maggie herself will soon require "pardon" for "inconsistencies" (Book 1, Ch. 12).

A second consequence of the deliberate connection between Gainsborough's and George Eliot's Old Halls affects interpretations of Philip Wakem. The tourist information on the Old Hall mentions two royal visitors, Richard III and Henry

VIII, both of whom are said to have dined at the head table. In the novel, Philip enters the bazaar without greeting anyone and takes a seat in an orchestra nook placed in the wall just above this table. Here he can look down on Maggie, and he soon observes Stephen in an intense exchange with her that raises his suspicions. Because Philip's "deformity" (Book 5, Ch. 6) creates an initial link between him and Richard III, his subsequent surreptitiousness enhances the unpleasant streak many readers have attributed to him. He seems to be lurking behind the curtain to spy on Maggie. In this scene George Eliot makes a rare architectural change that creates textual emphasis. Departing from the fidelity of her other representations of the Old Hall, she installs a gallery above the dining table to replace the narrow squint which actually forms the only opening in the wall. This change assures the importance of the events that take place in the added-on part of the setting. Its implications reduce the worthiness of Philip as a lover.

The fictional fruits of the Gainsborough trip also place the act of travel itself in the foreground of *The Mill* by constructing the narrator, the characters, and the narratee as metaphorical or actual travelers. In the new first chapter, the narrator is only dreaming of the spot by the Ripple, but in this dream he or she takes a position on the bridge as an observer, an outsider, a visitor to the scene. Later, in the happy ending of the "Tom Comes Home" chapter, Maggie and Tom's visit to the banks of the Floss imparts to the children "a sense of travel" (Book 1, Ch. 5). Because the site of Maggie's earliest memory is not the Ripple that she and Tom regard as their own possession, but the larger, more imposing and slightly distant Floss, their little journeys form a most important part of their relationship and unite them first of all as young travelers on an excursion.

The Rhine–Rhone passage of Chapter 12 depends on the second-person direct address to create a narratee also familiar with both rivers: a Continental traveler like this narrator and like the narrator in *Adam Bede* who mentions the wayside crucifixes found in Catholic countries in a tone that assumes the implied audience has also traveled there. Beginning the bazaar scene, the narrator appeals also to a narratee who travels in England by describing the setting as a destination: "It would have been worthwhile to come even from a distance to see the fine old Hall" (Book 6, Ch. 9). The narrator of *The Mill* thus encourages visiting the highlight attraction of George Eliot's own visit to Gainsborough, indeed encourages fruitful travel in general.

By the same token, one reason the aborted elopement results in disaster is that it is travel undertaken carelessly. Without planning, Maggie and Stephen's journey down the Floss meets bad weather that impels the couple to change their destination from Torby (Goole) to Mudport (Scunthorpe). After Maggie decides to return to St Ogg's, she increases her troubles by boarding a coach without checking on its destination just to escape Stephen before he can weaken her resolution. This mistake costs her a day, and the delay clinches Tom's conviction that she has disgraced her family. Unplanned, full of mistakes, the elopement exemplifies careless travel that contrasts with the productive journeying that helped the author to augment her novel's strong sense of place.

The two characters who have traveled badly are condemned to continue to do so: Stephen writes to Maggie from Holland that "Perhaps they tell you that I have been

'travelling.' My body has been dragged about somewhere but *I* have never travelled from the hideous place where you left me" (Book 7, Ch. 5). Maggie, too, must accede to the power of the gossip about her and leave her position at Dr Kenn's to become a "lonely wanderer" (Book 6, Ch. 9). As in the conclusion to *Adam Bede*, where two different forms of travel, transportation and war, become the wages of sexual sin for Hetty and Arthur, exile and fruitless wandering are the consequences of the aborted elopement of Stephen and Maggie. Only her death prevents the fulfillment of Maggie's condemnation to a mode of travel that, like Hetty's, Arthur's, and Stephen's, partakes of the medieval definition of travel as penance, rather than the travel for profit and pleasure in which the Leweses engaged.

The mill on the Thames

The combination of material from both Warwickshire and Lincolnshire makes up the bulk of *The Mill*'s assemblage of pointillistic, sundered elements. The settings directly based on Gainsborough include the river and the town, in particular the Old Hall. George Eliot's plans for the flooding in the novel, laid so long in advance of her Trent visit, assure that the trip resulted from the design of a narrative that would culminate with a flood, and the research in the *Annual Register* mentioned in January 1859 confirms that her plan included "inundation" (H&J 76) long before she set eyes on the River Trent.

Although Nuneaton has a small river of its own, the Anker, this gentle stream entirely lacks the scale and drama of the Trent. Because so little flooding occurs in the area where young Mary Ann and Isaac experienced many of the joys and conflicts written into the early chapters of *The Mill*, and because the early part of the novel was all written before the September research expedition to the Trent, only pure imagination or a third river could account for the original idea of a novel about a flood. What river might have suggested to George Eliot a novel with such a plot?

When the Leweses made the journey to Gainsborough, they had lived at Holly Lodge in Wandsworth for eight months. But when George Eliot conceived the idea of a flood-centered novel, they still lived at Park Shot in Richmond. Their lodgings lay only a few hundred yards from Richmond Green, the ancient jousting ground attached to Henry VII's Richmond Palace. By taking a jouster's diagonal path across the Green, the couple could then skirt the palace ruins and quickly reach the River Thames which has always attracted holidaymakers to Richmond during the warmer months (as pictured in J.M.W. Turner's watercolor, "Richmond Hill and Bridge"). In this bucolic river valley, the low banks of the Thames flood constantly, causing water to ripple up Old Palace, Friars, and Water Lanes toward the Green.

The banks of the Thames at Richmond provided nineteenth-century Londoners a place of comparative peace and recreation, an area with a rural atmosphere still within easy reach of London by railway. Charles Dickens and Alfred Tennyson both liked to stay at the Star and Garter Hotel, perched on the steep hillside of the south bank, where the hotel guests often swam along the river from bridge to bridge. George Eliot, agreeing with Walter Scott's praise for the famous view from Richmond Hill, kept it as a standard against which she measured other views for

"extent of boskage" (H&J 387). Earlier, the eighteenth-century poet James Thomson celebrated this spot in *The Seasons*, his enormously popular poem. The Leweses often took their guests, including Charles Bray, Herbert Spencer, John Blackwood, and Barbara Bodichon, for walks or rows along the Thames, either downriver along the edge of Kew Gardens or upriver toward Twickenham.

In August of 1858, George Eliot made up a boating party very similar to the ones in *The Mill*. With Barbara Bodichon and her husband, the Leweses rowed with the tide to Twickenham, left their boat, and then walked back to Richmond. Past the bridge in this direction, great houses stud the river walk, their grounds offering views of broad lawns that slope down to the river among bird-chirpy tall trees.[3]

The conditions of the Thames above Richmond thus duplicate those of the banks of the Floss in Volume 3 of the novel. The grown-up young characters in this section frequently take cushions to the boathouse at the foot of Lucy's garden and row with the tide to Luckreth, where they leave their boat and walk homeward. Indeed, this is the plan with which Stephen and Maggie set out, the day they run away together. When they discover they have gone past Luckreth, one of the things that weakens Maggie's resistence to Stephen's proposal is her weariness at the prospect of a long walk back to St Ogg's. She yields to "the recoil of her fatigued sensations from the impracticable difficulty of getting out of the boat at this unknown distance from home and walking for long miles" (Book 6, Ch. 13). Orleans, Marble Hill, and Ham Houses, standing grandly on the riverbanks above Richmond, far exceed Park House and Mr Deane's house in magnificence and scale, but a similar comfortable peace prevails in both places. Consequently, the similarities between the boating on the Thames at Richmond and the boating on the Floss at St Ogg's, together with the novel's conception in the small lodgings near Richmond Green, suggest that the idea for the central event of the novel occurred at Richmond-on-Thames. George Eliot adapted the composite settings for *The Mill* from Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, and, of all places, a London suburb.

During the time George Eliot was conceiving *The Mill* in Richmond, hundreds of people were buying a popular print, "The Pride of the River," which depicts a dark-haired young girl in pink rowing her little dog in a boat on the Thames. A mezzotint 27 by 18½ inches, the print shows the sentimental style of Thomas Brooks, a member of the Royal Academy from 1843, who made a career of painting similarly simpering subjects. Engravers copied them, and lithographers printed them, usually in lots of several hundred. "The Pride of the River," dated 15 June 1850, hangs in the White Cross public house close to where its scene is set: the banks of the Thames at Richmond. Its rowing figure combines Maggie Tulliver's coloring with Lucy Deane's curling locks, pet King Charles, and posture as an object of the admiring gaze of her neighbors.[4] The caption emphasizes the figure as the object of the viewer's gaze:

> She rowed so steadily
> Pulled so readily
> Delighting each heart
> And catching each eye.

Despite the activity in which she engages, she holds the oars with an improbably dainty grip against a background of a willow-fringed island. B. Brooks and Son published a total of 625 prints of the subject, and one of them still hangs in a room overlooking the rowing on the Thames near where the Leweses liked to walk. The visit to Gainsborough had another important effect on the composition of *The Mill*. It helped set George Eliot's mind at ease. Before the trip she wrote in her journal of her "*anxiety and doubt about my new novel*" (her italics, H&J 80). Three weeks afterward, she was confident enough to wish she could let Blackwood read the finished first volume. A month later, she had passed the halfway point in the plot by completing the chapter, "How a Hen Takes to Stratagem." The money has gone, Tom has gone to work, Mr Tulliver is still alive, and Maggie has yet to find Thomas à Kempis, but the author is turning out chapters at an accelerated pace. Her brief journey provided both the fresh material and the emotional energy that enabled her to go on to finish her second full-length novel.

One other detail in *The Mill* catches the atmosphere in Richmond during the period George Eliot was considering her subject. In the novel, while Tom Tulliver is laboring so assiduously in St Ogg's, he lives in small quarters in Bob Jakin's aged waterfront dwelling on the Floss. When Maggie visits Tom there, the narrator introduces a single light moment in the discussion between brother and sister. Attempting to ring for Mrs Jakin, Tom yanks down the bell pull, which he then tosses across the small room in frustration. Such an event, the narrator hopes, will be familiar to "distinguished men who were once at an early stage of their rise in the world and were cherishing very large hopes in very small lodgings" (Book 6, Ch. 5). Tom's large ambitions in small lodgings duplicate the circumstances of the Leweses in Park Shot, where they laid their plans for scientific achievement and extensive publication of newly-written fiction.

While based near the banks of the Thames, George Eliot turned out a remarkable four works of fiction, one a huge bestseller, and began her fifth, a full-length novel, *The Mill on the Floss*. Inspired partly by her London surroundings, she included them in her 1859 novel in her rowing scenes, even though she did not actually set a scene in the capital until *Daniel Deronda* in the mid-1870s, again a novel with rowing scenes. Deronda keeps his boat at Putney, not far from Holly Lodge, but he discovers Mirah preparing to drown herself near Kew Bridge, the most distant point the Leweses could reach comfortably when walking out from their first semi-permanent home together at Park Shot. In this way, both of their important homes south of the river made up some of the sundered elements that come together in George Eliot's fiction.

Dorking and the market for Italiana

If the Gainsborough trip returned huge rewards for a small investment of time, other short trips proved useful to George Eliot's writing in other ways. Few, if any, apparent details of Dorking, for example, reach the pages of *Romola*, but she worked a good deal on the novel during her time in this small town less than an hour south of London by the railway. Her visits there, ranging in length from a few days to a few

weeks, revived her health, provided opportunities to continue her research, motivated her to go on with *Romola*, and allowed her to write its segmented parts in rural peace and quiet, in lodgings available at a manageable price.

In the early 1860s, Dorking—a railway stop, market town, and tourist venue—offered lodging at a number of hotels and inns, including two of the most commodious, the Red Lion and the White Horse. George Eliot and Lewes chose the latter, and returned there often to rooms she came to describe familiarly as "our old quarters" (H&J 109). The White Horse, like their alternative lodging at the Parsonage on Station Road, was no secluded nook. It stood in the busiest section of Dorking High Street. While staying there conveniently and comfortably, and able to dine in their rooms or just downstairs, the Leweses could also set out for the most peaceful of rural walks.

The couple visited Dorking for the first time as tourists. On a February weekend in 1861, they arrived on the train from London, bringing along Charlie, Lewes's nineteen-year-old son (H&J 88). After the young man went back to town on Sunday, they diverted themselves with their usual walks, a drive around the countryside, and a visit to a local stately home, The Deepdene. *Black's Guide to the History, Antiquities, and Topography of the County of Surrey*, newly published in 1860 and a likely choice of guidebook for the Leweses (it was more current than Murray's), names these things as attractions of the area. It praises Dorking for its scenic beauty, its history, and its food. According to this guide, Dorking at the time was "well paved and well lighted" (1861: 195), and a population of 3,490 lived within the town, many more outside in cottages and farmhouses.

Most importantly for the Leweses, Dorking promised "wholesome air and very pleasant prospects" (1861: 197), because "the tourist, in whatsoever direction he may wander, cannot fail to come upon all the rarest graces of nature—upon leafy woods, rolling streams, the swelling curves of chalky downs, and the ferny depths of dells which Titania might have made her haunt" (1861: 195). In addition to the walks, Dorking offered tourists visitable country houses and their parks, and during her visits George Eliot toured the park of John Evelyn's Wotton and both the park and the house of the area's most conspicuous property, The Deepdene, then in the possession of Henry Thomas Hope, owner of the famous diamond.

The Surrey countryside resembles the setting of *Romola* primarily in its hilliness: few other topographical or architectural similarities link the two locations. But a tour of The Deepdene could supply another sort of inspiration to a novelist working on creating a late fifteenth-century Italian setting. George Eliot's notebooks indicate she had knowledge of Thomas Hope and his art collection.[5] When the younger Hope succeeded his father as owner of The Deepdene, he attempted to repeat his parent's flashy proprietorship. Poet and architect, Thomas Hope had added land and built onto the house. The son continued to embellish the estate and ended with a huge pile containing "40 bed rooms … nine reception rooms, halls and numerous offices" (Hope 1917). During the nineteenth century, the home was headquarters to Benjamin Disraeli's Young England group, and the novelist–politician dedicated *Coningsby* to his host, himself a Tory Member of Parliament.

The center of The Deepdene both physically and aesthetically was its sculpture hall. Thomas Hope's friendship with a number of sculptors and his expeditions to Italy enabled him to stock it with Greek and Roman originals as well as copies and copies of copies. The Deepdene displayed at least twenty busts: of Homer, Pindar, several unnamed Romans, Napoleon, Athena, Helen, Paris. The curved arches on the ground floor of the sculpture hall displayed figures in marble, bronze, and plaster by Thorwaldsen, Flaxman, Canova, and Pisani (who produced for Hope copies of both the Medici and Canova Venuses). On the second tier, a bronze faun danced between the pillars and contrasted in color and pose with the smaller sculptures and vases standing quietly on their pedestals on either side. The sale catalog for this inventory also mentions prominently "A very finely executed copy of the celebrated Bartolini Boar, appearing as if he had just been startled; on wood stand, painted as black figured marble, 4 ft 7 in. high by 5 ft long" (1917: 79). Thus, in February 1861 at The Deepdene, a characteristically Florentine sculpture confronted a tourist ambitious of writing a historical novel set in the city where the boar's original sits stolidly next to the straw market.

During the nineteenth century, Hope of The Deepdene kept up a suitably active program of service. He helped to found the Royal Botanical Society, participated in the organization of the Crystal Palace exhibit, and conducted the Surrey Archaeological Society. He also went on amassing property and other possessions. On his death, he bequeathed the Hope diamond to his French-born wife, Anne Adela Bichat. Most significantly for tourists in Dorking, he acquired stretches of land eventually totaling over two miles across and three miles north to south. He then pleased his neighbors by opening it all to the public. On behalf of the visitor to Dorking, *Black's Guide* is appreciative: "The tourist will not fail to examine [The Deepdene's] attractions, which, thanks to Mr Hope's liberal courtesy, is no difficult task. Access to the house and gardens is readily permitted; and through the adjacent grounds Mr Hope has thrown open several public roads" (1861: 206). George Eliot and George Henry Lewes took advantage of Hope's courtesy immediately in their walks. They waited until Tuesday, their last day in Dorking, then went to see The Deepdene in the morning and returned to London on an afternoon train (H&J 88).

At the time, although George Eliot had begun the research on *Romola*, she was still working to finish *Silas Marner* by Easter. She had interrupted her work on *Romola* to write *Silas*, which, with its English characters and settings, required far less research. But a view of The Deepdene, with all its Italian or Italian-inspired *objets d'art*, might have logically helped prompt a return to the earlier project by suggesting the substantial English appreciation for things Italian, as well as, more specifically, a promising market for a novel with an Italian setting. Two months later, George Eliot continued her research with a trip to Florence meant to restart the writing on *Romola,* as well as for additional material. The following year she would profit from the English market for Italiana when she agreed with publisher George Smith to receive for the serialization of her Italian novel possibly the largest sum of money ever offered a writer of fiction.

Although George Eliot left no direct comment on the splendors of Hope's gigantic house, she returned again the following year and took advantage of his

"courtesy" to the visitors to his park. By February of 1862, a year after the first Dorking trip, she had drafted the plot of *Romola* and begun writing her chapters. When, on Sunday 11 February, she complained of being "very ill" (H&J 109), she and Lewes retreated to Dorking the following day. The same afternoon, apparently instantly revived, she found the strength for a three-mile walk to Betchworth. *Black's* recommends that "the tourist having completed his inspection of The Deepdene, may proceed through the park to "one of the loveliest lanes in Surrey … or he may cross Chart Park to Brockham Green, or, taking the upper road, explore Betchworth Park and ruins of its castles, returning to Dorking by the high road" (1861: 206). The Leweses chose the third option.

Black's lavish descriptions of Betchworth's "ferny dells; wide stretches of blossomy sward; [and] verdurous uplands," create ekphrastic inducements to tourists considering taking this route. To the verbal inducement, the guide adds one of its infrequent pictures that presents a subject likely to appeal to the Leweses by depicting Betchworth as both calm and industrious, with a row of small, orderly buildings against tall trees in the background and a wagon at work, pulled by two horses, in the foreground. Although no guidebook has a good word to say about Betchworth Castle, which Hope bought to dismantle into a "picturesque ruin" (Holland 1984: 25), the couple took this direction for their first walk from Dorking on a "lovely" late winter afternoon (H&J 109). The various buildings of Betchworth village make attractive but inconclusive models for Mr Lingon's church and vicarage in *Felix Holt.*

On the following day, the Leweses had enough energy for another walk of equal length, this time in the opposite direction.Their destination, Wotton Park, lay three miles west along the road that runs parallel to the North Downs in the direction of Guildford. Wotton's literary connections received more respect from George Eliot than The Deepdene's, for she did not like Disraeli's novels. Although later in life, according to Edith Simcox (1998: 109), she defended Disraeli as a politician, she described *Tancred* most unfavorably when she read it as a young woman in Coventry (*GEL* 1:235). Wotton, on the other hand, housed the seventeenth-century diarist John Evelyn, who returned to his Surrey home from his travels in France and kept his family there during the London plague. George Eliot mentions Evelyn in a reverent tone in her journal when she notes the walk they took on 12 February 1862.

The two different routes she chose that February weekend shared not only beauty and accessibility, but also the freedom provided by generous owners to roam at will, for the Leweses often showed a conscientious fear of trespassing. Whereas she took advantage of Hope's willingness to open both house and park, in the case of Wotton, she did not tour the house, which was "seldom shown to visitors," although "the grounds may generally be inspected" (*Black's* 1861: 236). When they chose the walks to Betchworth and Wotton, the Leweses were responding to the promised freedom of walking without having to ask permission or feel unwelcome.

The road between Dorking and Wotton covers hilly, woody terrain and passes by the Church of St John that contains Evelyn's "coffin-shaped tomb" (*Black's*

1861: 237). At Westcott, the nineteenth-century walker could choose a route through the Rookery (where Thomas Malthus was born in 1766) or proceed along the coach road to come out at Wotton House, tucked into a high valley a half mile from the public road. Its redbrick cluster of buildings was backed in 1862 by groomed Italianate gardens rising behind the house in a series of imposing steep terraces, topped with classical statues standing like sentinels against the sky. George Eliot enjoyed their walk at Wotton: "The day was grey, but the air was fresh and pleasant" (H&J 109). With only the "Proem" and two chapters of *Romola* actually written at the time, she could benefit again at Wotton, as at Deepdene, from Surrey celebrations of Italian beauty.

Black's Guide becomes lyrical about both The Deepdene and Wotton. Of Deepdene's park, the author writes, "It is one of those enchanting scenes which tempts the pen to luxuriate in hyperboles; which recalls to the spectator those classic landscapes of the old poets, where Pan and the nymphs disported amid the wonderful and eternal beauty of deathless leaves and unfading blossoms" (1861: 205). He concludes this paean with a quotation from John Keats, another writer who sought refuge near Dorking to nourish his creativity, staying at an inn at the foot of Box Hill while composing *Endymion* (Motion 1997: 207). Although the guidebook asserts that the fame of the gardens at Wotton makes description superfluous, the author still cannot resist. He begins by describing "an elevated mound, shaped into terraces, and richly clothed with turf" where "shimmer musical fountains and chiming falls" (1861: 236). He promises scenery "stored with goodly trees, noble evergreens, and many coloured blossoms, [where] a bright stream flashes its silver among them, dimpling here and there into delicious pools" (1861: 236). When George Eliot planned the walks to Betchworth and Wotton, she was hoping to gain health enough to continue writing *Romola*. She accomplished this, and viewed Italian-inspired gardens likely to increase her motivation as well.

Romola ran in the *Cornhill Magazine* from the summer of 1862 to the summer of 1863. During this period, George Eliot suffered severe anxiety about the obligation to turn out its parts as needed, and, writing on George Eliot's serializations, Carol Martin adds to her record of that struggle the point that the author had the additional obligation of completing her segments early enough for the illustrator, Fredric Leighton, to read the text and supply appropriate engravings (Martin 1995: 124). Working with an illustrator made the deadlines less flexible and more intimidating.

Although George Eliot had already made her research trips to Italy before the serialization began, she had completed neither her book research nor her writing by the time the numbers began appearing. In fact, she continued reading all during its composition, moving back and forth between her Italian sources and her manuscript. After their walks around Dorking, the couple either dined at a roadside inn or returned for dinner at the White Horse (H&J 109).[6] On the first visit, they spent the February evenings doing reading relevant to *Romola*.

In 1862, George Eliot tried to add variety to her short trips by going to Englefield Green near Windsor and to the coast at Littlehampton, visits that suggest the Leweses were already enjoying the money they could spend as a result of the deal

with the *Cornhill*. In March, before any of the numbers appeared, they canvassed Englefield Green carefully (*GEL* 4:17) and calculated what they could afford before deciding to accept Barbara Bodichon's recommendation. The Barley Mow is a small inn, quietly located, and they stayed just six days.

But in September, after receipt of £7,000 from Smith Elder & Company (*GEL* 8: 309), they chose an entirely different kind of place: lonelier and much more expensive. Had they come to Littlehampton one year later, they would have found a seaside with a working railway station and a port with a ferry service to France. In 1862, Littlehampton was still very quiet, for the railway ended at Pulborough and would not reach Littlehampton until 1863.

The Beach Hotel, regarded as "pleasantly situated" (*The Guide to Littlehampton* 44), sprawled out on Littlehampton's most distinctive feature—the broad dipping and swirling belt of open land spread widely between the hotel and the water. Having no cliff, Littlehampton treated the levelness of the seaside sands as an advantage: its guides reassured parents that a seaside walk carried no danger of falls as the cliffside resorts did. Alone on the corner of land where the River Arun reaches the English Channel, George Eliot walked often on this mildly undulating expanse and wrote industriously. Compared to the six days the couple confined themselves at Englefield Green, they spent three weeks at more expensive Littlehampton. *Romola* was paying its way. George Eliot wrote Part 6 in the peace and calm luxury of a first-rate hotel in an isolated location, financed by the very novel still in progress under her pen.

Although these spots satisfied her too, during the writing of *Romola* she always returned to Dorking. Indeed, the Littlehampton jaunt ended with three days at their current Surrey favorite. In the spring of 1863, when she was winding up the novel and attempting with increasing desperation to keep up with the parts required by the spring schedule at the *Cornhill*, she increased her visits again. Between January and April she was going to Dorking once a month.

The Deepdene in *Felix Holt*

If Dorking provided the refuge for writing much of George Eliot's fourth novel, some parts in its vicinity recur in an English setting in her fifth, *Felix Holt*. Aside from the main Dorking-related location, Transome Court, George Eliot's fifth full-length novel includes the usual number of Warwickshire models. Ina Taylor asserts that George Eliot modeled Mrs Transome on Warwickshire's Maria Newdigate (1988: 24). In John Cross's *George Eliot's Life*, he describes the agitation surrounding the 1832 candidacy of Radical Dempster Hemming (1:21), which helped provide the action in the novel's central chapters.

In the scene in which the title character's mother comes to Transome Court to confront the gentry about her imprisoned son, however, George Eliot departs from Warwickshire models. She draws on the history and architecture of The Deepdene, especially its most striking interior feature, to create humorous effects. Although the shabby Queen Anne exterior of Transome Court differs entirely from The Deepdene's Italianate architecture, inside, a grandly pillared sculpture

hall provides entrance to the house that its proprietor, the fictional Harold Transome, repeating the efforts of the historical Henry Thomas Hope, expands on and improves.

Other similarities include Deepdene's situation, its river, and the political occupations of its owners. When Harold first arrives at Transome Court after fifteen years in Smyrna, he tours his house quickly but fondly, noting its shabbiness and reviving memories of his boyhood. From an upper storey, he catches a view of the River Lapp, which, like the often-fished River Mole, winds through his property: "Ah there's the old river I used to fish in. I often thought, when I was at Smyrna, that I would buy a park with a river through it as much like the Lapp as possible" (Ch. 1). Shifting the direction of his glance, he then notices some "fine oaks" situated similarly to the "Glory," a hill-crowning grove in which Dorking takes great pride. Politically, although Harold Transome takes the Radical rather than the Tory side, he does stand for Parliament, and his neighbor and opponent, Philip Debarry, "a new-fashioned Tory" (Ch. 43), would fit among the members of the group that met at The Deepdene, Disraeli's Young England.

Later in the novel, an important scene takes place in a Deepdene-inspired sculpture hall on a February day like that of the Lewes's first visit, when Dorking's plentiful crocuses, like Transome Court's in the novel, were in lavish bloom. (Indeed, the Leweses spent parts of February in Surrey for three years in a row.) Walking in the grounds, Esther and the Transomes, including Harold, his Uncle Lingon, Mr Transome, Dominic, and Harry, suddenly encounter Mrs Holt who has come on purpose to make her plea. After the self-righteous mother delivers an appeal for Felix that reduces her auditors to uncontrollable laughter, Esther, in some embarrassment over having such a plebeian acquaintance, leads the visitor into the hall. As the chapter goes on, and the characters enter or leave the sculpture hall, they go up and down its stone stairway or pass through the glass door facing eastward toward the garden: both features of the Deepdene showcase room.

In the scenes in the sculpture hall, George Eliot designs the action in a spirit of ironically amusing juxtapositions. Little Harry and Mrs Holt's foster child, Job Tudge, play hide-and-seek among the pedestals of statues that stand in a stony dignity that contrasts with the children's activity. The narrator mentions a prominent and recurring Deepdene subject in the description of Mrs Holt watching the children at play among the sculpture. She sits "on a stool, in singular relief against the pedestal of the Apollo" (Ch. 43). The Deepdene had three full-length Apollos (*The Deepdene* 1917: 78), any of which might supply an ironic comparison with Mrs Holt through his energetic, yet controlled young, male beauty next to her aged female fatigue.

Another statue against which George Eliot poses Mrs Holt creates a parallel rather than an ironic contrast with the foster mother. One of little Harry's squirrels scampers onto the head of a conspicuous Deepdene subject, Silenus with the infant Bacchus in his arms. Mrs Holt creates comedy through her assumption that Silenus represents an ancestor of the Transomes and also through her bemusement that he should have had his marble portrait taken nude, a posing which she regards as "eccentric where there were the means of buying the best" (Ch. 43). As with

Dorothea and the statue of Ariadne in the Vatican Museums, George Eliot juxtaposes antithetic figures: the living adoptive mother, Mrs Holt, and her masculine stone parody, Silenus. To achieve the contrast, George Eliot must move The Deepdene's statue of Silenus from the garden outside to the sculpture hall, an alteration that suggests more deliberate intentions in the character construction. Such mock-heroic humor also attributes a good deal of condescension to both the narrator and the implied audience.

In addition to providing at least one model for a *Felix Holt* setting, the geography of Dorking also helps answer one of the puzzles of the novel. Not one character in *Felix Holt* ever alludes to Harold's mistress, despite the improbability of keeping the existence of such an exotic creature entirely concealed in an early-nineteenth-century English market town. Because Harold quickly acquires so many mortal enemies in England, notably his father Mr Jermyn, only ignorance could account for the fact that neither his political opponents nor his threatened father uses this potent fact to damage him. However, although the Tories' campaign does not hesitate to allude to his mother's indiscretion and to Harold's dubious fatherhood, none of Tommy Trounsem's placards makes Harold's own sexual behavior a target for heavy-handed innuendo.

The architecture and community functions of Dorking's White Horse Inn provide a partial answer to this problem. When Harold first returns to Treby Magna after his fifteen years away in Smyrna, he surprises his mother by arriving at Transome Court in a hired vehicle instead of his own carriage "without a servant or much luggage" (Ch. 1). Harold explains offhandedly that he has left little Harry "behind in town" with his servant Dominic and "the rest of the luggage" (Ch. 1). The inclusion of his mistress among this luggage and her installation in a nearby inn could be occupying Dominic while Harold proceeds to Transome Court for his reunion with his mother.

A nineteenth-century house like the White Horse served a huge variety of functions beyond the provision of food, drink, and lodging for travelers. As transport terminals, banks, surgeries, morgues, museums, meeting rooms, campaign headquarters, employment bureaus, ballrooms, and libraries, the inns accommodated much busy coming and going of local people as well as strangers. The White Horse, for example, emphasized its appeal to both groups. Its advertisements demonstrate that, during the nineteenth century, it catered to commercial and family patrons, a circumstance that increased the amount of traffic in and out.

With multiple rooms designed to accommodate a variety of functions, and a sprawling property of stables, servants' quarters, and other outbuildings behind the dignified High Street façade, the possibilities in such an inn of finding a nook suitable for lodging Harold's mistress increase. The further possibility that this mistress is little Harry's mother, and that Harold is lying when he reports her death to Mrs Transome, suggests that Harold has left his son behind for a last farewell to the mother the boy can see only sporadically now that Harold has returned to England. As a slave, whose docility Harold relishes and encourages, the concubine at the inn could remain a mystery even in Treby Magna, at least for the brief period of Harold's campaign, which runs only from September to December. With

Dominic on hand to supply daily needs, the fictional Ram, which Harold has already engaged as his political headquarters, like the White Horse in Dorking, could plausibly, for the sake of Harold's lavish custom, shelter his mistress discreetly until the end of the 1832 parliamentary elections.

George Eliot returned to Dorking for a working visit one last time, during the writing of *Felix Holt*. Having passed through Westcott on the way to Wotton in 1862, the Leweses planned a two-week stay there in May of 1866. Like Wotton, which lies within an easily walkable distance, The Rookery at Westcott, where they decided to lodge, had literary connections. Its eighteenth-century proprietor, David Malthus, translated Goethe's *Sorrows of Werther*, as well as fathering his famous son, Thomas. It also offered great scenic beauty. According to the guidebook, at The Rookery "the hills modulate in gentle curves, and the vale rejoices in bold changes of scenery, to which the 'meandering stream' lends an exquisite charm" (*Blacks* 1861: 209). The Rookery did not work for *Felix Holt*, however. Intending to stay for two weeks, the Leweses returned after one because "I was not well and found the new circumstances unfavourable to work" (H&J 128). After this unsatisfactory attempt, they never returned to Dorking to stay. By the end of the decade, Limpsfield had replaced it as "our favorite Surrey retreat" (H&J 141), and by the time they were house-hunting for their own place in Surrey in 1876, they were traveling often to Weybridge, where the charms of social life among their Surrey friends, the Crosses, had replaced the quiet and energetic walking, working holidays they had favored during the previous decade.

Still, George Eliot did repeat the pattern of attempting to keep up with serial publication through stays in Surrey when she again committed herself to such a schedule. In the early 1870s, the plan for the serialization of *Middlemarch* demanded that its parts begin coming out long before she had finished her writing. Again she sought out remote locations in the purer air south of the North Downs. For three years in a row, she summered in Surrey: first at Shottermill, then Redhill, then, when *Daniel Deronda* had succeeded *Middlemarch*, at Earlswood Common.

Within the five years between 1859 and 1863, when long and short stays in Surrey became a part of her life, George Eliot wrote three novels and two short stories. Despite its closeness to London and its ordinariness, Surrey, like George Eliot's other English destinations, in addition to supplying specific material for works in progress, often generated ideas for the next project or the one after that.

6 Spas

> I am tired of a migratory life, but I can really wish for nothing else than to do what will best favor the return of my dear husband's strength.
>
> George Eliot to Jane Senior (13 June 1870)

As the 1860s advanced, and Lewes's health, in particular, did not improve, seeking out the right air and water became part of most of the couple's journeys. They often interspersed stops at spas with destinations chosen for other purposes. In 1868, for example, they stopped at Leeds to see the Infirmary and at Sheffield to see a steelworks. They added Matlock and Ilkley to this itinerary, however, and they never gave up visiting Tunbridge Wells. Many towns in England promoted some natural spring, supplemented by the services of a celebrity doctor or two, as ways of attracting visitors. While the productivity of the springs lay out of civic control (sometimes the sources dried up), buildings to cater to the patients did not. Towns could and did construct showers and baths, concert rooms, gambling casinos, shops, and gardens for the perambulations of visitors and patients.[1]

With varying degrees of confidence, the Leweses frequented many English spas: Tunbridge Wells, Malvern, Lymington, Bath, Harrogate, Matlock, Ilkley. In addition, many of the seasides where they stayed, such as St Leonard's, Weymouth, and Brighton, offered hydrotherapy as well as salutary sea air. In the mid-1860s, they began frequenting European spas, culminating in 1876, when nearly all their destinations in France and Germany offered therapy. After George Eliot's marriage to John Cross and the groom's mysterious honeymoon dive into the Grand Canal, the bride moved him as quickly as possible to Bad Wildbad in the Black Forest. In all, the Leweses' frequent returns to spas indicate that too much weight has been placed on the negativity expressed in the opening to *Daniel Deronda,* the best documented and most recognizable example of a spa adapted as a setting in a George Eliot novel.

As every reader of Jane Austen knows, watering places welcome questionable characters: women with reputations, profligate young and old men, desperate virgins, and fortune seekers of both genders. During the nineteenth century, the reputations of English watering places never quite recovered from the behavior of the Prince Regent at Brighton early in the century. Because Victorian culture stripped all the glamour from Romantic-era profligacy, the later generation

regarded the social side of the activities at watering places with suspicion. The Queen's removal of her holiday residence from the Royal Pavilion to the more secluded, domestic, and less absurdly designed Osborne, on the Isle of Wight, signaled this shift in perceptions of watering places, whether seaside or inland. The size of Osborne's nursery alone, which accommodated the growing family of princes and princesses, guaranteed a different sort of holiday from the gourmandizing romps that took place under the Pavilion's gilded chinoiserie, and the Georgian watering places themselves settled down to appeal to the Victorian patient–client visitor.

If they disapproved of the recreational activities at spas, however, most educated Victorians believed in the effectiveness of the water cure. They demonstrated this by repeatedly undergoing many of the ungentle procedures called for by the regimens. When George Eliot and Lewes visited a spa, it was Lewes who was usually identified as the patient, and he also occasionally went without her. He submitted himself to the therapy over and over throughout his sickly life, often with skepticism or disappointment. George Eliot had less trust than Lewes in the water cure, although she would drink her glass alongside him in the pump rooms and also participate in some of the numerous other methods available for getting water onto and into the human body. She sometimes remained home while Lewes took the cure by himself, and on at least one occasion she described Malvern's Dr James Gully, a name synonymous with making fame and a fortune at watering places, as a quack.

In her fiction, George Eliot draws, somewhat incidentally, on the reputations of spas as sites of pleasures that appeal to rakes and profligates. Occasionally, she inserts hints of her own doubts about their salutary efficacy. Both functions render them dangerous to order and responsibility. Positioned as the setting for the opening chapter, the gambling spa in *Daniel Deronda*, though Continental rather than English, earns Victorian disapproval from the narrator as the site of greed, compulsion, and idleness. Similar associations occur in *Felix Holt.* But between the writing of *Felix Holt* and *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot created a completely different kind of character out of a spa visit she made as the sixties drew to a close, and she entered one of the most creative periods of her life. Instead of assembling spa-related elements to create a gambling wastrel or a too-thriving physician as a poetic character, George Eliot creates Armgart, the doomed woman artist, a character who resulted directly from two weeks spent in Harrogate in 1870, and less directly out of every spa visit she ever made.[2]

Water cures: Malvern

Lewes's decidedly inferior health prompted him to try many of the strictly therapeutic destinations available in England, including repeated trips to Malvern. Marian Evans first visited the inland spa, briefly, in 1843, as a young woman on holiday with her friends. Their itinerary carried them on a route that swept southwestward from Coventry into Worcestershire, and they stayed a night at Stratford-on-Avon, visited Worcester and Malvern, and then returned to Stratford again, all within five days in May. When Lewes fell so sick in the spring of 1854 that Evans

was doing his writing for him, he departed for three weeks to Malvern and wrote about his experiences in the jaunty tone he assumed for the *Leader* as "Vivian." He often went to a spa to obtain the supervision of a particular physician, and in that year Dr John Bilbirnie tempted him with the therapy at Malvern (*GEL* 2:160). He returned to Malvern in 1861, this time with George Eliot, and yet again in 1864, by himself.

The habitual prurience of Lewes's *Leader* persona, Vivian, recurs in the satirical, gay-dog, yet subdued visitor to the Malvern wells he creates for his two short pieces in the 1854 summer numbers. Like George Eliot in her novels, "Vivian" draws on the profligacy presumed to prevail at spas to create a tone of idle self-indulgence concerning his pleasures and pains. He satirically constructs the patron of the spa as a bewildered victim, bullied by attendants and tortured by sitz baths, power showers, and unpalatable draughts.

The first of the two pieces, entitled "Douche the First" and "Douche the Second," appeared in the middle of July. It starts with a highly sexual report of his attraction to a young Quaker woman he encounters: "If you but knew the temptations I resisted, the perils I victoriously overcame, you would marvel that I am not at this moment the father of a numerous drab progeny." His attraction falters in vulgar circumstances when the woman tells him that she would rather read the Bible than bathe: "I could stand her coal scuttle bonnet—I could stand being *tutoyé*—I could stand the familiarity of 'Friend Vivian'—but the state of epidermis implied in that preference for her Bible, opened vistas of conjugal disagreement too terrible for a man of my sensitive nature" (1854: 644). Vivian's vulgarity perhaps suits his satirical attitude toward the watering place. His fragile-patient persona withdraws from social life to concentrate on his other frailties.

"Douche the Second" introduces the persona's questions about the effectiveness of the cure with mild irony. Vivian declares that if people had the idea that the processes of the cure endangered rather than improved the health, its pleasantness, together with the thrill of defying the prohibition, would create an irresistible allure. In the same vein as popular pictorial caricatures of spa patients enduring diabolic treatments by means of monstrous mechanical devices at the hands of sadistic attendants, Lewes observes that the packings of wet sheets and blankets are supposed to warm the patient. But problems with packings arise for Vivian when the attendant absents himself at a time when an errant hair creates periods of itching or when "possibly your condition is so low that you have not heat enough to produce the necessary reaction; and may be as I was at the first trial, obliged to take a cup of hot tea, or some other stimulant." George Eliot's English spa in *Felix Holt* differs little from Vivian's Malvern. Like Lewes's persona, George Eliot draws on the spas' reputations for pleasure-seeking, as well as for possibly pointless treatments, to apply satire to hopeful, hopeless, victimized patrons; her narrator, while just as salacious and satirical as Vivian, adds one more to the usual associations for her Treby Magna spa, for her *Felix Holt* narrator shares her suspicions of quackery untempered by irony.

In their daily habits, no one could accuse the Leweses of laxity or self-indulgence. The walks, of course, supplied their exercise at least twice a day in all

but the most forbidding weather. While they both drank alcohol, and he smoked cigars, their consumption gives few indications of overindulgence in either. Lewes's journals indicate that they usually bathed at least twice a week. In Jersey, their essential purchases for Rosa Cottage included a bath, and, according to Lewes's journal, they often stopped in the afternoon at public bathhouses, both in London and in foreign cities. They would go to their separate areas, as divided according to gender, and reunite afterward with their clean bodies reclothed.

Although many English watering places survived from the eighteenth century and flourished during the Napoleonic Wars, certain spots did not hit their stride until after Queen Victoria began her reign. Malvern experienced its major growth during the nineteenth century and thus carried little Regency–Georgian–Hogarthian baggage. It drew many prominent Victorians: the Carlyles, the Dickenses, and Bulwer-Lytton, as well as Charles Darwin and Florence Nightingale, visitors who might be expected to have some understanding of the salutary effectiveness of its therapies.

Malvern differed from Tunbridge Wells or Bath, the traditional inland resorts, in its rigor, seriousness, and domination by the two founding physicians of the "Graefenberg Experiment," James Gully and James Wilson (Harcup 1992: 12). Austere diets that also eliminated alcohol and coffee complemented the array of things the two physicians designed to do to the human body with water: drinking, spraying from all possible angles and in varying quantities, wrappings, and differing methods of immersion at various temperatures. Malvern's situation on the southeastern side of its granite hill in Worcestershire resulted in a mildly vertical style of life that called for all the patients to exercise a little every day unless they depended on sedan chairs or bath chairs. Lodgers in the town situated halfway down the hill had to climb up to the largest and most efficacious sources (such as St Ann's Well and Holy Well) to take their drinks, and so the ritual provided both pure water and exercise.

The purity of the water also singularized Malvern among English spas. Whereas other spas touted the chemical complexity pouring from their springs, Gully and Wilson in their treatise concluded that "Pure water, pure air, proper diet, and regulated exercise, are the great agents in effecting the cure of disease by aiding the natural efforts of the body, through the instrumentality of the nervous system" (Harcup 1992: 13). Most importantly, the regime called for the elimination of all drugs, and Harcup speculates that, for these reasons, the Gully–Wilson regimen would cut off addictions, regulate diet, and demand exercise, if it did nothing else.

George Eliot accompanied Lewes to Malvern only once, in September of 1861. The town's growth since 1843 surprised her because "I have hardly ever seen an English Watering-place which has sprung up rapidly, where there is so little ugly building" (*GEL* 3:452). Their lodgings pleased them because the sitting room overlooked the "wide south-eastern valley" (3:451). They climbed the sycamore-covered "great green hills" (3:451) in the chilly weather and found them challenging. They both believed Lewes's condition much improved after eleven days of Malvern's "packings, bathings, cold-water draughts, and extensive walking" (3:452). But a treatment of eleven days fell short of the usual regimen, and when he

returned in 1864, Lewes again showed a lack of confidence through his inability or disinterest in persevering in the full-length treatment.

George Eliot meanwhile maintained reservations about water cures that sometimes depended on fears of too much rather than too little potency. Three months after the 1861 Malvern stay, in a letter to Theodosia Trollope, George Eliot employs more caution than when assessing Lewes's progress in September. She was worrying about recommending Malvern because of the strength of its waters for her recipient, whom she describes as "a delicate and fragile friend at Florence" (*GEL* 3:472). She expresses skepticism about Gully, the most famous and most important of the Malvern water-cure practitioners, expressing a hope that in Florence her friends, the Trollopes, can find a hydropathist "who may not be a quack as Dr Gully at Malvern certainly is" (3:472). Still, she concedes the indisputable improvement in Lewes after his returns from Malvern.

George Eliot's fictional spas in *Felix Holt* and *Daniel Deronda* draw on a heritage of Regency idleness and debauchery to assign profligacy to a number of faulty characters by associating them with spas. Of the two spas that appear as more than quick references in George Eliot's fiction, the more prominent one occurs in the first chapter to *Daniel Deronda,* where the gambling occasions additional vices: usury and, probably, prostitution. The other, in *Felix Holt*, has already folded as a spa before the action of the novel begins.

Nevertheless, George Eliot renders this non-spa or post-spa in considerable detail, accounting for its failure only obscurely: "The Spa, for some mysterious reason, did not succeed" (Ch. 3). With the failure of the Treby Magna spa, the *Felix Holt* narrator arrives at the objective of this short history: the identification of the resulting scapegoat. She sets up the slipperiness of the leading figure in the project, Mr Jermyn, by reporting how the debacle of the failed spa has alienated most of the town from its instigator and contributed to his status as an outsider.

It also hints at his depravity. That Jermyn should choose this particular scheme, associated at once with quackery and rakishness, associates him with other characters in the novel, usually wealthier than he, who also show signs of rakishness. The disasters in *Felix Holt*, including its bizarre legal plot, all proceed from acts of profligacy—the carelessness of the Thomas Transome who has sold the right to Transome Court to his cousin, the behavior of Mrs Transome's older son that unfits him to inherit Transome Court, even the abbreviated debauchery of Felix Holt, who comes to define his mission, which turns out disastrously during the riot, after a period of intemperate self-indulgence in Glasgow. Such activities disturb order and jeopardize heritage. They are committed by a group of mostly negative characters who share their most extravagant faults, a group into which Jermyn fits well, especially because of his dubious project to profit from and participate in encouraging the characteristic behavior at spas.

Gamblers and spenders

The spa-related activity that creates the most damage in George Eliot's plots is gambling. The similarities among such *Felix Holt* personages as Mr Christian, Lord

Fortinbras, and the son of John Justus Transome, who sells his birthright, create a background pattern of pleasure-seeking irresponsibility. The blame for the whole tangled question of the right to Transome Court in *Felix Holt* results from the acts of John Justus Transome's son, Thomas, who, "proving a prodigal, had, without the knowledge of his father, the tenant in possession, sold his own and his descendants' rights to a lawyer–cousin named Durfey" (Ch. 29). In both this case and in the example of Mr Christian, youthful prodigality, specifically the gambling to which such young blades were often addicted, costs the gamblers their heritage.

In addition, *Felix Holt* often connects youthful prodigality, and the moral failures to which it leads, with unsoundly motivated travel that lacks the seriousness of the Leweses' own journeying. Harold Transome travels for economic motives rather than for artistic pursuits or pleasure-seeking adventure. He wins his fortune as a result of luck, not effort, and he returns with an opium habit and an Asian concubine. Like Mr Brooke and Mr Casaubon in *Middlemarch*, characters in *Daniel Deronda*, notably Grandcourt and Sir Hugo, carry the effects of their travel back to complicate events at home. Their errors resemble the faults of the *Felix Holt* characters, the more Regency-era vices concerned with exotic sex and unproductive excess.

Not only the travelers themselves, but their accompanying appendages also, suffer George Eliot's sternness toward the rootless and idle. The bear leaders and couriers likely to go along with wealthy young men on their tours include some of George Eliot's most vicious characters. Mr Christian, the ex-courier in *Felix Holt*, bears an alias that makes his travels, in which he has picked up only vicious practices and an opium addiction, a parody of the journey to salvation in *Pilgrim's Progress*. Mr Christian has wasted his youth. Because of the youthful excess that dissipates his father's fortune, he descends into servitude from his independence as son of a prosperous cloth-merchant. As with Thomas Transome, the son of John Justus, prodigality, gambling in particular, creates the difficulties George Eliot's characters inherit. Christian exemplifies the class of which George Eliot disapproved most: the wastrels who squander a valuable inheritance (as mentioned in the "Address to Working Men by Felix Holt"). Both the son of John Justus Transome and Mr Christian, at different social levels, squander the "treasure" ("Address" 621) of inherited privilege.

Another superannuated bear leader, Mr Lush in *Daniel Deronda*, whose name alone suggests habits of debauchery, abandons his ambitions to become a clergyman, "for the sake of a college living" to go as "traveling companion to a Marquess" (Ch. 12), then replaced in his life by another young traveler, Grandcourt himself. Lush remains in this position permanently to fulfill his new ambitions: "dining with high discrimination, riding good horses, living generally in the most luxuriant honey-blossomed clover—and all without working" (Ch. 12). Indeed, within the action of the novel, Mr Lush still makes travel arrangements. He transports Mrs Glasher and two of her children to Grandcourt's neighborhood and lodges them at the Golden Keys, so that Lydia can confront Gwendolen at the Whispering Stones. The duties of such subordinates and appendages included all the dreary chores of booking transportation, finding rooms, and arranging for

money, the very chores that poorer travelers must do independently, thereby subjecting themselves to potential hazards of deception, unavailability, cheating, and outright robbery at inns or on the road.

The similarities among the wastrel characters, especially in *Felix Holt*, help explain the presence of one minor character to whom many readers have responded with the question: what is he doing in this novel anyway? A major participant in the political chatter at the Marquis of Granby, Mr Nolan is an aged business man of obscure London origins. References to his hook nose and first name (Baruch) identify him to the Victorian reader, if not to the company at the Marquis of Granby, as Jewish, an identification that fits oddly in the fiction of the author of *Daniel Deronda,* albeit a full decade earlier.

Mr Nolan gives himself away as a usurer when he reports that the prosperous Mr Calibut's son-in-law, Lord Fortinbras, "paid me a large debt on his marriage" (Ch. 20). Presumably having lost a substantial amount of money gambling, Lord Fortinbras typifies the profligate young nobleman obliged to retrench by marrying into trade. Mr Nolan completes the array of characters involved in the Hogarthian progress of profligacy followed by *Felix Holt*'s troublesome characters, who generally have traveled in part to pursue their pleasures, to destinations likely to include spas.

Leamington: a last resort

The timing of George Eliot's spas visits *vis-à-vis* her fiction points predictably to connections between the English spas she saw and elements of characters and settings in *Felix Holt*, while the continental spas, specifically Bad Homburg, supply a more direct model for Leubronn in *Daniel Deronda*. The directness of the connection between Leubronn and Homburg rests on the letter George Eliot wrote from Germany to her friend Anna Cross about the sight of Byron's niece gambling. But no such clear evidence connects Treby Magna and any of the English spas. Indeed, Peter Coveney, author of the comprehensive notes in the Penguin edition, concludes that the entire array of attractions described as available at Treby, both castle and spa, are generic—any English castle–spa town would fit.[3] At the same time, the Midlands location of the Treby Magna spa suggests that it perhaps owes most to a spa Marian Evans knew long before she began traveling with Lewes: the spa at Leamington, not far from her girlhood home.

Water and places for delivering it were long a prominent part of the Warwickshire environment where Evans grew up. Historian Arnold Bickerstaff locates a "health resort or spa" (1964: 8) of great antiquity fed by the streams on Oldbury Hill, only a mile or so from Nuneaton. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Nuneaton resident Robert Burton finds curing potential in the same location: "delightsome prospects" (1813: 400), such as "Oldbury in the confines of Warwickshire, where I have often looked about me with great delight, at the foot of which hill I was born" (336). When Evans was seven years old, the physician, Mr Buchnell, contributed to the salubriousness of Nuneaton by installing public baths for the populace ("Ocurrences" [*sic*] 19 May 1827). Later, the most important

Warwickshire spa, Leamington, also figured in Evans's life in a number of important ways.

Located within fifteen miles of Arbury Hall, Leamington (unlike the fictional Treby) was thriving during the early nineteenth century. The Pump Rooms, built in 1814, attracted enough patrons to justify several decades of additional building. During the 1830s, Leamington added many streets of Regency houses: Newbold Street, Lansdowne Crescent, Lansdowne Circle, Dale Street, and Warwick Street. Victoria and Adelaide Bridges were built to span the River Leam. During the 1840s, when Evans knew Leamington best, the Jephson Gardens acquired their formal layout of paths and flower beds, and the Binswood Hall School opened, while a Magdalen home began to serve women unlikely to be eligible for the school. The architect of the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, John Nash, is credited with architecture on Newbold Terrace, and although the designation "Royal" proceeded from a subsequent stay by Queen Victoria, the Prince Regent visited in 1819, stopping at the Regent Hotel. The railways, together with Leamington's ever-flowing springs, meant that the town continued to flourish during the nineteenth century, as suggested by Mr Dombey's seeking his wife there in Dickens's *Dombey and Son*.

At one crisis point in young Marian Evans's life, Leamington functioned for her as a last resort. In 1842, threatened with homelessness by her father's disapproval of her freethinking, she considered setting up as a governess in the thriving town, where visitors needing tuition for their daughters, or perhaps the Binswood Hall School might offer her the opportunity for financial independence. Indeed, as the conflict with her father wore on, Cara Bray reports that Evans began to turn her eyes on a place in Leamington as a relief from family conflict. By March of 1842, Bray writes as if such rooms were already in existence: "Miss E had begun quite to long for her solitary lodgings at Leamington" (*GEL* 1:132). But the reconciliation with her father prevented the necessity for moving. Later, her sister Fanny Houghton lived all her married life in Leamington with her husband, Henry. But even when peace-making relatives fruitlessly attempted to reconcile the half-sisters, George Eliot did not visit them there.

Nine years after the resolution of the quarrel with her father allowed Evans to abandon the thought of her own lodgings and wages, she spent one of the worst days of her life on a day trip to Leamington, followed by the castles at Kenilworth and Warwick. Midlanders often followed this itinerary when they had guests to entertain. Evans herself had chosen it to show off to her Swiss friend François d'Albert Durade when he accompanied her home from Geneva in 1849. But the London guest in 1851 was John Chapman. Having acquiesced to her abrupt departure from his establishment at 142 Strand in London, apparently under the jealous combined influence of his wife and his mistress, he pursued Evans to Warwickshire in an attempt to retrieve his lodger, and return her to her position as his editor. After they visited Leamington, he chose the grounds at Kenilworth as the site of his reflections on the necessity of beauty to the stimulation of his passion, which, his journal states, made her cry "bitterly" (quoted in Haight 1968: 90). Chapman's later relationship with Barbara Leigh Smith only continued a reputation for rakishness he sustained all his life, and had already manifested in his

romantic relations with Evans, which culminated in the sad scene at Kenilworth Castle. His nickname, Byron, stayed with him until and after he finally left Susanna Chapman for good in 1874.

In *Felix Holt*, the castle–spa material as first drafted does not survive into the final version of the novel. One of George Eliot's most distinctly Warwickshire novels, *Felix Holt* draws on the reputation of nineteenth-century spas to establish the rakish side of Mr Jermyn. His life as the story opens has arrived at a state of respectable domesticity that contains little hint of his past. But the adulterous affair with Mrs Transome belongs to his youthful period, the period of spa-building before the plot action begins. Indeed, an early version of this part of *Felix Holt* includes passages introducing Jermyn that go on beyond the descriptions of the spa finally published. They concern, for one thing, a little fancy about the tourist allure of the Treby Magna Castle, though in the end George Eliot deleted references to the castle and a portion of the rest of the spa material. Why an author deletes something can never really be known, but her day with Chapman at Leamington, Kenilworth, and Warwick more than ten years previously, together with the tone of the deleted material and her more recent visits to English spas, probably account for this deletion from *Felix Holt*.

The deleted Chapter 3 passage, after making fun of the Treby Magna building because it holds "every traditional honour that could belong to an English castle" (Eliot 1968a: 651)—including rollicking Plantagenets, warring Yorks and Lancasters, and a doomed Queen, Mary of Scots—concludes that "every inducement was offered to patients who combined gout with a passion for antiquarian hypothesis, debility with a taste for the biography of queens, or a general decay of the vital powers, with a tendency to purchase superfluous small wares to make expensive presents" (651–2). The narrator here connects sexual potency, one of the most sought-after benefits of nineteenth-century therapies (as indicated by the ads on the front pages of many newspapers), with opportunities to buy expensive gifts. Presumably, these will distract the patient's partner and compensate for the failure of the spa to restore potency.

The reference to bribing wifely devotion in the face of sexual disappointment by means of items marked "Presents from Treby" (652) was probably too obvious for John Blackwood, possibly too clearly directed at John Chapman and the site of their painful conversation, and no doubt too raw for the Victorian family audience. Hence, George Eliot deletes the castle (thereby also deleting a coded communication with her former editor), and leaves more innocuous references to the spa to convey Jermyn's rakishness, a rakishness he fulfills in his seduction of Mrs Transome. The narrative's temporal sequence, which arranges all this before the action of the novel begins, identifies him as a sexual predator in advance of the seduction, thereby lightening Mrs Transome's guilt in their heedless affair.[4]

Water cures: Harrogate

In September 1864, the Leweses made their first visit to Harrogate, followed a month later by Lewes's return to Malvern by himself. He was at this point trying

everyone's recommendations about his health, and even took a series of riding lessons as recommended by George Smith, but concluded they did more damage than good (Haight 1968: 378). He eventually took up tennis for the same reason, and persevered despite his doubts. Like George Eliot's time at Tunbridge Wells, Bath, Leamington, and Malvern, this visit predates *Felix Holt*, and could therefore have contributed to the generic spa in the novel. But a second visit to Harrogate later in the decade postdated *Felix Holt* and directly contributed to the creation of a character not in a novel but in a poem; not a rakish wastrel, but a woman artist.

For the Leweses' first visit, in 1864, Sara Hennell recommended lodgings in Lower Harrogate, but they found them already let, and the smallness of their ultimate choice disappointed them. They drank their glass three times a day nearby at the Royal Pump Room, whose sulphur water Lewes described to his son as "not very good" (*GEL* 4:163). Nevertheless, the elegant octagonal building was surrounded by gardens where they could enjoy lounging and watching young women "promenading, playing croquet, etc" (4:163). They sampled the "very decent" concerts available there and elsewhere in the town. And, of course, they walked. The water, or something, did perk Lewes up and fitted him to cap the interlude with several days at Scarborough where they had perfect weather and lodgings on the sea-cliff.

However, the improvement in Lewes's health lasted so briefly that only a few weeks after Harrogate, he returned again to Malvern. The German-born physician, Dr Juda Stummer, invited Lewes personally as his guest, and once again he felt improved. He stayed just two weeks because he missed George Eliot, who nevertheless thought him "much benefited" (*GEL* 4:166) when she welcomed him home. Dr Stummer must have created some satisfaction in his patient, for he came as a guest to the Priory two months later, indeed on Christmas morning.

During the next few years, however, the couple gave up on Malvern and usually chose Tunbridge Wells as the spa they visited in England. Meanwhile, they increased their visits to an assortment of Continental spas, visits that bolstered their confidence in the therapies. Finally, in 1870, they returned one more time to Harrogate for the stop that inspired a poem, and followed this visit with a sequel, a visit to Whitby that yielded much material for George Eliot's last two novels.

Since Lewes had already tried many of the south coast towns more than once, his physician, Dr Reynolds, recommended the sea air on the Yorkshire coast. This advice led the couple to spend June and July of 1870 at a series of three watering places: Cromer in Norfolk, Harrogate inland in Yorkshire, and Whitby on the North Sea coast.

The Leweses admitted that the first destination, in Norfolk, did not fulfill the physician's recommendation, and blamed themselves that it did so little for the patient. They felt that having acted against his advice, they suffered the consequences (*GEL* 5:104–5). So they soon left Norfolk for Yorkshire, starting out on 30 June 1870 in unpromising weather, journeying west and then north from Cromer, first by coach, and next by train. They hoped to stop and tour Ely Cathedral, but had to skip it entirely because of a heavy downpour. As the rain continued, they remained in the station, pacing the platform while Lewes smoked. They reached

Peterborough at four, and prepared to spend the night. George Eliot's headache did not prevent a look at the cathedral there, but they retired early, soon after dinner. The rain continued the following day, though when they arrived at Harrogate they enjoyed their meal at the George Hotel and found spacious lodgings that included a drawing room this time, bedroom, and dressing room, in a peaceful location far away from the Pump Room.

They began their stay as they would continue, with a concert. For more than two weeks they attended vocal and instrumental performances at Montpellier Spa, in the Royal Pump Room gardens, and elsewhere, most often at the rate of two a day. During that time, the Harrogate performers were principally local talent. On 2 July 1870, for example, at the Royal Spa, Miss Aitkin "sang Scotch songs charmingly" (*Harrogate Advertiser*), while at Victoria Hall the program included three women singers of Yorkshire fame, including Miss Grace Armytage. All these concerts caused George Eliot to conceive a creative project. After a week-and-a-half, she proposed to Lewes the poem that she eventually named "Armgart," as she described it the story of a singer who refuses to accept mediocrity, not only while a triumphant soloist, but also after she loses her voice. When they returned to Limpsfield, George Eliot began to develop this idea into one of her more significant poems.[5]

George Eliot does not set "Armgart" at a spa, much less an English spa. The action all occurs in an ornate salon apparently, from an incidental reference to Charlottenburg late in Act II, in Berlin. Because the doomed singer loses her voice as a result of her prescribed medication, a mistaken doctor precipitates the poem's catastrophe, anticipated when Dr Grahn's dialog with Walpurga reveals his doubts about the effects of his drug on her voice. The poem presents its characters in a Continental setting and in a plot involving performing, sickness, and possible quackery. Hence George Eliot is drawing on a health question repeatedly raised about spas—the reliability of the physicians. Engaging this issue as a result of the concerts at Harrogate added to George Eliot's ways of drawing on spas in her writing.

George Eliot's letters, read in sequence through Haight's first seven volumes, reveal a sudden morbidness following Thornie Lewes's death in 1869, a state that persisted until the end of Lewes's life and scarcely lightened around the time of her marriage to Cross. She began to make a practice of qualifying promises with the condition of her survival. She worried about the inevitable separation from her life's partner. In 1870 in Yorkshire, ten months after Thornie's death, came news that exacerbated the morbidity—war between Germany and France. The Franco-Prussian War had the disadvantage of proximity. Unlike the Crimean War of 1854, it took place on and around some favorite Continental routes. It also troubled the Leweses because they had friends on both sides. In letters from Limpsfield, they fretted and wrote page after page that create an anxious tone, and they corresponded most uneasily with friends who had German or French connections.

Meanwhile, the spa visits themselves combine to lend a darker tone to the "Finale" of *Middlemarch* by reinforcing the utter failure of Lydgate. The quackery George Eliot attributed to James Gully clings to Lydgate to make his fate as a

Continental watering-place physician a more complete failure, lacking dignity as well as purpose, his cures perhaps regarded with suspicion by skeptical patients. As the two weeks that the Leweses spent at Harrogate also resulted directly in the health plot in "Armgart," professional failure and questionable medicine join the suggestions about profligacy that George Eliot's visits to spas had already left in her writing, notably in *Felix Holt*. Meanwhile, she and Lewes continued to patronize them to the end of their days.

The years leading up to the interlude at Harrogate included some of the Leweses' most intense travel within England, besides several substantial international journeys. Interspersed with Malvern and Harrogate were jaunts to Tunbridge Wells, and eventually they sampled many of the other attractive spots near to London: Sevenoaks, Hatfield, Watford, and Weybridge. The pattern of travel begun around 1868 includes destinations that prepare for *Middlemarch* in a wide variety of ways. George Eliot found material for her masterpiece on journeys to Devon, to Oxford, and, as always, to Surrey; journeys made for science, for knowledge, for friendship, and for grieving. Indeed, *Middlemarch*, among the most directly Warwickshire-based of all her novels, nevertheless depends much on English travel destinations elsewhere as well, for characters, plots, and settings that go a long way toward supplementing the obviously Warwickshire settings in her masterpiece.

7 Whitby, Devon, Oxford, Surrey

Middlemarch

> It is piteous to see the helplessness of some sweet women when their affections are disappointed—because all their teaching has been, that they can only delight in study of any kind for the sake of a personal love. They have never contemplated an independent delight in ideas as an experience which they could confess without being laughed at.
>
> George Eliot to Edith Lytton (8 July 1870)

> More discontents I never had
> Since I was born than here;
> Where I have been, and still am sad,
> In this dull Devon-shire.
>
> Robert Herrick (1648)

Like its predecessors, *Middlemarch* assembles characters, settings, and plot elements partly out of places George Eliot saw and people she met during her English travels. In the late 1860s, journeys embarked on for the sake of Lewes's science continued to yield material for George Eliot's fiction, including originals for *Middlemarch* characters and for the country-house settings increasingly usual in her last two novels. For *Middlemarch,* she gathered details from travels to a Yorkshire seaside resort, along the quiet byroads of Devon, among the most important scientists at Oxford, and within the rosiest gardens in Surrey.

Between 1868 and the publication of *Middlemarch*, the Leweses made more than twenty long and short journeys within England, from day trips to four-month-long summer leases. The itineraries for these visits help identify models for settings in addition to the established connections between Middlemarch and Coventry (where Mary Ann Evans lived nearly ten years as a young woman). They identify composite elements for *Middlemarch* characters Dorothea, Fred, and Lydgate, as well as for characters in *Daniel Deronda.*

The travel connected with *Middlemarch* also suggests how George Eliot conducts two of her most important coded communications: one with her brother Isaac Evans, from whom she remained estranged, and the other with both partners in the troubled marriage of Edward and Georgiana Burne-Jones. George Eliot's intimacy with Edward Burne-Jones, always counted among the most important Pre-Raphaelite artists, contributed in particular to the small Gothic revival that

occurs mainly in certain settings in the last two novels. She was composing *Middlemarch* during the same period her friendship with the couple was becoming steadily more intimate, and the need for delivering coded communications to Edward Burne-Jones prompted her to adopt his medieval aesthetic to create some of her own settings and characters.

Because the most crucial period of the friendship with the Burne-Joneses occurred at the seaside in 1870, it is necessary to skip ahead two years to describe a summer holiday at Whitby in Yorkshire, before returning to the travels of 1868 and 1869, which also contributed to George Eliot's masterpiece.

Whitby

After the Cromer and Harrogate visits described in Chapter 6, the Leweses finished off July of 1870 on the coast in Whitby, an interlude that led to more and closer connections between George Eliot's late novels and the work of the Pre-Raphaelite artists of her acquaintance. In his excellent article, "Dorothea in the Moated Grange," Joseph Nicholes notes her "sustained fascination with Pre-Raphaelitism, particularly prominent in the years immediately preceding and during the writing of *Middlemarch*" (1992: 103). Whereas Dante Gabriel Rossetti and John Everett Millais remained primarily Sunday-afternoon visitors to the Priory, the Burne-Joneses became such intimate friends that John Cross relied on him as a source when preparing his biographical "Introduction" to the *Life and Letters* (1885 1:19–20). George Eliot generally reserved her Fridays in town for visits with Georgiana Burne-Jones, and after the former's sudden wedding to Cross in 1880, she included the young wife among the five intimates to be notified by letter at once (Haight 1968: 538).

When Georgiana Burne-Jones joined the Leweses in Yorkshire in 1870, her visit solidified a confidential relationship that yielded characters and settings for George Eliot's masterpiece-in-progress, as well as for *Daniel Deronda*. Nicholes redirects attention usually focused on the Pattisons of Oxford by commenting of the Burne-Jones marriage: "It is likely that their precarious relationship contributed to the theme of unhappy marriage in *Middlemarch*" (1992: 109). The conversations with Georgiana Burne-Jones in Whitby led to references in the last two novels to the Middle Ages, to the architecture of convents and cloisters, and to courtly love. During this period, George Eliot also continued to develop her severe critique of one aspect of medievalism, the Crusades, a critique she carried forth in *Daniel Deronda* and *Theophrastus Such*.

When Georgiana Burne-Jones joined George Eliot at Whitby with the hope of confiding about her love problems, she was replicating the sequence followed by Barbara Bodichon nearly fifteen years before at Tenby. Again in a beachside setting, a troubled friend discussed intimate love and sex difficulties and looked for advice. And again the situation provided conflicts, allusions, metaphors, characters, and settings for George Eliot's novels. The sibylline recipient of the confidences of younger women responded, not only by dispensing advice, but also by inserting details in her fiction they would be sure to recognize. Her letters

demonstrate that she employed the same language regarding broad interests, moral commitment, fellow-feeling, and fortitude both in her novels and in her other communications with the younger women she advised. The *Middlemarch* narrator, too, assumes a tone of responsibility for the discontents of young women who find their opportunities limited. Concluding that "We insignificant people with our daily words and acts are preparing the lives of many Dorotheas" ("Finale"), the narrator enlists the audience as members of a group expected to take seriously the responsibility for molding young female lives.

Georgiana Burne-Jones describes herself as almost a child at the time of her engagement, an impression intensified by her small stature and the seven-year age gap between herself and her husband (Burne-Jones 1893, 1:134). As young married couples, the Burne-Joneses, the Rossettis, and the Morrises made up a set at once artistic and domestic. They decorated, the wives became pregnant, and the husbands worked in verse, stained glass, watercolors, oils, prose, and design. Very soon, Georgiana Burne-Jones gave birth to Philip, followed by a baby boy who died, and then, four years later, Margaret. Both children became late-Victorian celebrities, Phil, as the roué Sir Philip Burne-Jones, and Margaret as a beauty and one of her father's favorite models. Until 1866, the couple lived happily, the husband enjoying artistic success and the wife fulfilling a typically Victorian role, domestic and maternal.

George Eliot's journals record visits from the Burne-Joneses in March and April of 1868 (H&J 132). They met again when the Leweses made a New Year's call in 1869, the first day of one of the worst years of Georgiana Burne-Jones's life. Her husband's affair with his model, Maria Zambaco, was in full swing. Two things made it quite public. First, Zambaco's service as model to Burne-Jones resulted in paintings so beautiful and sometimes so passionate that they manifest his love graphically. On public display, they allowed Zambaco, the London public, and the artist's wife to make of them what they would. In addition, the tempestuousness of the affair drew plenty of comment as London gossip. The lovers' quarrels sometimes occurred out of doors, climaxing with Zambaco's 1869 suicide attempt (if such it was) in the Regent's Canal near Westbourne Grove, no more than a mile west of where the Leweses lived at the Priory.[1]

After the Leweses' New Year's call of 1869, the Burne-Joneses repeated their attendance at Sunday at the Priory. Then in May of 1870, Georgiana Burne-Jones came alone one Sunday. Fed up with her husband's behavior, she had been repeatedly taking the children to live elsewhere, sometimes with her family the Macdonalds, and for a while in Oxford where she piteously tried to imagine herself as a studious undergraduate living an ascetic life at the university (Fitzgerald 1989: 122). After a year mostly away from her straying husband, she was at a loss as to her next course of action. But she began to find direction that summer when she turned to George Eliot.

One problem (or resource) in the situation was that George Eliot liked both of them. She thought Edward Burne-Jones a "wonderfully fine painter" (*GEL* 5:57). She enjoyed visiting his studio at the Grange in Fulham, recommended such a visit highly to Emilia Pattison, and arranged for Cosima Wagner to see it when she

came from Germany in 1877 (*GEL* 6:368). Meanwhile, however, the troubles stretched into 1870 for Georgiana Burne-Jones, and to some degree for the two children who wandered with her.

George Eliot warmly encouraged the young mother's confidences. As she and Lewes made their way from Cromer to Harrogate to Whitby, she wrote notes to keep her friend informed of their itinerary. At one point she hinted hopefully that both husband and wife might meet them at Whitby. But Georgiana Burne-Jones arrived at Whitby station on the afternoon of 18 July 1870 with only her little boy and girl, their summer clothes, children's books, and toys. The Leweses were already there. Edward Burne-Jones was back in Fulham painting Zambaco, a tender portrait full of intimate love symbols. He welcomed communications from his children and flattered little Philip, telling him that his red-tinted drawing of Whitby was much better than the one he himself produced at a similar age (Burne-Jones 1893, 2:15). He then returned to a blue-green portrait of his mistress, who shares the frame of his painting with a cupid, while she holds a book open to a page that pictures a tiny version of his illustration to *Chant d'Amour*.

Whitby, the destination for what both participants knew would be serious conversations, faces north-east, and the River Esk divides it into two sides, the East and West Cliffs. The Esk approaches its destination in the North Sea after a twisting route across the North York Moors. In the nineteenth century, the river also provided a valley suitable for the railway, whose white plume of steam made an attractive sight as the locomotive chugged through the heathery hillocks on a July morning. Nearing the sea, the Esk widens like a snake just after dinner, then narrows to the original width of its channel.

Since the fourteenth century, a bridge has connected the two halves of the village on either side of the riverbank, while at the same time separating the inner from the outer harbors. Upriver of the bridge, in the inner harbor, Whitby offered docking, sail lofts, warehouses, and other nautical services. Closer to the sea, the water broadens again, and, by 1870, breakwaters on either side of the mouth of the Esk extended the shelter a few hundred yards. With their harbor lights and sea-reaching embrace, these structures created a welcome for vessels returning from fishing trips on the North Sea.

At the time, much of the shipping at Whitby still went forth under sail. The 14–16-foot channel accommodated deep keels comfortably, and either a southerly or a northerly wind meant that a sailing ship could depart or arrive in Whitby harbor under full sail if the other conditions were right. An occasional departure or arrival of a sailing vessel added to the drama of navigating in the close quarters of the channel. The visual accent of the spreading sails and the thickets of masts and shrouds made for a picturesque scene. Even dotted with paddlewheel steamers, the harbor looked a little like the Arno because of the buildings on the east bank that rise flush with the sea wall, as do the riverside buildings of the Oltrarno on the other side of the Ponte Vecchio.

The trains arrived in Whitby on a level tract not far from the banks of the inner harbor, and the Leweses found their lodgings on the West Cliff. From the station, the streets climb to the sites where great blocks of hotels were then being built

overlooking the sea. Accommodating more and more visitors, such hotels were transforming the fishing village into a tourist spot.

The couple chose a tall house at the farthest end of the town from the railway, facing west near the cliffside end of the Royal Crescent. A short flight of steps reached its main floor from the front garden, and the slight elevation, together with the long windows, allowed excellent views. Seen from the top of the front steps, successive points of Yorkshire land dissolve one behind the other into the western distance past Sandsend toward Goldborough, like the promontories on the Amalfi coast. Only steps across the road, the cliff allows descent to the sands, a perfect situation for the Burne-Jones children. Arriving in town just hours after the Leweses on the same day, Burne-Jones established herself and the children on the Royal Crescent, too. They all admired the view and savored the air, which the Leweses found entirely different from the breeziness of Harrogate's (GHLJ 18 July 1870).

Whitby offered plenty to amuse the children while the adults conversed. Phil and Margaret were equipped with beach paraphernalia—spades, buckets, and nets for shrimping. They had time to play on the sands first thing next morning, and one imagines Lewes with his trouser legs rolled up, energetically leading an excursion down the cliff. He "superintended their castlebuilding fortress digging" (*GHLL* 2:154) as they molded the sand with their toy spades. They also engaged in "general paddling" (2:154), during which he called on his experience as a father and as naturalist to instruct and amuse them.

After the children's beachside morning with Lewes, which gave the women back on the Royal Crescent ample time to initiate their adult conversation, the entire party started off for a close-up view of Whitby's premiere attraction, the abbey. Seizing on the pleasant weather, they risked no delays, setting out in the early afternoon for the strenuous walk from the top of the West Cliff, through the valley, and up to the top of the East Cliff.

The route from Royal Crescent to the abbey offered many adventures likely to appeal to half-grown children. Visible from nearly everywhere in Whitby, the abbey forms a conspicuous goal high on the opposite side of the Esk. A byway nicknamed the Khyber Pass slices through the granite rock for a dramatic descent to sea level, a short distance from the swing bridge. Across the bridge, the buildings of the old town center, threaded by a grid of streets, gather close together, in contrast with the spaciousness of the placement of the newer buildings on the West Cliff. Past the older inns, smaller shops, and the snug town market square, the route presents its final, most challenging phase, the climb up Whitby's famous 199 steps to reach first the Parish Church of St Mary, then the abbey ruins themselves.

Even in a country full of notable cathedrals and monastic ruins, Whitby Abbey offers a unique view for the visitor. The surviving walls of the abbey church stand solitary on the foreland, overlooking the sea from a lofty height, yet also reflected in the nearby pools where grazing cattle drink on the high plateau. Disestablished by Henry VIII, the community of Benedictines has an impressive history, having sheltered a number of Anglo-Saxon saints, notably its formidable founding Abbess, St Hilda, as well as her protegé, Caedmon, the shepherd poet.

During the nineteenth century, Whitby Abbey's frame of east and north windows remained standing, as did its square central tower and much of the west front. The three tiers of windows in the north wall reached high into the sky, while the toppled columns in the grassy nave provided places where a tourist could sit and relax within the shell of the shattered church. The abbey ruins made great play space for a nine-year-old boy and a five-year-old girl. They could romp about the stones while the grown-ups talked on until the sun set magnificently over their lodgings, across the valley on the Royal Crescent (GHLJ 19 July 1870).

The conversation in the Whitby ruins, between the sibylline author and the distressed wife, like the confessional scenes between Gwendolen and Daniel in *Daniel Deronda*, are connected with a medieval setting. In the novel, as the two characters stand overlooking the Topping Abbey cloisters, Daniel prescribes a course of action for the desperate wife in the face of the meaninglessness of her marriage: "Look on other lives besides your own. See what their troubles are, and how they are borne. Try to care about something in this vast world besides the gratification of small selfish desires. Try to care for what is best in thought and action—something that is good apart from the accidents of your own lot" (Ch. 36). When Gwendolen tries to put this advice to use by selecting important tomes from Grandcourt's library shelf, among which she hopes to find a sufficient independent interest, she finds herself unequal to their seriousness.

But when Georgiana Burne-Jones returned home from Whitby she succeeded better than Gwendolen at establishing interests of her own. She committed herself to a course of study, especially of Latin and music, and stuck to it effectively (Fitzgerald 1989: 131). She immediately wrote a grateful letter to George Eliot about the holiday (*GEL* 8:482). Her trial lasted, but so did her marriage, and her *Memorials* to her husband testify to the positive outcome of the advice she received from George Eliot. When George Eliot died, Georgiana Burne-Jones's sympathy note to the widower John Cross specifically mentions her gratitude for the period at Whitby (ms letter, Beinecke, 26 March 1881). Her choice of an event that took place more than a decade before, over all their other mutual experiences, indicates its importance to her.

The graphic passion in some of Burne-Jones's paintings of Zambaco render his wife one of the most visibly betrayed women in nineteenth-century London. One and all regarded her as preternaturally patient, notably un-angry, and well rewarded when Burne-Jones finally gave up Zambaco, possibly sometime in the early seventies. George Eliot's message of unselfish submission to duty, of sustaining oneself through independent intellectual interests, and of infinite patience, resulted in the survival of the Burne-Jones marriage and the eventual triumph of the Victorian domesticity embodied in Georgiana Burne-Jones herself.

Following George Eliot's advice required enormous emotional endurance, however. In line with the strenuousness of the advice delivered there, Whitby did not sustain an air of festivity in July of 1870. Shops and barrows displayed one of the area's most important products: dark and glittering mourning jewelry made of monkey-puzzle jet, jewelry that Queen Victoria had been purchasing and wearing for nearly a decade of widowhood. The 199 steps to the Abbey are punctuated by

spaces specifically designed as resting places for pallbearers carrying coffins up to the parish church; hence, every pause for a breath or a look at the view duplicates the pace of a funeral procession. Seafront communities such as Whitby took pride in their lifeboat stations, but such facilities signal disaster as well as refuge, the ever-present threat of shipwreck. Parts of Whitby Abbey produced a melancholy effect through a tendency to fall down. Before the century ended, the central tower and part of one wall were gone. Portions of the cliffs themselves also sometimes slipped into the sea.[2]

Nor did the weather favor continued pleasure. The Leweses rarely left Georgiana Burne-Jones alone. After a few days, heat and mist arrived in turn, but the troubled wife continued to take her long walks, primarily inland up past the windmill, as she struggled to accept her mentor's plan for surviving an adulterous marriage.

On Monday, 25 July 1870, W.G. Clark, a Cambridge friend of Oscar Browning and regular Priory visitor, arrived for a stop on his way south, and so the group of adults gained another member whose presence would require abandoning the most personal topics of conversation. In any case, after a week, most of the story had been told and most of the advice concerning selflessness and industry delivered. On Tuesday the 26th, the sea mist rolled in heavily (GHLJ 26 July 1870). After another week, the Leweses left Whitby, stopped at York to look at the cathedral, and returned home to the Priory. Georgiana Burne-Jones also went home. She took her children and rejoined her husband at the Grange.

George Eliot did not delay addressing the matters she heard about in Whitby in her novel-in-progress. Already in *Middlemarch,* she decorates the Burne-Jones strain detected by Nicholes in the marriage plot with many of the accoutrements of the Pre-Raphaelite medievalist revival. Allusions to convents, important saints, courtly love, and knightly combat all contribute to *Middlemarch* characters and metaphors. Coupled with a glorification of a nun-like and perfect wife, George Eliot presents the deadly *femme fatale* in Rosamond and in her avatar, Madame Laure, both plausibly based in part on the model of Zambaco, whom Burne-Jones (in his paintings) also repeatedly represented in the temptress archetype.

The most obvious similarity between Georgiana Burne-Jones and Dorothea Brooke concerns their clothing. Like several of the Pre-Raphaelite wives, Georgiana Burne-Jones wore conspicuously unfashionable medieval garb (Flanders 2002: 103). Such ultra-simple lines made Burne-Jones stand out strikingly among the flounces and crinolines worn by middle-class women in the 1860s.[3] The contrast between conventional Victorian dress for women and the Pre-Raphaelite styles would make Burne-Jones, like Dorothea, look "in her plain dress … without a single ornament on her besides her wedding-ring, as if she were under a vow to be different from all other women" (Ch. 37). In the first paragraph of *Middlemarch*'s Chapter 1, the narrator three times describes Dorothea's dress as "plain." Like photographs of Georgiana Burne-Jones that show her hair pulled straight back from a center parting, Dorothea "wore her brown hair flatly braided and coiled behind so as to expose the outline of her head in a daring manner" (Ch. 1). In *Middlemarch*, George Eliot dresses one of her most admirable characters in Georgiana Burne-Jones's wardrobe.

The parallels between *Middlemarch* characters and saints, some of them abbesses, extend the medieval allusions. Whitby Abbey had a founding abbess, the seventh-century St Hilda, who demonstrated, according to the Venerable Bede, qualities similar to those the narrator of *Middlemarch* admires in St Theresa of Avila: piety, daring, and administrative competence.[4] In the *Middlemarch* "Prelude" and "Finale," George Eliot again gives an English travel experience a Continental overlay by attributing these achievements to a Spaniard, rather than to an equally talented and historical Saxon. As with the wayside crucifixes in *Adam Bede* and the Rhine–Rhone contrast in *The Mill on the Floss*, George Eliot's choice of St Theresa for the beginning of *Middlemarch* transfers an English model of effective female saintliness to a Continental setting, where St Theresa does as well, in fact better, because she makes the Spanish connection with Cervantes as picked up in the Quixotic motto to Chapter 2.[5] Both of these women saints accepted opportunities offered by medieval conventual life, opportunities, according to the "Finale" to *Middlemarch,* lacking for the directionless Victorian women who often confided in George Eliot about their feelings of triviality and uselessness. The need for a coded communication with several unfilfilled women of her acquaintance, stifled by the Victorian "medium" ("Finale"), might have been one motivation for changing the "Finale" from a scene of Will and Dorothea in London to a deliberation on foundresses of nothing.

George Eliot continues the St Theresa association with Dorothea through several nun-like details in addition to her clothing, notably her St Bernard dog, and connections with a number of other saints. When Naumann first spots her in the Vatican Museums, he informs Will of his plan to paint her dressed "as a nun" (Ch. 19). Aware of the appeal of the convent setting to Edward Burne-Jones, who, as far back as his undergraduate days at Oxford, considered creating with his friends a cloistered community, George Eliot places a character partly modeled on his wife in cloistered, monastic settings in her novel. In doing so, she invites him to remember the charms that attracted him, within a setting of declared interest to him.

Meanwhile, dashes of one figure in the drama, Maria Zambaco, reached first *Middlemarch*, then *Daniel Deronda,* in several forms. Like Madame Laure in *Middlemarch* and the Alcharisi in *Daniel Deronda*, she has the exoticism of women from Mediterranean groups and, like these two performers, she assumed roles (Phillis, Nimue, Cassandra, Ariadne) as she modeled in character for Edward Burne-Jones's narrative paintings. Like Madame Laure, she had a relationship, in her case marriage, with a physician in Paris. She left her doctor–husband behind in France when she came to England (Fitzgerald 1989: 113).

In *Middlemarch*, the Madame Laure episode has often elicited comment for its intrusiveness. It is usually taken as a synecdochic anticipation of Lydgate's spiritual murder by Rosamond. It offers a moral lesson about succumbing to the temptations of "the divine cow" (Ch. 16), in the face of duties to science, to England, to self. If George Eliot did base it partly on what Georgiana Burne-Jones told her in Whitby about Zambaco, she took the trouble to move it promptly into her novel-in-progress, and the coded communication helps account for the presence of the oddly melodramatic incident in the work of a novelist who believed in realistic art.

Biographers differ about when Edward Burne-Jones returned to his wife in the fullest sense by giving up his mistress. Indeed, Philip Attwood presents evidence that Burne-Jones and Zambaco kept secret studios side-by-side in Camden Hill Road as late as 1888 (1986: 37, n.20). Nor did Burne-Jones accept George Eliot's aesthetic message. According to Judith Flanders, he never learned to like the way his wife dressed (2002: 279). George Eliot also could not deflect him from conceiving and completing the enormous tapestries he did later in life, which still render Crusaders noble, beautiful, godly, courageous, and calm. Only the endurance of the Burne-Jones marriage measures the effectiveness of her warnings about Zambaco and her medievalistic presentation of a most admirable character who resembles the artist's own wife.

With the composition of *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda* both going forth in the late sixties and early seventies (as simultaneous entries in her notebooks prove), George Eliot had by no means completed the full coded communication with the "Finale" to *Middlemarch*. *Daniel Deronda* continues the conversation through its own medieval settings, references to the Crusades, and preoccupation with surviving marriage, all discussed in the following chapter.

George Eliot's coded communications, at least in the case of the Burne-Joneses, demonstrated much tact, for her intimacy with the erring husband only intensified. She made sure he felt no censure from the Priory about the affair, and often wrote him pleasant notes praising his paintings. Meanwhile, Georgiana Burne-Jones was beginning to replace Barbara Bodichon as George Eliot's favorite original. In the last two novels, she carved up the betrayed wife like a Christmas goose. She gave her tiny stature to Mirah, her efforts to deal with her husband's behavior to Gwendolen, and her family of active Scottish sisters to the Meyricks.[6] However, she began with Dorothea, with information gathered at Whitby and shaped to appeal to one of the most intimate of George Eliot's Pre-Raphaelite artist friends, Edward Burne-Jones.

Torquay

Two years before George Eliot's momentous visit to Whitby, her travel to destinations elsewhere reveals that the composition of *Middlemarch* was already advancing. In the spring of 1868, the Leweses paid a three-week visit to Torquay on the south coast of Devon. They chose this destination partly because Lewes required the resources of a seaside location to accumulate more marine species for his current scientific project (*GEL* 4:424). In January, he journeyed by himself to Bonn, his destination the placid university on the Rhine, where he conferred with several of its scientists. Then, after weekends in Tunbridge Wells and Cambridge, the couple prepared for something more extensive. George Eliot was finishing *The Spanish Gypsy* and had not published a novel since the appearance of *Felix Holt* two years earlier, while *Middlemarch* lay three years in the future, and still more poetry projects occupied the interim.

At the same time, details of the journey to Torquay suggest that, during this period, George Eliot was constantly and rapidly acquiring material for her

masterpiece. On the one hand, written evidence of the creative process leading to *Middlemarch* began decades earlier with her contributions to the *Coventry Herald* in the 1840s.[7] On the other hand, the March interlude in Devonshire shows specific evidence of an accelerating process of composition, whether she recorded details in written pages of notes or left them, for the moment, largely in her head.

Lewes was dissecting even more actively than usual, preparing for an exchange of scientific ideas with an important group. His research in the spring of 1868 was to supply material for his contribution to the meeting of the British Medical Association, to which he had been invited by Professor Henry Wentworth Acland of Oxford.

Torquay (where Philip Gosse again preceded him) fit Lewes's requirements in that its cliffs and hills yield to a long sweep of sand providing easy access to the beach. A fishing industry around the bay at Brixham promised a good deal of marine life, should he continue his attempts to coax specimens from the professionals. In a letter, George Eliot euphemistically describes the flaying, brain-probing, and boiling of hapless specimens he was engaging in as "a little rough handling for the benefit of science" (*GEL* 4:426). Along with delivering his conclusions at the Oxford meeting, Lewes published four related articles in *The Fortnightly Review*, the periodical of which he was founding editor. He began an epistolary dialog with Darwin himself, which eventually led to the presence of the greatest Victorian scientist at the Priory on Sunday afternoons. In November 1868, Lewes boldly asked Darwin to recommend him for membership in the Linnaean Society, and Darwin obligingly did (*GEL* 8:437).

Torquay had sustained a reputation for comfortable lodgings since the eighteenth century. But by 1868, the town was changing. The railway had extended to encircle the bay all the way to Brixham. A set of baths at the end of the pier offered a variety of temperatures for "sprinkling" (a shower) or "immersion" (a bath), a choice that recurs in one of the many figures of dryness associated with Casaubon in *Middlemarch*. With his marriage quickly approaching and his ardor failing to grow, the narrator observes that "As in droughty regions baptism by immersion could be performed symbolically, so Mr Casaubon found that sprinkling was the utmost approach to a plunge which his stream could afford him" (Ch. 7). The Leweses quickly found satisfactory accommodations, first at Queen's Hotel on the Strand; then, for the long term, they took rooms on Hesketh Road, which climbs a slope behind Torquay's impressive Regency showplace, Hesketh Crescent.

In the Leweses' letters, they accounted for their choice of destination with references to the availability of accommodations (*GEL* 4:424). But George Eliot saw signs that Torquay would not long remain a refuge. As a result of extensive villa building, she wrote to several friends, it was already taking on the aspect of a "London suburb" (*GEL* 4:428). Although they had splendid weather that improved steadily as spring advanced, Lewes's health there again disappointed them and limited his activities. It remained bad even as March yielded to April, and the flowers on Babbicombe Hill, where they often walked, budded and bloomed (GHLJ 22 March 1868).

Around the fourth of April, they began to worry about the return trip on the railway. They feared congestion at the stations because of the Easter holidays, and

George Eliot mentions to John Blackwood that "We are afraid of being entangled in excursion trains or crowds of Easter holidaymakers in Easter week, and may possibly be driven back next Wednesday" (*GEL* 4:429). George Eliot's expression, "be driven back," could refer to a premature departure precipitated as if under threat by the Easter crowds, and, indeed, when they arrived in London on the sixteenth, it was by rail. But the specification of the next Wednesday suggests a non-metaphorical plan for an alternative to rail travel during the holiday period.

At this point in their lives, the Leweses could afford to hire carriages to take them where they wished. The following July in Germany, for example, they traveled from Freiburg to St Märgen, a four-hour drive, by carriage (*GEL* 4:459). A Devon route that permitted a rendezvous with the railway at Honiton or points east, over a road less than twenty miles long, would not be inconsistent with their plans and practices. Departure from Torquay on "next Wednesday," the eighth of April, would allow a week during which to fit a leisurely and gradual drive through Devon with a stop at Ottery St Mary. Even if they did not leave Torquay until the twelfth, the date of Lewes's last entry in his Torquay journal, they would have ample time for such a drive.

Cadhay Manor: east of the limes and west of the yews

Ottery St Mary, in any case, was an entirely probable place for the Leweses to stop, partly because of its literary heritage. In addition to the Coleridgean connection as the childhood home of the poet, Thackeray set parts of *Pendennis* in the village, calling it Clavering St Mary.[8] Just three miles south of Ottery, exactly where, according to the diagram in Anna Kitchel's *Quarry*, Freshitt Hall and Tipton Grange are situated *vis-à-vis* the town of Middlemarch, sits the village of Tipton St John. Slightly northwest of Ottery, the architecture and grounds of Cadhay Manor embody nearly every significant detail George Eliot attributes to Lowick Manor in her 1871–2 novel.[9]

Whether on foot or driving, visitors approach Cadhay Manor by means of its avenue of lime trees. Like Lowick Manor, Cadhay House sits in a "small park, with a fine old oak here and there" and "a sunk fence between park and pleasure ground" (Ch. 9). The River Otter winds through the grounds, as does the stream where Mr Cadwallader of *Middlemarch* so values his fishing that, according to his wife's jibe, he refuses to object to Dorothea's marriage because of the risk of offending the owner of such an eminently fishable body of water.

Cadhay's avenue of limes ends at a set of outbuildings where a sharp turn to the left would bring an arriving Victorian carriage to an eighteenth-century façade overlooking a yard edged on one side with a low brick wall. When adapted as part of Lowick Manor, this is the least important side of the building. The remaining three façades figure prominently in *Middlemarch*. The narrator contrasts the two sides facing toward the garden, the "melancholy" sides, with the single façade facing out toward the greensward, the "happy" (Ch. 9) side of Lowick.

The large windows and sunny aspect of this façade yield the cheerful light that helps make it the happy side. In George Eliot's novel, it looks southwestward and

features at its center the tower that accommodates Dorothea's boudoir.[10] But on the next side adjoining—the side opposite the entry—narrow openings pierce wide panels of solid stone and look "rather melancholy even under the brightest morning" (Ch. 9). Here, another entry yields access from the house to the garden, the encroaching garden of untended flowers with its stand of yew trees close by. The third side, also melancholy, looks past the outbuildings toward the village. As the Casaubon marriage deteriorates, and the couple begin partitioning the spaces of their home, the garden areas around the two unhappy sides become the spaces favored by the brooding husband.

When Dorothea first sees Lowick, she embraces it all happily, refuses to change any detail, and accepts Casaubon's assignment of its spaces. While Celia shudders at its gloom, Casaubon attempts a concession to female needs and inquires about Dorothea's preferences regarding "your boudoir" (Ch. 9). As Dorothea demurs, Celia intervenes: "Will you not have the bow-windowed room upstairs?" (Ch. 9). They proceed to inspect the upstairs chamber at the center of the "happy side"—the west side—of Lowick.

On the top storey of Cadhay House, three gables protrude from the pitched roof, but the one in the middle protrudes farthest because it is part of a high semi-circular tower that runs up the front of the building. Whereas the gables on either side have flat facings, the bow-windowed room, through its three high double windows, offers 180-degree views of the park, the lime-tree avenue, and the green-sward. A delicate spire tops the pointed roof above. The entire arrangement emphasizes parallels between what Will calls Dorothea's "imprisonment" (Ch. 39) and the isolation of St Barbara, confined by her father in a room at the top of a tower. Indeed, during Dorothea's engagement party, the narrator explicitly compares her with St Barbara in her tower (Ch. 10), and Will picks up the theme of imprisonment on several occasions (Ch. 39). When Dorothea enters her boudoir, she assumes the role of a character favored by many Victorian artists and writers, but chiefly by the Pre-Raphaelites: the lady imprisoned in a remote towered castle.

Lowick and the Pre-Raphaelites

The design of the Cadhay original, with its conspicuous tower, highlights the Pre-Raphaelitism of George Eliot's settings and plots in *Middlemarch*, and further substantiates suggestions of Georgiana Burne-Jones as a model for Dorothea. Like Maggie in the inconsistent bay window of the Gainsborough Old Hall, Dorothea resembles the captive maiden of medieval tales—best known to Victorians in the Tennysonian characters of Mariana and the Lady of Shallott—through her placement in this isolating, isolated tower. Her situation there also assumes the loneliness, tedium, and alluring mysteriousness of the fairy-tale Rapunzel, the subject of a poem by William Morris. Nicholes finds references to both Tennyson's poem and John Everett Millais's painting of the Lady of Shallott in Dorothea's position at the boudoir window, in the sexual yearning she sustains there, and in the dreariness of her situation. He concludes that throughout the novel "Eliot intended … a sequential evocation of Millais's picture" (1992: 100). When Edward Burne-Jones was

courting his young wife, he confessed to her his impulse to install her in a tower (Fitzgerald 1989: 52).

The plot that goes forward in this Pre-Raphaelite setting contributes to the construction of Will Ladislaw as a courtly lover, for whom Dorothea is "for ever enthroned in his soul" (Ch. 47). Indeed, Will develops the courtly love plot himself by associating his relation to Dorothea with the role of medieval knight-errant, specifically St George. As early as his second encounter with Dorothea (in Rome), he reflects that "if Mr Casaubon had been a dragon who had carried her off to his lair with his talons simply and without legal forms, it would have been an unavoidable feat of heroism to release her and fall at her feet" (Ch. 21). Even after Casaubon's death, when her friends and relatives assume the protection of Dorothea, Will sustains his self-perception as dragon-slayer: "She had once said that she would like him to stay; and stay he would, whatever fire-breathing dragons might hiss around her" (Ch. 47). For himself, Will takes on the task often assigned the wearer of knightly armor in Pre-Raphaelite art.

In *Middlemarch,* several years before composing the confidential scenes set in the cloisters of Topping Abbey in *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot is already adapting medieval trappings by dramatizing her dragon-slaying, courtly love plot in an appropriately Gothic setting in *Middlemarch*. Dorothea's position in the boudoir at the heart of Lowick Manor requires that Will penetrate the hostile territory and storm the tower. His invasions of Casaubon's perimeters occur in several ways. He achieves one interview with Dorothea through the strategy of a rained-out sketching trip. After Casaubon forbids him to visit, he again penetrates his cousin's territory by attending Lowick Church one Sunday. Meanwhile, reminders of Will surround the threatened Casaubon. Despite his cousin's efforts to exclude Will, allusions to art and literature associated with him penetrate the Manor and combine to reduce Casaubon's security about his wife.

On this level, Will occupies the tower itself through two sets of allusions that juxtapose the medieval knight-and-maiden characters with a group of sustained parallels with Ovidian plots concerning metamorphosis, sexual transgression, and battles between youth and age. These begin in the Vatican, as Will answers his friend Naumann's injunction to come and view Dorothea in the Hall of the Statues. On their way, they pass through the Room of the Animals, the liveliest room in the museum, full of sculptures of creatures with a tendency to metamorphose, a tendency the narrator has already associated with Will. It contains many pieces relevant to the love plot of Dorothea and Will, including the Melaeger, the Minotaur, and the Alabaster Stag. The narrator specifically mentions the Melaeger, a viable equivalent for Will, especially since Ovid's character slays his uncles. Youth and age conflict elsewhere in *The Metamorphoses* in such narrations as Lycaon versus Jove; Phaeton versus Phoebus; Bacchus versus Penteus; and Perseus versus Atlas, the dragon, and Penteus. The event of metamorphosis in progress provided sculptors represented in the Vatican collection with a challenging opportunity to combine species, and they took advantage of it in creating a number of the sculptures in the Room of the Animals.

The furnishings of the tower boudoir at Lowick repeat several of the parallels established in the Vatican Museums, including the evocation of the Alabaster

Stag, a representation of Actaeon transformed by metamorphosis, and then besieged by his own hunting dogs. As the former room of Casaubon's dead mother, draped in muted blues and greens, the tower room features, in particular, two ornaments connected with Will: the tapestry of the pale stag and the miniature of his grandmother. Because Aunt Julia shares Will's pre-metamorphic nose, as well as his general physiognomy, and because of the associations between Will and the animal in the tapestry, these decorative details constitute an invasion of Casaubon's best-defended space through artistic allusion, as well as through Dorothea's memories.

After Dorothea returns from her honeymoon to her Lowick boudoir, only the miniature of Aunt Julia offers her any "breath and meaning" (Ch. 28). Indeed, before her eyes it metamorphoses into Will: "The colours deepened, the lips and chin seemed to get larger, the hair and eyes seemed to be sending out light, the face was masculine and beamed on her with that full gaze which tells her on whom it falls that she is too interesting for the slightest movement of her eyelid to pass unnoticed and uninterpreted" (Ch. 28). Dorothea responds to this masculinized face with "a pleasant glow" (and her honeymoon barely ended!). Already, George Eliot is daringly placing a version of Will in Dorothea's boudoir in the form of the miniature of his grandparent.

In addition, as I have argued elsewhere, Dorothea associates Ladislaw with the "pale stag" in the room's tapestry.[11] From his placement near the Alabaster Stag in the Vatican's Room of the Animals, through his stay at the White Hart Inn in *Middlemarch*, George Eliot frequently figures Will as a deerlike creature, most conspicuously in the passage in which the narrator asks, "If a princess in the days of enchantment had seen a four-footed creature from among those which live in herds come to her once and again with a human gaze which rested upon her with choice and beseeching, what would she think of in her journeying, what would she look for when the herds passed her? Surely for the gaze which had found her, and which she would know again" (Ch. 54). This description of Will as an affectionate animal accounts for Dorothea's warmth even before she realizes how strongly she wants to see him. It provides a second reminder of him within the most confining room at Lowick, a room that at once manifests the limitations of Dorothea's position and allows moral space for her to live her inward life apart from her husband. Two strong reminders of Will remain with her at her most intense, most sincere moments. Like his heritage, which blends English, Jewish, and Polish, Ladislaw's invasions of Lowick demonstrate his ability to transgress boundaries, including those imposed by his enemy.

Both Will and Casaubon figure their rivalry in martial terms. Will believes Casaubon's hatred for him appears in facial expressions so bitter and venomous that they "would almost justify declaring war" (Ch. 37). The strength of Casaubon's position depends on his having "collective society at his back" (Ch. 21). Casaubon, meanwhile, perceives Will as an invader: "He thinks of an easy conquest and of entering into my nest. That I will hinder!" (Ch. 42). But the besieged husband remains unaware of the figurative and allusive invasions of his territory, and therefore remains powerless to repel them.

The Burne-Jones drama offers an original with much in common with details surrounding the character of Will. Lingering around the Burne-Jones home at the Grange was a candidate who would have liked to compensate for the husband's behavior (Fitzgerald 1989: 123). William Morris shares with Ladislaw his given name, curly hair, assumption of chivalric roles, artistic inclinations, fondness for an undervalued wife, associations with tapestry, and nascent political tendencies. Like Ladislaw, he composed poems with his unattainable lady in mind, including parts of his *Earthly Paradise* (Fitzgerald 1989: 123). Georgiana Burne-Jones herself comments of Morris that "the statues of medieval knights often remind me of him" (1893: 111). Encoding a warning, even a threat, to Edward Burne-Jones's confidence that his affair would not cost him his wife, George Eliot embodies in two *Middlemarch* characters attractions he would be required to acknowledge, drawn partly from Morris and partly from Burne-Jones's wife, while the *femme fatale* characters of the novel, Rosamond and, even more conspicuously, Madame Laure, convey George Eliot's warnings about the deadly Zamabacan temptress archetype.

Alterations

In addition to creating *Middlemarch*'s medievalistic trappings partly out of Cadhay Manor's architecture, George Eliot develops patterns of emphasis through the details she retains as she converts it into a setting, as much as by what she omits from her descriptions of Casaubon's manor in the novel. By turning the entire building around so that the tower room faces west, George Eliot prepares for the event often taken as the novel's climax, Dorothea's confirming vision of the family on the road after her night of sleepless anguish over Will's apparent relationship with Rosamond. Other significant alterations include drying up (or just not mentioning) a set of fish ponds, knocking out a circular stairway in the tower, adding a church to the local village, shifting the avenue of limes fifty yards to one side, and, on one occasion, altering its species entirely.[12]

The elimination of the circular stairway within the tower at Cadhay means that Dorothea has no exit by which she might escape or travel up and down by herself at will. This elimination also permits the installation of a ground-floor window in the drawing room, which in the proper seasons opens up the room to nature in bloom. When Will says his first goodbye to Dorothea in this room, the open window allows a bumble-bee to fly in and out as the two talk together happily until interrupted by the entrance of Sir James. Together with the rose bush outside the window, the bee brings a touch of natural fecundity to the scene (Hardy 1998: 20).

Another change to Cadhay enables George Eliot to satisfy her design for plots involving Mr Casaubon, Mr Featherstone, and Mr Farebrother. As the rector of Lowick, Casaubon needs a church, and George Eliot places one nearby so that viewers can see it from "some parts of the garden" (Ch. 9). This location permits the Cadwalladers, the Chettams, Mr Brooke, and the Casaubons to view Featherstone's funeral from "an upper room" (Ch. 34) of the manor, a point from which Celia unexpectedly spots Will. George Eliot's original manuscript description of Lowick

moves directly from the statement that "Mr Casaubon's home was the manor-house" (Ch. 9) to the description of its park, a straightforward adaptation of her model at Cadhay. In revision, she inserts the church, an addition necessitated by Casaubon's profession. Since no record has ever noted a church in Cadhay, George Eliot creates one on a logical site, just where Cadhay Barton touches the garden of the manor at the edge of the "nutshell" village.

Other omissions concern the interior of the manor, which George Eliot either ignored or did not see. Within, Cadhay boasts two conspicuous features. At the center of the house, a stony oblong Tudor courtyard, the Court of the Sovereigns, displays four statues set high in elaborate scallop-shell niches cut into each of the four walls. The four smaller-than-life figures represent the Tudor monarchs: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary Tudor, and Elizabeth I. The second striking internal feature also dates from the sixteenth century, a great hall called the Roof Chamber, with an arching ceiling made up of and supported by stout carved beams of hardwood and variously used over the years, including as a compartmented residence for farm workers. During the eighteenth century, owner Peere Williams divided the hall vertically into two rooms one above the other, the lower becoming a Georgian dining room.

Apart from the entry side, all three façades of Cadhay retain the Tudor architecture in which its owners take great pride. But their Tudor overtones do not affect the events that befall Dorothea and Casaubon. George Eliot avoids evoking Henry VIII's marital difficulties as a motif to parallel either Lydgate's or Dorothea's troubles; indeed, she mutes the Tudor associations entirely, by describing the period of the exterior façades vaguely "in the old English style" (Ch. 9), rather than specifically Tudor. But the likelihood is that George Eliot never saw the inside of Cadhay. At the time of their visit, Cadhay was in one of its periods of decline, divided into two residences, let out, and for these reasons unlikely to be visitable.

The Dorothea plot of *Middlemarch* suggests that the remoteness of Cadhay—its potential as a setting for the story of a wife trapped in a remote park, a towered room, and a loveless marriage—created its appeal for George Eliot. Local lore about Cadhay Manor emphasizes this remoteness. Brochures speculate in particular about the wife of one sixteenth-century owner, Robert Haydon. The author of the current guide, "Cadhay Devon," accounts for Haydon's refurbishments with reference to his wife, "who probably spent her youth in more luxurious surroundings than the sub-manor of Cadhay, buried in the depth of Devon" (15). A short walk or drive from one of the inns in Ottery on an April day would allow an exploration of its exterior and grounds that left George Eliot free to bury her character effectively, and to position her heroine in a lonely tower that draws attention to her need for knightly rescue.

Oxford

Back in London after their jaunt through Devon, the Leweses stayed little more than five weeks before leaving for two months at a series of Continental spas. They returned towards the end of July, and Lewes continued preparations for the project that had

occasioned their trip to Torquay. Although he made his visit to Oxford without George Eliot, it had effects on *Middlemarch* easily as significant as the stop at Cadhay Manor. Not only was the university town teeming with little Lydgates attending the medical meeting, all of them passionate medical reformers interested in relationships between scientific research and public health, but Fred Vincy's plot also shows signs of originating in Lewes's reports to George Eliot of the events at Oxford.

By 1868, the inclusion of science in the Oxford curriculum had resulted in drastic changes in faculty and curriculum, as well as in the physical plant of the ancient university. The Museum of the University of Oxford was the pride and joy of the science faculty, in particular of Acland, its instigator. The project directly involved John Ruskin and embodied many of his theories about architecture and happy workers. In the pamphlet published by the Museum, Birkin Haward asserts that "The completion, in 1860, of Deane and Woodward's Oxford University Museum coincided with the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*. This is of significance, for the building was not just a repository of natural history but also—due to Ruskin's influence—a key work in the evolution of Victorian Gothic, demonstrating that an historic style could be utilised to construct a modern building out of modern materials" (1991: 3). Haward attributes the achievement to Acland, who in 1845 with his appointment as Regius Reader in Anatomy "began campaigning" for a museum suitable for housing the University's natural history collections and also for meeting rooms, offices, a library, lecture halls, dissecting rooms, and, detached but close by, laboratories for the chemists and biologists.

The architectural competition won by the neo-Gothic design for the museum exemplifies a typically Victorian Battle of the Styles. When the proposal based on a Northern Italian palazzo held off challenges presented by the neoclassical designs, the architects seized the opportunity to build the ceiling of the central court called for by the committee out of pointed steel arches and transparent glass panels. From Ireland came the O'Shea brothers and their nephew, of whom Acland himself reports: "The capitals are partly designed by the family of O'Shea, who bring wit and alacrity from the Emerald Isle to their cheerful task" (Haward 1991: 42). The arrangement met Ruskin's dearest wishes regarding the wisdom of coaxing creativity from contented workmen by leaving them to design, in this case, the carvings for the arches on the ground floor and the capitals of the stone pillars on the upper range surrounding the glass-covered courtyard (Yanni 1999: 81). Hugely esteemed, each carving represents a different species of the flora of England: delicate, accurate, realistic.

The end of the O'Shea brothers at Oxford is too good a story to omit. Informed that funds were lacking to finish the carvings, they decorated what turned out to be their last, on the interior arches surrounding the entrance, with carvings, not of chestnuts and holly, but of owls and parrots. Enough interpreters identified these reliefs with the authorities in charge of the project that the O'Sheas lost their jobs. They left behind in Oxford an unfinished set of carvings, with the external arches of the building varying in their states of completion.

The visual effect of the museum's interior derives from both its striking architecture and the parade of dinosaur skeletons wading down nave-like aisles of the

central courtyard, knee-high in displays of butterflies and bugs and furry deer in cabinets. When the sunlight enters through the glass ceiling panes, it illuminates the Gothic iron arches supporting the glass, the bones of the extinct animals, and the cases full of insect wings and marine species gathered from their distant homelands and displayed for the purposes of science at the university.

The museum gained its historical credentials within its first year when the Wilberforce–Huxley exchange took place in one of the rooms off the upper gallery.[13] This event created the new building as an arena for the ongoing Victorian debate on evolution and natural selection. Always eager to have his work accepted within the academy, Lewes prepared carefully for his participation at the meeting of the British Medical Association by writing on Darwinian topics. While Acland stressed that this was not officially an Oxford but a BMA meeting, and that the venue was therefore incidental, a welcome for Lewes's ideas from this group in this setting would provide him with solid satisfaction and proof of his non-amateur status among English scientists.

Lewes arrived at Oxford station from London on 4 August 1868, less than two weeks after his return from the Continent. It was the Long Vac, and the absence of the students freed up the college rooms for the physicians. Lewes stayed at Magdalen, quiet along the river in the August weather. The international BMA membership (which, although not all in attendance at Oxford, totaled more than 3,000), assembled that evening in Christ's Church Hall for Acland's welcome, an address in which he playfully emphasized the summer tranquility, inviting members of the association to inspect "whatever in the lotus-growing, stagnant depth of the long vacation you may find still living here" (Acland 1868: 130). Both Acland's welcome and his introduction by the previous year's host, William Stokes, himself a medical pioneer (Acland 1856: xx), touched on matters George Eliot renders as parts of the plot and character of Dr Lydgate in *Middlemarch*.

Stokes began his introduction of Acland with acknowledgments of the previous year's meeting at the Dublin university, disingenuously placing that shiny-new location side by side with the current venue on the basis that there "as here, you were received and honoured in the halls of a great university" (Stokes 1868: 123). He swiftly moves on to matters related to the medical profession: he believes reform goes forth most productively through the activities of individual physicians rather than through "the pursuit of medical politics". He acknowledges that "it is impossible in any country, that evils of custom and of administration, private wrongs, corporate shortcomings, hard dealings, unfair competition, and scanty remuneration for public and private services should not occur," then asks rhetorically how improvement should take place: "Is it, by the efforts of one and all, to place medicine in the hierarchy of the sciences—in the vanguard of human progress; eliminating every influence that can lower it … while we foster all things that relate to its moral, literary, and scientific character?". Having provided a pretty good sketch of the motives of George Eliot's Dr Lydgate, Stokes yielded the floor to Acland, who went on to speak for an hour-and-a-half in much the same vein.

Acland's "President's Address," published that same month in *The British Medical Journal*, calls for physicians to conduct themselves as both scientists and

practitioners. He names some specific medical challenges of the age: overcrowding, the touchy relationship between science and religion, the methods of educating young physicians. He praises accepted values of the age, idealizing hard work and the need for his audience to maintain "the more tender parts of our nature, sympathy with goodness, imagination, generosity, devotion" (Acland 1868: 127). He gratifies some members of his audience by singling them out for mention of their particular accomplishments. He concludes with an inspiring call to action: "In exchange for our welcome to the banks of the Isis give us your thoughts and your counsels, to the end that we may all return refreshed and strengthened to our common and happy toil" (1868: 130). George Eliot's fiction suggests that one member of the audience left what Acland calls "this ancient hall" full of the ideas on which the speech touched.

In addition to attempting to answer the call for integrity, disinterestedness, and elevation in the physician's life, Lydgate's ambitions answer Acland's call for physicians to engage simultaneously in both practice and research. Like Acland's physician, he is both "tender" (to Rosamond) and, in his work, "a happy fellow" (Ch 15). Even when Rosamond reveals all her annoying inadequacies, he continues to demonstrate tenderness toward her, and he finds great happiness in his scientific work.

George Eliot constructs Lydgate's character partly through an application of one of Acland's metaphors. While Acland figures the scientist as a "navigator" well equipped with instruments, who trusts his instincts as well as his instruments (1868: 126), Mr Farebrother describes Lydgate as "a sort of circumnavigator come to settle among us" (Ch. 17). The *Middlemarch* narrator describes Lydgate as an explorer: "the dark territories of pathology were a fine America for a spirited young adventurer" (Ch. 15). Acland, the *Middlemarch* narrator, and Mr Farebrother all figure physicians as courageous explorers who venture forth into the unknown.

As a model who provided details for composite characters, Acland shares several interests with Lydgate and one with Dorothea. Duplicating the objectives pursued by Lydgate, he had by 1868 already written on fever (*Fever in Agricultural Districts*, 1858) and cholera (*Acland's Memoir on the Cholera at Oxford,* 1856). In the latter he emphasizes the need for "a Building fit to receive Contagious or Epidemic Disease" (1856: 106), and discusses whether health improvements in preparation for cholera should be publicly or voluntarily funded, the same question confronting the Sanitary meeting at which his neighbors accuse Bulstrode of murder. He also duplicates Dorothea's preoccupation with cottages and the health of villagers that she manifests in her conversation with Lydgate at the New Hospital (Ch. 44). Not only did Acland advise on choices of *Cottage Wall Prints* in 1862, but in his *Memoir on the Cholera*, he attributes the prevalence of cholera to crowded housing in Oxford and includes examples of model cottage designs. Although his *Health in the Village*, with its many plans and designs for cottages, did not appear until 1884, it culminated a lifetime of interest in the subject. It opens with a description of the wretched conditions he discovered among the villagers of Low Marsh, the fruit of his explorations there in 1858.

The BMA meeting continued with a hectic schedule of activities. Despite stormy debates that did not end until midnight, members reassembled at eight the next

morning for breakfast, and afterward formed a "brilliant gathering" (*Oxford Times* 1868) at the Sheldonian for the awarding of honorary degrees. One evening, after a full day of sessions and seminars, Acland hosted the President's Conversazione in the University Museum, where he supplemented the usual collection with exhibits specially designed to interest his guests: "pathological preparations," physiological drawings, and "microscopial display". There were expeditions offered the attendees as well: "The Duke of Marlborough liberally threw open the magnificent gardens and grounds of Blenheim Palace", an opportunity all the more attractive because as the days passed, the long Oxfordshire dry spell was broken by a rain shower or two ("Horticulture", *Oxford Times* 1868). Under these conditions Lewes could avail himself of the abundant scientific collegiality he so desired.

After the meeting, Lewes took home more than the inspiration of Acland's ideas. He took news of an acquaintance he formed who also contributed to *Middlemarch*. In his address, Acland cites by name the achievements of Dr Thomas Clifford Allbutt, engaged in research on "states of the eye" that also might prove "pathogenic of other suspected conditions in other and distant organs" (Acland 1868: 126). One of the frequently named models for Dr Lydgate (Evans 1950), Allbutt provided Lewes an invitation for himself and George Eliot to visit his surgery and the new Leeds Infirmary, an invitation to which they responded promptly by traveling to Leeds the following month. Without question, their inspection of the Leeds Infirmary, combined with material based on Dr John Bury's Coventry clinic, contributed to the most important of Lydgate's projects in *Middlemarch*.[14]

Like the Oxford University Museum, the Leeds Infirmary exemplifies ambitious Victorian Gothic revival architecture adapted for scientific purposes. Its massive façade features a countless number of pointed arches in dark and light alternating stripes, at every level, in every size. On either side of the carriage portico, the ends of three of its five long, "pavilion"-style wards protrude, one to the right and two to the left. The forked ends of the wards permitted the installation of still more light-providing windows. Intended to incorporate the teaching functions it still offers, the building opened with fanfare on 19 May 1868, just as Lewes began a summer heavy with medical–scientific preoccupations that climaxed with the BMA meeting. Crowds jammed the barriers around the carriage portico to see the arrival of the Prince of Wales for the opening ceremony.[15]

An important feature of the George Gilbert Scott design, the infirmary's planted courtyards, appear in George Eliot's description of Lydgate's embryo hospital. Describing the central courtyards inserted between the wards and their connecting passages, the Infirmary's historical display notes that "Integral to both Phase 1 and Phase 2 is the development of a landscaping strategy for the building," which resulted in interior gardens threaded with paths. The New Fever Hospital in Middlemarch also adopts a landscaping strategy, for when Dorothea seeks out Lydgate there to inquire about her husband's prognosis, they talk as they walk "round the grass plots" (Ch. 43). Later the narrator mentions the landscaping again as Dorothea remembers the conversation conducted in "the laurel-planted plots of the New Hospital" (Ch. 44). In these details, George Eliot gracefully encodes her little tribute to the grand, new infirmary she visited at Leeds in 1868.

Cricket at Rugby

Meanwhile, Lewes's visit to Oxford supports another suggestion, this one offered by Haight, of an original for a *Middlemarch* character, and, in doing so, directs attention to the novel's second major coded communication. George Eliot's brother, Isaac Evans, had four children, including Frederic Rawlins, the second child and the oldest boy. Isaac Evans himself had taken early to his father Robert's profession, riding out with him on land-agent errands as a boy of eleven. Then he was privately educated in Birmingham under the tutelage of a High Church Anglican clergyman. He married Sarah Rawlins at the age of 24, moved into Griff House, and assumed his father's job, while his sister and father relocated to their comfortable new home in Coventry (Haight 1968: 31).

As a child, Isaac Evans's small son Fred saw his Aunt Mary Ann regularly. In 1850, when he was seven, she returned from her long winter stay in Geneva to Griff House and remained there for several weeks. After Mary Ann Evans moved to London and cast her lot with Lewes (but was still presenting herself to her family as a single woman), she returned to Nuneaton during holidays. On these occasions, she stayed mainly with her sister, Chrissey Clarke, rather than at Griff House, but she was not yet completely cut off from her brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews.

Then, one spring day in 1857, when Isaac Evans's oldest son had reached the age of fourteen, approaching a suitable time for his father to place him in a public school, a letter from Fred's aunt arrived from Jersey to confirm what her brother probably already knew, that she was living with Lewes out of wedlock. Evans attempted to protect his reputation and consequently his considerable ambitions for his sons by shunning the scandalous sister and demanding that the rest of the family do so, too. Still publishing her stories anonymously, his sister enjoyed no fame at all at the time, and Isaac Evans concealed the embarrassment well enough to place both of his sons at Rugby School. They entered in April of 1859, Fred at the age of sixteen, Walter three years younger.

Shortly thereafter, the success of *Adam Bede*, together with the to-do surrounding the Liggins challenge (in which a Nuneaton clergyman claimed to have written *Scenes of Clerical Life*), obliterated any chance for the author to maintain her anonymity. While the news about George Eliot's identity as the author of *Adam Bede* was invading Warwickshire, Isaac Evans, like thousands of people in Britain, read the novel. Instantly he recognized details about his home and family that identified the author as his sister. He had entered his sons at Rugby just in time. He had also entered his sons at Rugby just after the publication of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.[16]

Away at the famous public school, things were going well for young Fred. The proximity of Rugby to Nuneaton played some part in Isaac Evans's choice of school, and, fortunately, its reputation for prizing athleticism fit well with his son's talents. Although Headmaster Frederick Temple had by this time succeeded Dr Arnold, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* was still fostering the rough-and-ready reputation for muscular Christianity created by Thomas Hughes's novel. All Rugby's young fags joined the controlled violence in the tradition of the eponymous game begun by William Webb Ellis who, according to the plaque overlooking the expansive

green Close, "first took the ball in his arms and ran with it" (Arlott 1975: 882). But Rugby scorebooks reveal that the Evans boy succeeded best as a cricketer. A few months after his arrival, he made a splashy debut for The Twenty-two, scoring eighteen runs against The Eleven in his first innings. He sustained his success thereafter, taking leadership on the cricket pitch throughout his schooldays. Having matriculated at Oxford, he nevertheless continued to play for the Old Rugbeian side until 1863, when he began lending his talents to his university rather than his school.

Evans left Rugby and entered Oxford in 1861. By this point, his aunt had become a famous author, and rumors may well have circulated concerning her relationship to one of the university's undergraduates, Evans of Exeter. According to Lewes's comment in 1868, the university dons were as enthusiastic as the rest of Britain about the writing of George Eliot, and spoke of it with a respect that thrilled him. Meanwhile, Fred Evans's interests continued to center on cricket. Even after taking his inglorious third in Classical Moderations in 1863, he continued to play. He did not finally take his MA until 1868, the year of the meeting of the British Medical Association attended by his quasi-uncle.

Similarities between Fred Evans of Griff and Fred Vincy of *Middlemarch* abound. Evans's first name, his preference for the out-of-doors over matters of divinity, his successful father's ambitions for a son who had already carried the middle-class Evanses to Oxford, all match the circumstances of Fred Vincy in *Middlemarch*, and, what is more, Fred Vincy applies a cricketer's metaphor to his romantic rivalry when he frets to Mary about being "bowled out by Farebrother" (Ch. 57). My speculation concerns George Eliot's detailed knowledge of her nephew's circumstances. She herself did not visit Oxford until 1870, but in August of 1868 the possibility remained that, in-between the activities of the British Medical Association, Lewes sought out her nephew (lingering on or visiting his university college?), spoke intimately with him about his vocational doubts, and repeated the thrust of the conversation to George Eliot when he returned to the Priory. On the other hand, the plot could as well have developed out of some kind of hearsay of young Fred's activities (from a don or an Exeter man), for he had already his degree in hand since receiving his MA on 20 February of that year (*Oxford Times* 22 February 1868). In either case, the comments on the family situation delivered with the publication of *Middlemarch* in 1872 came too late to affect Fred Evans's career, for by then he was already started on the life he continued with external success as he proceeded steadily up the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

The character George Eliot models on her nephew flatters him. Fred Vincy has long graceful legs, stylish clothes, attractive curly hair, and good taste in women. His conversation with Mr Farebrother about his vocation shows the spirit of a non-theological mind. When the vicar of Lowick inquires whether scruples about the Thirty-nine Articles might be deflecting Fred from a vocation as a clergyman, the young man replies with appealingly secular indifference, "No, I suppose the Articles are all right" (Ch. 52). This character's happy fate outside the church suggests that Aunt Marian was of the opinion that her nephew ought to follow the occupation of his father and his grandfather as a land agent, for Fred Vincy's employment

with Caleb Garth gives him at long last an absorbing, respectable, and appropriate vocation. The confidential scenes between Mr Farebrother and Fred Vincy, as they try to work out his future (according to my tantalizingly unconfirmable speculation), could repeat conversations between Lewes and George Eliot's model for yet another of her Oxford characters whose university education does him little good.

When Lewes died in 1878, Fred Evans called on his aunt personally to offer her his sympathy. In the reclusive early days of her mourning, George Eliot did not see him. Indeed, when she finally resumed correspondence with Isaac Evans after her marriage to Cross, her first letter for some reason emphasizes that she has met only one of her brother's grown children, her niece Edith (*GEL* 7:286). But the call itself implies a particular respect for Lewes, perhaps stemming from a meeting at Oxford in 1868 at which he poured his heart out about his vocation. His aunt's communication of her doubts via her novel had no effect, as he entered the church anyway. He succeeded well enough as a clergyman, and Edith Simcox, when she met him in 1881, considered him a pleasant, non-doctrinal Warwickshire vicar (Simcox 1998: 140). His brother Walter, Isaac Evans's younger son, carried on the family tradition. He did not follow his brother to Oxford but attended Cirencester Agricultural College, then became a Warwickshire land agent.

George Eliot herself finally visited Oxford two years later, in May of 1870, staying at Lincoln College. By all accounts, she experienced many bright moments during an event-packed trip that, moreover, set a pattern observed more or less annually in the future. On Wednesday she had her first sight of the University Museum during a croquet game on the lawn in the shadow of its Gothic peaks (possibly a source for the croquet enthusiasm shown by a young Oxonian, Mr Clintock, in *Daniel Deronda*). Thursday, she spent all day actually within the building. In one of the dissecting rooms off the glazed courtyard, she watched Professor George Rolleston dissect a human brain (Haight 1968: 428).

The weather during her visit was bright and sunny, and the party hosted by the Rector of Lincoln went out to the river to watch the races. George Eliot admired the gardens and, according to the account by young Mary Arnold, had an impulse of aesthetic delight when they entered the gate of the front quad at Lincoln afterward. Ahead of them in the corner of the vine-covered rectangle, Emilia Pattison was leaning out of the window above the door, making a pretty view that young Miss Arnold believed George Eliot would insert into a book at some time or other (Haight 1968: 427). At a lecture at the Sheldonian, she heard a talk by Emanuel Deutsch, often named as the model for Mordecai in *Daniel Deronda* (Baker 1975; Temple 1989). She saw Christ Church, New College, Magdalen, and Lincoln close up, and strolled along the banks of the Isis.

The 1870 visit to Oxford refocuses attention on the Pattison marriage as a source for the plot of *Middlemarch*. Because George Eliot's pointillistic characters and plots assume numerous models for participants in any situation, accepting the Pattisons' contribution to the marital conflict does not require discarding the Burne-Joneses. One afternoon during the Oxford visit, Emilia Pattison occupied George Eliot's exclusive company as they took a long drive alone together

around the Oxfordshire countryside. At one stop, at Littlemore a few miles to the south, John Henry Newman had spent the three years immediately following his abandonment of the Anglican priesthood and his departure from St Mary the Virgin church in Oxford.

Two of the ecclesiastical buildings at Littlemore relate to George Eliot's fiction: the set of small rooms occupied by Newman and his followers and the ruins of a nearby Benedictine convent, of which John Rothenstein comments: "Newman was connected with all … of Littlemore's historic buildings. With the most ancient, the Mynchery, the connection was one of sentiment alone. This place is a ruined Benedictine convent, or place of Mynchons, an early English word for nuns" (1945: 74). George Eliot's advisory role toward Emilia Pattison, sustained throughout the period of the composition of *Middlemarch*, together with the notoriously unhappy Pattisons, long-reputed a source for the Casaubons, render it almost impossible that the two women shared no related confidences on their drive together. Hence, two years before the encounter with Georgiana Burne-Jones at Whitby, stories of marital discontent had been shared at or near convent ruins. In both cases, George Eliot assumed her priest-like role in places formerly occupied by religious communities, the Abbey at Whitby and the Mynchery at Littlemore.

Between her own 1870 visit and Lewes's two years earlier, George Eliot accrued a jumble of Oxford details which reach the pages of *Middlemarch*, even though she never sets a scene there. The eager attendees at the BMA meeting of 1868 contributed to her medical plot, while the career of Fred Evans resulted not only in a good chunk of plot but also one of several novelistic half-dialogs by which she communicated with her estranged brother back in Nuneaton, and conveyed to him her opinion of the way he was conducting his family affairs. The Pattisons, among others, offered a model for a far-from-model marriage, even though by the time she saw them there, *Middlemarch* was well underway. The only real name she draws from the Oxford map is Brasenose, where lurk Casaubon's scholarly rivals. Contiguous to Lincoln, this college stands in *Middlemarch* as the symbol of scholarly carping.

Finally, sending Will Ladislaw to Rugby, her nephew's old school, invites comparisons between Old Rugbeian Will Ladislaw and the other Old Rugbeians of her acquaintance. During the sixties and seventies, she and Lewes often saw the young literati referred to as the "Rugby–Balliol Trinity," of whom William Henry Bullock was a favorite. Later, she accounted to Harriet Beecher Stowe for her Jewish plot in *Daniel Deronda* as partly an educational device for Christian England: someone in the Rugby group had shocked her by concluding that Jesus Christ spoke Greek (*GEL* 6:302). Her biological nephew, Fred Evans, swinging his cricket bat into the record books, followed only four years behind old boy John Walter Cross, whom she would playfully call her "nephew" right up until the day she started calling him her "best loved." When George Eliot married her own Old Rugbeian, her brother's approval came immediately. She had joined a family that matched his easily in wealth and status, and whose members even favored the same public school he had chosen for his sons. In some things, despite their estrangement, the Evans siblings were not so divided.

1869

The Leweses ended in 1868 with two journeys northward and an interlude in Sevenoaks, which was becoming their favorite site for quick refreshment. Then, in March of 1869, they took their last substantial journey, to Italy, before Lewes's son Thornie returned from Africa seriously ill and requiring all their attention. Afterward, they spent the rest of the summer season by his deathbed, escaping only for brief visits to local spots barely outside of London: Hatfield, Watford, and Sevenoaks. Meanwhile, they had a full two months between March and May in Italy. The momentousness of this Italian journey stems from an historic chance meeting in the Pamfili Gardens.

The story of 1869 begins in 1867. When Lewes first made the acquaintance of the Cross family staying at an inn along the South-western Railway line in the autumn of 1867, the brief encounter had deceptively important consequences because it prepared for the exchanges of calls between the Leweses and members of the family in Rome a year-and-a-half later. This exchange began one of the most important friendships the Leweses made as a couple, for they visited frequently with the Crosses for more than ten years, that is, for nearly half of their lifetime together. The party in Rome included Anna Cross, John Walter Cross, and the newly married couple, William Henry Bullock and Elizabeth Cross.

Because of George Eliot's startling marriage to Johnnie Cross near the end of her life, his family usually figures in narratives of her very last days, after the death of Lewes in 1878. But the relationship with the family had plenty of time to yield material for both *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*. The stability of the friendship coincided with and probably contributed to the respectability, indeed the exclusivity, of the group of wealthy and titled friends who came to supplement the long-time artistic–scientific group with whom the Leweses socialized.

In October 1867, Herbert Spencer and George Henry Lewes chose Weybridge station as the starting point for their planned five-day Surrey walking tour. On Monday the 14th, Spencer encountered Lewes at the regular meeting of the London Library Committee on which they both served (GHLJ 19 October 1867). Spencer proposed the walk, and Lewes agreed. He went home, packed lightly, and on Saturday the pair took the train to Weybridge and headed for the nearby Hand and Spear Inn.

The railway line at this point bends gently westward from London, just touching the edges of many of the towns and villages where it stops. Among these stops, together with its neighbor Walton, Weybridge receives good notice in nineteenth-century travel guides. Its attractions included a graceful bridge before the station, a windmill just beyond, and several noteworthy homes: Brooklands, Oatlands, and Broadlands Farm (Lovelock and Pardoe 1969).

Built along the Wey south of where it joins the Thames, the town center lies nearly a mile from the station, so that the Hand and Spear nestles in a rural spot despite its proximity to the tracks. Praised in an 1846 guide for its Italian profile and warm welcome, the inn has a four-storey-high square central tower that rises from the surrounding trees on the edge of the Brooklands estate, and recalls the medieval defenses at Florence or San Gimignano. At the first-night destination for

the walk with Spencer, Lewes made the acquaintance of the family with whom he and George Eliot would spend holidays for the rest of their lives.

Another large Victorian family group of grown-up brothers and sisters, Anna Chalmers Cross and her children were taking refuge after a fire in their nearby house on Weybridge Heath. Mrs Cross had ten children by her husband William, a prosperous banker. Originally Scots, the young family grew up at Aigburth, a suburb just outside Liverpool, situated on the low northern bank of the still-broad Mersey. As a measure of their status, they entertained Alfred Tennyson there in 1853. When the party of adults and older children paused during a Sunday walk, Tennyson composed a little verse:

> We had smoke but we hadna wine
> And we had nothing whereon to dine
> And Crosskin sang a song of mine
> Behind the falling water.
> (Sellar 1907: 54)

The likely singer was the oldest "Crosskin," daughter Elizabeth, then seventeen years old, who went on to compose her own poems and to put one of George Eliot's lyrics to music for singing as drawing-room entertainment.

Elizabeth, nicknamed Zibbie, was, according to her cousin, Eleanor Sellar, the star of the family. She describes them all in superlatives: a wise father and "handsome, lively, humorous mother" (1907: 74), but the oldest girl is "the peerless Zibbie" (74) and "one of the most charming and brilliant women I have ever known" (52). As a child, Sellar spent an interlude with the Crosses at Oxford, where her idolized cousin captivated everyone: "We lived in lodgings in High St and Zibbie soon became the centre of attraction at all the fêtes to which we were invited. I remember a luncheon at Magdalen, and then going to the top of the tower, and a poem being written on her little white parasol" (76). The Cross daughters who married, including Zibbie, all made good matches, and the sons occupied themselves with the banking business of their deceased father.

As a result of the fire at Weybridge Heath, the Crosses met the two walkers on holiday just as they arrived at the Hand and Spear. Reports differ on the seriousness of the fire. Lewes's journal indicates that the Crosses had stayed at the inn for two weeks, after the "burning down" of their house (*GEL* 4:393). When the two library board members appeared on the road from the station, asserts Lewes, the family was leaving the inn to occupy temporary lodgings as they had the house rebuilt. But Sellar believes the fire caused little damage. Indeed, according to her narrative, it prompted funny stories "of strange aberrations on the part of some of their neighbors who rushed in to help and among other things threw out the bedroom china on to the lawn, thus insuring its destruction" (1907: 290). John Walter Cross, absent at the time in America, believed that the company all dined together at the inn, while Spencer remembered a dinner at the Crosses' temporary lodgings (*GEL* 4:393, n.8).

If the three men differ on the circumstances of the meeting, Spencer, Cross, and Lewes all agree on its pleasantness. Having enjoyed a climb up St George's Hill,

the first of many climbs to come on future visits, Lewes dashed off a letter to George Eliot, had a nap, and laughed and sang away the evening with the Crosses (GHLJ 19 October 1868). He does not mention how he occupied himself over the weekend, but he did not leave Weybridge until Tuesday, when he and Spencer boarded the train for Guildford. A few long walks and pleasant inns later, he directed his route homeward.

Despite the rhyme of love and dove scribbled by a smitten undergraduate on Zibbie Cross's parasol atop the Magdalen tower, she had not yet married. Turned thirty, she had finished a book of poetry, *An Old Story and Other Poems,* which includes some translations from German and Russian, and she had continued to set rhymes to music as she did for Tennyson at Liverpool more than a decade earlier. The full friendship with the Crosses had to wait nearly two years before it flourished when Zibbie Cross finally married Bullock and went to honeymoon in Rome.

The provocative meeting with a honeymooning couple in Rome does not provide a likely model for the Casaubon honeymoon. Many English people honeymooned in Rome, including Lewes's son and his wife in 1865. The new bride, unlike Dorothea, was not making her first Roman visit; a number of her poems describe experiences in Italy. Nevertheless, some preoccupations in *Middlemarch* echo the family situations of the Crosses. When the daughters married, the husbands brought their brides to substantial homes in Lincolnshire, Sussex, and Cambridgeshire, where they took their responsibilities as landowners seriously. Bullock, for example, when he inherited Six Mile Bottom in 1872, built solid and attractive cottages near the house alongside the road between Cambridge and Newmarket. When the Leweses visited Six Mile Bottom, Bullock, who had taken the surname Hall, proudly showed them around his estate (Haight 1968: 443). If the Cross husbands resemble Sir James Chettam, Bullock also, like Will Ladislaw, worked as a journalist and went to Rugby School.

John Walter Cross reports that Zibbie Cross Bullock sang her *Spanish Gypsy* song on the important day in August of 1869 on which the lifelong intimacy between the Crosses and Leweses sprang up, full blown, because shared sorrow brought the families together: "Mr and Mrs Lewes were in deep trouble, owing to the illness of Thornton Lewes; we were also in much anxiety as to the approaching confinement of my sister with her first child" (Cross 1885, 3:76–7).[17] This day, according to Cross, "did the work of years. Our visitors had come to the house as acquaintances, they left it as lifelong friends" (3:76–7). The rendition of the song from *Spanish Gypsy* formed one of the most intense moments of the visit. Heavily pregnant, Zibbie Cross raised her trained voice in the words from near the beginning of the fourth part of *The Spanish Gypsy*:

> Push off the boat
> Quit, quit the shore
> The stars will guide us back:—
> O gathering cloud
> O wide, wide sea,
> O waves that keep no track

On through the Pines!
The pillared woods,
Where silence breathes sweet breath:—
O labyrinth,
O sunless gloom
The other side of death!

Sung at the foot of St George's Hill, covered with tall pines whose red trunks stand out against the ever-green needles, the song took on a special poignancy for George Eliot, and "it affected her deeply. She moved quickly to the piano, and kissed Mrs Bullock very warmly in her tears" (3:76). The pregnancy that upset the Cross family cannot have been going smoothly; otherwise, family fears would not have been so strong. In any case, "the other side of death" came quickly for Zibbie Cross Bullock, who within a month died after giving birth to her baby son.

Edith Simcox, so long in love with George Eliot, reports more about the Crosses in her *Autobiography of a Shirt Maker* than any other source. She views them curiously and skeptically, and her notations strive for fairness against the strength of her antipathy toward Johnnie and her jealousy of other claimants for George Eliot's affection. Simcox suggests that Zibbie Cross never felt comfortable in the company of the family idol, although the Cross brothers and sisters detected many strange and portentous resemblances between their eldest sister and George Eliot (1998: 70).

When George Eliot became Mary Ann Cross, Eleanor Cross wrote in terms that show she was still connecting her late sister and her new relative: "it is most delicious to have an oldest sister again!" (ms letter, Beinecke, 6 May 1880). George Eliot conducted her most frequent correspondence with the mother, only a few years older than she, and with the two sisters who never married and who naturally had the most freedom to go about with their brothers. George Eliot addresses her letters to Mary Finlay Cross, the most literary family member, to "Mary Dove," her name in draft for Mary Garth. "Mary Dove" had other talents as well. In May of 1874 she presented George Eliot with a gift of her own creation. She brought a vase she had painted with miniature scenes from *Romola* to Sunday at the Priory, and bestowed it on a delighted George Eliot (*GEL* 6:47–8).

Both Mary and her younger sister Eleanor were lesbians. Eleanor developed a crush on Simcox, who did not take her very seriously, no matter how often she showed up at her Covent Garden garment business, Hamilton & Company, and notwithstanding the generosity and sensitivity with which the younger woman shared her insider's knowledge of George Eliot's movements. At the same time, Simcox had serious thoughts concerning the older sister, Mary, in whom she considered confiding about her love for George Eliot (1998: 130). On any one Sunday afternoon at the Priory, George Eliot and Lewes might welcome her future husband Johnnie, either or both of his smitten sisters, and Simcox herself, all of whom could combine and recombine socially in wasteful dances of frustrated triangularity. Meanwhile, the inclusions of Mary and Eleanor Cross on the Priory guest lists adds to the group of women callers whose lack of interest in heterosexual

attachments preceded George Eliot's conception of Gwendolen Harleth and her antipathy toward romantic approaches from men.

Like the other social occasions and visits that contributed to the settings and characters in *Middlemarch,* the Sundays at the Priory provide suggestions about models for Dorothea Brooke and Gwendolen Harleth in addition to Georgiana Burne-Jones (and Emilia Pattison). Zibbie, the spirited, late-marrying drawing-room singer, makes a possible model for Gwendolen. Moreover, at least one of the Cross sisters had a challenging marriage that provoked comments on the malicious resources of married couples at odds with each other (Simcox 1998: 19).

Letters between George Eliot and Jane Senior provide yet another model for Dorothea. One of George Eliot's most socially conscious correspondents, she shares her philanthropic impulses with Dorothea (as did other acquaintances, such as Clementia Taylor and Octavia Hill). In one 1870 letter, George Eliot anticipates an important adjective from the *Middlemarch* "Finale" when she asks Senior to "See how *diffusive* your one little life may be. I say that àpropos of your longing for a wider existence" (my italics, *GEL* 5:83). Later, in 1872, Senior was inquiring exactly when George Eliot composed the "Miss Brooke" part of *Middlemarch*, perhaps an effort to align the creation of the character with exchanges between the two correspondents (British Library Add. Ms 75298 1514D). Burne-Jones, Pattison, Taylor, and Senior make likely candidates for the group of "other Dorotheas," yearning for a more obviously significant life, evoked in the "Finale" of *Middlemarch.*

But this trail, like many others, leads also to Barbara Bodichon. Dorothea's emotional bewilderment on her Roman honeymoon in *Middlemarch* goes hand in hand with her aesthetic bewilderment. In 1854, Barbara Leigh Smith had responded similarly to the art there. She visited studios, as English tourists customarily did, even if not so directly interested as she. Pam Hirsch reports that she responded to the Naumannesque "large formal historical or religious scenes she saw" at the studios with the remark that "for an artist Rome is a dangerous place. They nearly all get into the old tracks instead of trying new ones!" (1999: 103). Like Dorothea, she escaped the city to spend much time outside it. She "hired a horse and rode most days in the Campagna." Dorothea does not ride horseback in Rome, but she does flee from uncongenial art by driving out to the Campagna.[18] In 1860, when the Leweses arrived in Rome on their first Italian journey as a couple, they spent more than two weeks regarding frescoes, mosaics, sculpture, architecture, and paintings before Lewes confided to his journal, "On the whole I conceive it a very dangerous place for any young enthusiastic mind" (GHLJ 18 April 1860). If the Casaubon character owes something to Dr Brabant, Mark Pattison, the dons of Brasenose, R.W. Mackay, Jacob Bryant, and George Eliot herself (Haight 1968; Ellman 1973; Witemeyer 1979), living models for Dorothea are equally scattered and equally numerous.

After much discussion regarding the sexual side of Dorothea's marriage, Barbara Hardy offers the most conclusive evidence that it remains unconsummated; otherwise Dorothea would not seek to alter Casaubon's will in directions that eliminate the clauses depending on the possibility of issue. Whatever George Eliot detected in Zibbie Bullock's demeanor in the Pamfili Gardens, there is the

most definite proof that her marriage did not remain unconsummated. Her child survived and grew up at Six Mile Bottom, affectionately known by his nickname of Alkie Hall. His father remarried in 1876.

Beginning with the August 1869 visit, and all during the 1870s, the Cross place at Weybridge Heath provided a house in the country where the Leweses were always welcome. At the foot of St George's Hill, it offered challenging walks over pine-covered hills with spectacular views, especially toward Windsor. The site by the tracks actually approximated the ideal of "the cab stand in front and the desert behind" (*GEL* 6:461), as George Eliot repeatedly described their demanding and contradictory needs in rental properties. The railway stopped virtually at the door of the Cross home, while the village lay at a distance that preserved the isolation, privacy, and rural feel.

The Weybridge area offers two names possibly adapted in *Daniel Deronda*. George Eliot makes a small but crucial change in the name of the railway inn, assigning it to the urban Hand and Banner, Holborn, where Mordecai's discussion club meets. For this setting she attaches an inn sign from Weybridge to the model for the public house based otherwise on the Red Lion, whose size and shape repeat the dimensions of the pub usually identified as the model for the Hand and Banner. She may also have adapted the name of one of the Weybridge estates, Oatlands, as "Ryelands," where Grandcourt and Gwendolen in *Daniel Deronda* spend their wedding night. Although estates named Oatlands pop up all over England, both of these grainy places are the same distance from Wiltshire (more or less the site of the wedding), fifty miles by railway, at the center of extensive parklands.

Limpsfield

Having found at Cadhay Manor a country house suitable as a model for Lowick Manor in *Middlemarch*, George Eliot continued to build toward her masterpiece at the same time as she turned out more poetry. Interspersed with a holiday in Italy in the spring, and regular visits to the Crosses at their home west of London, the 1869 travels all contribute to *Middlemarch*. Meanwhile, seeking country refuge south of London after the death of Lewes's son, who died at the Priory after five months of suffering, George Eliot saw daily a country house I believe she adapts as Freshitt Hall—the rose-planted Surrey estate of Titsey Place.

The day after Thornie's burial, they arrived in Surrey "much shaken" (*GEL* 5:67) and followed the road from Godstone station through Limpsfield to Park Farm. Like many of their Surrey destinations, the site of this refuge lay just south of the North Downs. Straight ahead of them, past the farm buildings, the hill suddenly becomes steeper, rising to a height of 800 feet, so that from the back of the tidy red-brick house they rented, George Eliot looked northward, face to face with the steep visual barrier of the Downs separating them from London and its recent sorrow. Their front windows provided peaceful views of the fields and the copses about them. Toward the east, a group of firs reached high and dark into the sky, their heavy limbs drooping like huge helpless arms hanging at the sides of the massive trunks.

The couple had prepared for this escape quite deliberately. Charles Lee Lewes's mother-in-law, Caroline Hill, knew of Park Farm, and the first weekend in October, the Leweses went to inspect the house and make arrangements for their arrival when the inevitable death occurred. Afterward, when Barbara Bodichon sympathetically proposed that they join her on the Isle of Wight, George Eliot responded that they had anticipated the bereavement by making definite plans to go to Surrey when the time came (*GEL* 5:60–1).

Once at Limpsfield, they started a grieving process they expected never to complete. Morning farm sounds of tame chickens and wild birds nesting in the highest branches of the surrounding trees began George Eliot's days of reading, writing, and walking. The project at hand was to finish "The Legend of Jubal," a poem which argues that art is what people produced when they discovered that they were going to die, a consoling subject for a mourning stepmother. In the afternoons, the bereaved couple dressed for the ungentle November weather, and chose from a variety of nearby walks.

George Eliot felt isolated and peaceful at Park Farm. She told Sara Hennell that its site lay four-and-a-half miles from the nearest train at Godstone, and that they were deliberately leaving their mail at the Priory, unforwarded (*GEL* 5:65–6). A few near neighbors lessened the loneliness. The area on and around the farm accommodated several homes neither large nor small, all in the warm red colors common to the locale, one storey of brick and the next covered in tile. The couple's walks might lead them in several directions. Northward, the Downs offered challenging ascents. To the south, the village, with its church and inn and a respectably sized cluster of cottages and lodges, lay no more than a mile away. On 9 August 1870, they took their walk through the village to the common on the southeast and the Chart Wood beyond. To the east of Park Farm, they could follow the crease in the hill of the Downs round to Titsey Place, a route they walked unprofitably on the 16th to reach the village of Westerham, where they did not find the vegetables they sought (GHLJ 16 August 1870). When in Limpsfield, they often chose to walk through the local woods: Chart, Titsey, and Westerham.

A medium-sized country house situated amid rose gardens notable even in a shire famous for its roses, Titsey Place's situation on the opposite side of the curved amphitheater-shaped hillside meant that it fell within George Eliot's prospect every day of the three weeks they stayed there that year and for a few weeks again the following summer. In *Middlemarch*, Freshitt Hall is made of "white freestone" with a "pillared portico," and a "terrace full of flowers, Sir James smiling above them like a prince issuing from his enchantment in a rose bush, with a handkerchief swiftly metamorphosed from the most delicately odorous petals" (Ch. 9). Celia's focalization of Sir James at home emphasizes the contrast between Lowick and Freshitt, as well as the contrast between the blooming Sir James and the desiccated Casaubon.

In some ways, Titsey Place does not match Celia's description. Its porch, for example, is crenelated, while Freshitt's is pillared, and the materials, as often, differ. But the long windows, the terraces, the distribution of space, and the roses still evoke the Surrey estate of the Leveson-Gower family. Moreover, George Eliot

has a habit of carrying forth parts of names from models to settings, and Freshitt and Titsey share several letters and one full syllable of compatible sounds.

When George Eliot actually entered the intense writing of *Middlemarch*, its length, complexity, and publication method stretched the task over two of their subsequent summers in Surrey. The first they spent at Shottermill, where the refurbishment of the Priory and the uncertainty of their lease of Cherrimans Cottage troubled them and prompted long, ingratiating letters to their landlady, who ultimately placed them across the road at another cottage, called Brookbank (*GEL* 5:146, 159). The couple welcomed the security of their lease despite the alternate property's conspicuous disadvantage. Periodically, all day, the South-western Railway thundered through their back yard within feet of the doorstep on its way north to Waterloo or south to the Isle of Wight. On a property cut into awkward triangular pieces by the tracks, George Eliot worked on the novel that contains a scene in which the coming of the railway agitates the rural residents, who fear losing their fields to "three-cornered bits" (Ch. 56). As usual, this scene emphasizes the positive contributions of the railway, and one of the novel's most consistently positive characters, Caleb Garth, reasons in their favor. Indeed, in *Daniel Deronda*, the only novel whose temporal setting permits a great network of railways linking the settings, George Eliot omits describing Gwendolen's precipitous and no doubt miserable journey from Leubronn to Offendene, on which the button-tufted velvet cushions of a first-class carriage could not provide the *nouveau pauvre* beauty much comfort. She reserves her gloomy touches for the station where Gwendolen arrives, rather than for the unease of the journey itself.

Contributing to George Eliot's two most monumental works, her journeying during the late sixties and early seventies, to seasides, spas, and to the other destinations mentioned in this chapter, was the most creatively productive English journeying of her life. Its fruitfulness combined with episodes acquired in numerous locations over previous decades as well, among them the girlhood experience of Warwickshire politics, the view of the Subscription Gardens in 1848 at St Leonard's, and the holiday with Bodichon's "Aunt Julia" in 1853. Simultaneously, she was acquiring material for *Daniel Deronda*, in which she most distinctly severs her connections with Midlands settings in order to represent other English times and places—the England of 1860s London and the various nooks of the Wessex countryside she adapted after visits she made during the writing of her last novel.

8 Country houses

Daniel Deronda

> Heavenly grace had especially singled out a certain one of the brothers in the monastery ruled by this abbess, for he used to compose devout and religious songs … He was taken to the abbess and ordered to tell his dream and to recite his song to an audience of the most learned men so that they might judge what the nature of that vision was and where it came from. It was evident to all of them that he had been granted the heavenly grace of God … Therefore, the abbess, who cherished the grace of God in this man, instructed him to give up secular life and to take monastic vows.
>
> The Venerable Bede, "The Story of Caedmon,"
> *An Ecclesiastical History of the English People*

> Tomorrow I intend to hunt again.
>
> The Lord, *The Taming of the Shrew*

A highflying bird's view of Wiltshire extending from Bath in the west to Savernake Forest in the east would include at least five easily identifiable models for settings in *Daniel Deronda*. Of these, the fictional locations of Offendene, Brackenshaw Castle, Diplow, and Cardell Chase cluster together in the novel in a shire roughly the equivalent of Wiltshire. The lords and ladies of *Daniel Deronda* inhabit several grand properties including Topping Abbey, which, although based on Lacock, lies in the novel "in another county" (Ch. 16). Gadsmere, based on the Folly Farm at Corsham Court, is located in the novel in coal country, far away from the chalky downs of Wessex. Though in *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot disperses some of these settings geographically, according to where her characters must live, she found all their models within a small radius and in a few days' time. Their importance in the fiction made her second brief autumn excursion, four days at the end of October 1874 in the area called Wessex, one of the most creatively profitable concentrated journeys George Eliot ever made.

Devizes

Of all George Eliot's models for her fictional country houses, only Arbury Hall has received more attention than Lacock Abbey. Although Haight clearly states that the Leweses visited at least four Wiltshire properties gathering material for *Daniel Deronda*, he singles out Lacock as an important model, while implying that the

estate, owned at the time by William Henry Fox Talbot, suited George Eliot's narrative needs better than the other places she viewed.

Lacock's fame over the years has depended partly on unique associations with photography. As early as the 1840s, Fox Talbot included photographs of his home, especially favoring the cloisters, in *The Pencil of Nature*, his best-selling introduction to the practical uses and aesthetic potential of his art. His shot of an oriel window at Lacock retains considerable historical importance as the first photographic negative, Fox Talbot's revolutionary invention that permitted multiple prints to be made from a single exposure. His *Pencil of Nature* photographs rendered his estate visible to the public in an unprecedented way. Scenes of Lacock appear side by side with delicate renderings of leaves and ferns, practical records of household inventories, and allegorical-narrative portraits of family and workers at the Abbey. He poses his family members in the cloisters, one of the main attractions of an estate with many attractive Gothic touches, some surviving for hundreds of years, others added to keep the style of the house consistent.

In the early twentieth century, photography again raised the visibility of Lacock. Haight cites an appreciative series of articles on the property appearing in the 1923 *Country Life*. This series helps establish Lacock as the original of Sir Hugo's seat even though author Avery Tipping does not make the connection. In the three numbers of the periodical in which the pieces appear, dozens of photographs accompany Tipping's text, and, like Fox Talbot and George Eliot before him, Tipping finds a good deal of Lacock's artistic potential in the cloisters.

Haight presents the Leweses' half-week visit to Wiltshire with the idea that the couple toured a number of country houses before finding Lacock, the one that best fit the plan for *Daniel Deronda*. Indeed, George Eliot draws with fidelity on her model for a setting of primary importance to her character, Daniel, and the world of the estate's owner, Sir Hugo Mallinger. The narrator's direct descriptions of parts of Lacock in the introduction to Sir Hugo's Topping most often match with precision. At the same time, omissions and alterations concern passages of the novel deemed especially important to deconstructionist, feminist, and historical approaches to George Eliot's last novel. Meanwhile, admiration for Lacock and the ways George Eliot adapts it have obscured the adaptations of her other Wiltshire models. She drew on all the country houses she saw during the 1874 autumn weekend for settings in *Daniel Deronda*: Corsham Court, Bowood, and Spye Park House.

The timing of the two October trips in 1874 measures the slow composition of George Eliot's last novel, for they happened, like the Gainsborough trip for *The Mill on the Floss*, well into its writing. She had put "deep shafts" (H&J 144) into the novel during the summer just spent at Earlswood Cottage in Surrey, but not until the following spring did she deliver the first couple of books to Blackwood—on 19 May 1875. The timing suggests that she worked on the Gwendolen material in the first chapters during the summer at Earlswood, before she went to Wiltshire. Her suspicion that she might draw on Stonehenge and Old Sarum prompted her to query Barbara Bodichon about accommodation near Salisbury as early as July, when she had already planned for Wessex settings without yet being able to render them with the specificity that appears in the final composition.

According to this scheme, the Daniel-in-the-cloisters scenes were on her mind during the autumn. In the two years since Lewes first mentioned the novel in his journal, she had completed only twenty chapters of a seventy-chapter book. Hence, material accumulated during two October jaunts to the southwest of England contributed heavily to the work done on the novel during the winter of 1874–5. On 13 January 1875 she declares in her journal that she is turning toward "the part about Deronda" (H&J 145). This note suggests that in November and December she was integrating her research with the Gwendolen plot. In January she began with the Lacock Abbey scene in the introduction to Daniel's story, the story of the bewildered boy in the Gothic cloisters where he begins his quest for his identity.

The English country-house settings in *Daniel Deronda* all come from the area around Devizes visited on the Leweses' second October interlude in Wessex. As with many of their destinations, George Eliot had some experience of this one before she met Lewes. During the 1840s, she had passed a full month in the neighborhood when she stayed with Dr Robert Brabant, the father of Rufa Brabant who had recently married Charles Hennell. Evans spent the weeks leading up to her twenty-fourth birthday becoming embroiled with the married physician-turned-scholar who participated in her unceremonious departure from Devizes when he failed to defend her against the jealous accusations of his wife and his wife's sister. The details of the incident and Evans's language in letters to Cara Bray about it (specifically the archangel metaphors she applies to her host) support Eliza Lynn Linton's proposal that, at least in part, George Eliot sardonically modeled Mr Casaubon on Dr Brabant.

In 1843, while in Wiltshire as Dr Brabant's young guest, Evans became familiar with the major features of the neighborhood, and Brabant, in addition to helping her with her German and Latin, educated her a little in local history. The area's major literary celebrity, Thomas Moore, had entrusted his health to her host when he was still practicing medicine, and Moore lived in the area so as to be at the disposal of Lord Lansdowne of Bowood, one of the important seats nearby. In a letter, Evans refers to a "Devizes poet who, Dr B. tells me, thought it incumbent on him to mention what he did *not* see in his description of the environs: 'Alike appear *not* to the view/The house of Lansdowne and of Montagu'" (*GEL* 1:168). If she, like the Devizes poet, did *not* see Bowood, the "house of Lansdowne," she was at least aware of it. Whatever her memories of Brabant, her memories of architecture served her well as she turned her experiences of her earlier time in Devizes to creative use. Her 1843 visit had introduced her to a town near a cluster of unique country houses, to which she returned with expectations of a plenitude of architectural models for her novel. Within a few days she visited four houses, a forest, a village, a school, and an inn, all of which contributed to *Daniel Deronda* characters and settings.

In any case, in Devizes in 1874, George Eliot could not possibly have avoided reminders of Dr Brabant, whom she had encountered several times since 1843, notably in Cologne during her 1854 elopement trip. As with a number of male friends including Spencer and Chapman (though Brabant himself did not maintain a comparable degree of intimacy), she often met with equanimity men with whom she had formerly shared emotional relationships, whether they brought on a tinge

of embarrassment or a laugh at her own youthful indiscretions or indeed no reaction at all.

The Leweses arrived in town on 28 October, a Wednesday, and booked into the Bear Hotel on the market square. The number of inns on this square indicates the historical importance of Devizes as a coaching stage on the way to Bath. The Bear, the Pelican, the Black Swan, all have respectable size and arches for welcoming the coaches and horses, but the Bear is the biggest and most expensive. To its rear, the remains of Devizes Castle occupy the hilltop within a few hundred yards of the inn. On the front, the Bear looks directly at Devizes' Gothic market cross just across the way. The cross, in turn, stands out against a backdrop created by the more distant range of shops lining the opposite side of the market square. The square slopes gently downhill to the left of the Bear, then narrows to the width of an ordinary road and becomes Northgate, the section of the street where Dr Brabant lived in 1843.

Along with the inns and some dignified public buildings, a number of handsome rectangular eighteenth-century homes grace Devizes' market square and, after it narrows to the west, line Northgate—some of brick, some of sandstone, all variously ornamented with statues, urns, lanterns, and wrought-iron gates. Dr Brabant's sandstone mansion, with its massive wooden double front door, sits directly on Northgate about half a mile from the Bear, on the same side of the street, but farther out on the edge of the town, where the country lies nearby. Close to the Kennet and Avon Canal, the situation offers views of the waterway at a spot where a series of locks add interest to the navigation. The walks with her host that Evans describes in her letters to Coventry in 1843 would have taken her through the gardens behind the house as well as along the towpath of the canal.

In 1874, George Eliot and Lewes drove past Dr Brabant's house on their first day in Devizes. The way to both Bromham village and Bowood, George Eliot's first objectives in the neighborhood, leads past the very doorstep of his house just before crossing the bridge over the canal. On the afternoon of the 28th, Northgate (which later turns into Chippenham Road) took them out of Devizes toward the estate that provided the model for Grandcourt's Diplow and the village on which George Eliot bases Pennicote.

Bowood shares with Diplow its herds of deer, floor-length windows, and not-dissimilar names, each with a long "o" sound in one of its two spondaic syllables.[1] It lies approximately the same distance from the village near which Gwendolen lives with her family, and it has a lake for the Grandcourt setter, Fetch, to show off the "accomplishment of bringing a water-lily to the bank like Cowper's spaniel Beau" (Ch. 13).[2] The orangery opens onto a formal garden, a likely place for Grandcourt and Lush to breakfast. The grounds include some famous rhododendrons and the autumn-yellow beech tree avenue that Lewes regarded with admiration. Its park stretches on and on.

In the novel, Diplow gains little praise from anyone. Only Sir Hugo Mallinger, who covets it for his widow at the time when his death will install Grandcourt at Topping, regards the estate as desirable. Grandcourt feels obliged to account for it as a place he owns for the sake of the hunting. The narrator describes it as relatively landless, and Gwendolen disparages it on several occasions.

George Eliot selects details from Bowood that emphasize the artificiality of the society that visits there, and the unnaturalness of Grandcourt's courtship of Gwendolen. Diplow provides the setting for one of Grandcourt's unaccountable delays of his proposal to Gwendolen. Having decided to marry, he imports his cousin to serve as hostess, in particular of a lunch party at which he expects to make his offer. As the couple walk together in the garden, specifically up the "knoll planted with American shrubs" (Ch. 13), they agree on the general boredom of life, and Gwendolen speculates that some flowers, like women, grow poisonous from *ennui*.[3] Gwendolen evades Grandcourt's advances by accidentally-on-purpose tossing her riding whip down the slope so as to require its retrieval. Having gone up the hill with intentions, Grandcourt must descend it with the intentions unfulfilled. The setting for these events, though out of doors, carries no suggestion of the organic spontaneity of nature's processes. Fetch's stage-managed retrieval of the water lily and the references to mutant poisonous flowers on the knoll create an ominous, contrived atmosphere even among the daytime flowers and foliage. Non-indigenous flora and performing animals make up a setting full of life that is tortured and perverted, rather than permitted to flourish.

The un-natural nature in the garden anticipates the lecture on marriage Gwendolen receives from her uncle that evening, when he learns that she has thwarted Grandcourt's proposal at Diplow. She accepts his admonitions regarding her obligation to accept the attentions of a man as significant as Grandcourt, regardless of their freedom from affection. A marriage contrived by the bride as a source of wealth, dignity, and independence, and by the husband as an arena for his control, neither depends on nor calls forth natural passion or spontaneous emotion. Diplow's gardens convey an artificiality that parallels the motives behind the marriage on both sides. Despite its supposed potential for issue, the ceremonial, indifferent, greedy alliance between Gwendolen and Grandcourt yields none.

After Bowood, the village of Bromham completed the first day's explorations. Centrally situated among the country houses, and not too small, it provides a good location for the vicarage of Mr Gascoigne. In addition to its ecclesiastical buildings, it also has cottages of a sort suitable for the Davilows to move to after they lose their money—not hovels, but compact houses that would nevertheless permanently exclude the occupants from the social circle in which the family moves at the start.

The next day, Thursday, the Leweses' hired vehicle really covered some ground. They started their day in Devizes with a walk and a tour of the castle ruins, and began their more serious explorations by taking the same Chippenham road out of Devizes on which they had traveled the day before. Their first stop took them beyond Bromham, through the village of Chittoe, and on to the top of the woody hill of Spye Park. Spye Park House, situated on a plateau with a broad, flat semicircle of shaded lawn in front and a gentle, dipping garden in the back, makes a good model for the Davilows' Offendene. Its spacious site and its small size combine to render it suitable as the new home of the Davilow family, not too large for a straightened widow, nor so insignificant as to render its inmates unvisitable by the local aristocracy.

Like most of the buildings George Eliot chose as models in Wiltshire, Spye Park indicates that the faults of the English society so strongly represented in the novel

result not from superficiality but from the decadence of long tradition. *Daniel Deronda* emphasizes the length of the heritage that has produced the Wessex society in which Gwendolen moves. French names recall the Norman conquest. Ancestral portraits present an aesthetic and biographical continuum extending hundreds of years. Remodeled monasteries evoke the Middle Ages. The Bromham area homes are continuities architecturally, too. A number of the buildings around Devizes use materials from previous buildings: Old Bromham House from the remains of Devizes Castle, Spye Park House from Old Bromham House, the stables at Lacock from materials of previous buildings on the estate. The deterioration of the enervated English side of *Daniel Deronda* has taken place over nearly a millennium. If the narrator regrets that Gwendolen has no roots at Offendene, the other English characters demonstrate that roots can likewise decay.

Offendene resembles its model in compact size, over-ornamentation, and materials. Murray's *Handbook* for the area introduces it:

> The old house for many years the residence of the Boynstons, and afterwards of the Starkeys, was built about 1650, after the destruction of Bromham House in 1645. It was of brick, and with the exception of one room, of no great size, but it crested on the verge of a charming hill. Evelyn visited it, in 1654, and describes it in his "Diary" as "a place capable of being made a noble seat; but the humorous old knight has built a long single house of 2 low stories on the precipice of an incomparable prospect."
>
> (*A Handbook for Travellers in Wiltshire* 1869: 30–1)

In 1874 the property belonged to Major John W.G. Spicer, head of a large fox-hunting family.

Offendene delights Gwendolen because she recognizes its dignity: "The season suited the aspect of the old oblong red-brick house, rather too anxiously ornamented with stone at every line, not excepting the double row of windows and the large square portico … Inside and outside it was what no beholder could suppose to be inhabited by retired tradespeople" (Ch. 3). Although Gwendolen and her family arrive from no fixed residence, their relationship with the Vicar assures their social acceptance in the neighborhood. Nevertheless, they cling to their bottom-most rung insecurely. The neighbors among whom they visit, and among whom Gwendolen must marry well, all live in significantly more magnificent places compared to Offendene.

After Spye Park, the Leweses drove on to Lacock, which answered George Eliot's need for a setting of comparable Gothicism to the place where she listened to Georgiana Burne-Jones's confidences, the ruins of the abbey at Whitby. Having advised Georgiana Burne-Jones among the Gothic ruins there, she creates Gothic detail for a residence where her character Gwendolen seeks counsel for a desperation generated, like Burne-Jones's, out of a partner's sexual irregularity.

Indeed, the most important events set at Topping Abbey take place in the cloisters. The long chapters introducing thirteen-year-old Daniel and his mysterious status in the Mallinger family, the tour of the abbey he leads for the Christmas

guests including the newlywed Grandcourts, and Daniel's confidential conversation with Gwendolen at New Year, all occur in or near the well-preserved medieval cloisters.

George Eliot's adaptation of the Lacock cloisters demonstrates that all Victorian medievalism is not alike. While she draws on the popular Pre-Raphaelite figure of the isolated woman for Maggie and Dorothea, she regards the knightly quest, particularly the quest carried forth in the Crusades, with skepticism and eventually with repulsion. Hence, the Gothic architecture in *Deronda* helps measure and explain Daniel's movement away from the world of Sir Hugo Mallinger, with its medieval roots, as he gradually shapes his unfocused ambitions into the journey to Palestine on which he embarks at the end of the novel.[4] Indeed, the scenes set at Topping Abbey help identify Daniel's mission as emphatically the opposite to the mission of the Christian Crusaders, the predecessors of Sir Hugo at Topping. They also bring out the arrogance of the proprietor of Topping, for Sir Hugo Mallinger repeats a fault of one of George Eliot's earliest characters. Like Sir Christopher Cheverel, he has heedlessly transplanted a European child to England.

George Eliot's retentions and omissions to Lacock in *Deronda,* especially those connected with the cloisters, lend emphasis to the questions the novel poses about Sir Hugo's authority. Unlike Whitby, which housed both monks and nuns, Lacock is best known for its origins not as a monastery but as a nunnery; indeed, Fox Talbot named one of his daughters after its most important abbess, Ela. But in George Eliot's novel, visitors at Topping make repeated references to it as the former home of monks. Changing the gender of its early inmates identifies the property more closely with ecclesiastical authority, an association by which George Eliot presents Sir Hugo's faults and errors. The cloisters, a feature of Lacock which remains substantially unchanged in *Deronda,* associates with a specifically papal male authority, for it is there that the young Daniel begins to understand the possibility of his illegitimacy through hints gleaned from Sismondi's *History of the Italian Republics* regarding the pope's "nephews" (Ch. 16). Daniel begins to account for his position at Topping with the supposition that, like the popes, Sir Hugo could have natural children identified as nephews.

George Eliot's other retentions and omissions from Lacock both measure Daniel's progress toward identifying his mission and indicate its nature as an anti-Crusade. As he gropes toward his vocation, he rejects the model of the Crusades bit by bit. Before the episode in the cloisters, the only Mallinger ancestor whose portrait interests him is the one "who had killed three Saracens in one encounter" (Ch. 16). Afterward, his scrutiny of the Topping Abbey portraits concerns family resemblances and a search for his paternity rather than a desire to emulate Crusading ancestors. When he rescues Mirah, he still fells like Rinaldo of *Jerusalem Delivered*. But he begins to resist the knightly role when Gwendolen starts to demonstrate dependence on him during the Christmas holiday at Topping.

Other Lacock–Topping scenes continue the anti-Crusade motif. The description of the party in the hall emphasizes decoration faithfully retained from Lacock Abbey, specifically "a ceiling that glowed with the rich colours of the coats of arms

ranged between the sockets" (Ch. 35). Like much heraldry, these coats of arms feature iconography associated with the Crusades. Because Daniel begins to reject the idea of rescuing Gwendolen in this setting, its heraldic coats of arms form another detail mentioned as he moves away from, rather than toward, assuming the role of medieval knight saving an Englishwoman in distress. Later, as they overlook the cloisters already associated with monks and popes, Daniel becomes increasingly uneasy with the notion of rescuing Gwendolen from the consequences of her marriage to Grandcourt.

George Eliot's anti-Crusade crusade (elaborated in *Theophrastus Such* in the section, "The Modern Hep Hep Hep") occurs in *Deronda*'s literary allusions as well as in its architecture. Aside from Daniel's soon-abandoned identification of himself as Rinaldo, satiric allusions to *Jerusalem Delivered* occur most often in the debased English world of the novel. Names of the knights of *Jerusalem Delivered* have appeared in connection with George Eliot's rake characters in earlier novels. Stephen Guest has a horse named Tancred, and Godfrey Cass's first name alludes to the Italian epic as well as to the labels on the most popular infants' opium of the nineteenth century, Godfrey's Cordial. In *Deronda*, several characters in the English society group bear names from Tasso's epic, including Sir Hugo, the Gascoignes, and the Raymonds, a family present at Topping in the party that meets under the heraldic ceiling of the great hall. Gwendolen has memorized passages from this epic at the "showy" (Ch. 3) school that has helped spoil her, and Mrs Arrowpoint's ridiculousness proceeds partly from her biography of Tasso.

After Daniel's realization, the narrator does not return to the scene of the cloisters until Daniel has grown up. It then provides a setting for the debut of the Grandcourts as a married couple, and for this sequence George Eliot makes a significant change when she converts Lacock to Topping. As Daniel himself conducts a tour of the abbey for his uncle's guests, he dwells on one of the details that George Eliot does not adapt from Lacock but does install at Topping on her own initiative—the leafy capitals of the cloisters' columns.

This alteration to the cloisters produces a passage that has drawn much attention, at least since deconstructionist analysis began focusing on George Eliot's novels in the mid-1970s. When Daniel conducts his group to the cloisters, the narrator observes: "It was a rare example of a northern cloister with arched and pillared openings not intended for glazing, and the delicately-wrought foliage of the capitals seemed still to carry the very touches of the chisel" (Ch. 35). She singles out one for its beauty and accurate detail: "a lovely capital made by the curled leaves of greens, showing their reticulated underside with the firm gradual swell of its central rib" (Ch. 35). The capitals of Lacock are plain, neither Corinthian nor leafy in any other way. The capitals in this scene, in fact, far from coming from an authentic Gothic ruin, resemble most strikingly the work produced by the O'Shea brothers at the Oxford University Museum. The foliage that carries the "very touches of the chisel" even evokes their abrupt departure when they left the capitals unfinished as they laid down their tools and returned to their home across the Irish Sea.

The realism of the capitals prompts the reflection that captivated deconstructionists for its flexibility about the origins of texts; that is, for questioning the

priority of either artistry or lived experience in the production of meaning: "I wonder whether one oftener learns to love real objects through their representations, or the representations through the real objects" (Ch. 35). Cynthia Chase in her 1978 proto-deconstructionist article, "Double Reading *Daniel Deronda*: 'The Decomposition of the Elephants,'" was the first to build her argument on this provocative question of Daniel's, a query for which George Eliot must add ornament to the architecture of her model. Edward Burne-Jones, frequently in Oxford, greatly admired the University Museum.

Finally, the Leweses' drive around Wiltshire on Thursday took them to Corsham Court, where George Eliot discovered models for the house and pleasure ground of Brackenshaw Castle, as well as for the place called Gadsmere where Grandcourt visits Lydia Glasher who lives there with their four children.

The massiveness of Corsham Court suits it as the residence of the most important member of the society in which Gwendolen manages to move. Like its actual proprietor, Lord Methuen, Lord Brackenshaw is a social leader in the neighborhood, especially prominent in the hunt. Corsham Court matches Brackenshaw Castle in materials and in its situation. At the same time, although George Eliot adapts its pleasure grounds for *Deronda*, its park and gardens offer many opportunities she does not take. From the back, the house looks over a massive sweep of lawn that accommodates a huge oriental plane tree dominating the view like a giant, twisting, plumped-out spider. To the left, a Gothic-folly bathhouse guards the pleasure-ground. The pleasure-ground itself provides a perfect area for the archery meet, but, possibly to solidify archery connections between Gwendolen and Diana, George Eliot installs there an archery building of classical architecture, leaving all the Gothic detail for Lacock–Topping.

Despite the similarities, Corsham Court also differs from Brackenshaw Castle in that the latter lacks the extensive art collection that made Corsham partly an art museum, even in the nineteenth century. According to Murray's *Handbook*, Methuen opened Corsham for tourists who wished to see his collection: "Strangers are kindly permitted to view these pictures" (*A Handbook for Travellers in Wiltshire* 1869: 23). Certain characters created for *Daniel Deronda* suggest that George Eliot and Lewes took advantage of this. Among artworks by Van Dyck, Della Robbia, Fra Angelico, and others at Corsham Court, is some statuary described in the brochure as the "Bust of Anna Horatia, Caroline Sanford, subsequently second Lady Methuen (1824–1899) and her hand" (*Corsham Court* 11). Anna Horatia, a charming piece by Aristodome Costoli (1803–71) has a short upper lip like the hereditary mouth of the Gascoigne children—Rex and Anna both have it, and it appeals greatly to the painter Hans Meyrick who mentions his admiration for this detail to Daniel. But her hair is pure Gwendolen, a high chignon twisted forward in a large curl crowning her head behind center-parted back-gathered flat panels above her ears. Costoli has conveyed youth, eagerness, and pure life in this bust, and George Eliot assigns some of its qualities to at least three characters.

Along the road between Chippenham and Corsham sits yet another model for a *Deronda* setting. Gadsmere, where Lydia Glasher lives with her four illegitimate children, must have dignity and isolation: dignity to indicate that Grandcourt

provides adequately for his progeny, and isolation to allow Mrs Glasher her privacy. The Folly Farm, situated on the northern perimeter of the Corsham Court park, matches the narrator's description of Gadsmere with precision: the "rambling, patchy house" with "a round tower jutting at one of the corners," set near "a great cedar flourishing on one side" (Ch. 30). Again, a tower imprisons a lonely woman, and George Eliot's choices regarding her models indicate the relative freedom of Gwendolen and Mrs Glasher. As a single woman, Gwendolen retains some choices; Lydia, because of her children, has none. The models for these characters' homes both have pointed towers, but the narrator includes only the tower from the Folly Farm, not the equally conspicuous one among the over-ornamentation of Spye Park House. Mrs Glasher's captivity is more extreme.

George Eliot also shuffles the parts of Corsham Court she adapts from site to site. Instead of placing the pleasure-ground just by the house where the Corsham Court pleasure-ground almost touches the back of the building, she moves it to the northern perimeter of the park, the actual location of Folly Farm. When Grandcourt visits the house modeled on Folly Farm, his expression of disgust about Lydia's machinations with the diamonds creates a pun based on George Eliot's model for the relocated Gadmere: "You have made me feel uncommonly ill with your folly" (Ch. 30). Shifting the pleasure ground to the site of Folly Farm puts pleasures and follies together in the same place.[5]

Phil Burne-Jones

Friday was the least productive day of the journey to Wiltshire. This time the Leweses chose their destinations to the northeast, planning stops at Avebury to view the stone circle and at Marlborough to visit young Philip Burne-Jones at his public school. Lewes found Avebury a vast disappointment, "not worth stopping for" (GHLJ 30 October 1874). The inn where they lunched, the thatched Red Lion, he described as "wretched," and he left no comment about their little walk toward Calne after lunch.

At Marlborough, the disappointment continued. The day before, George Eliot had seen the cloisters at Lacock Abbey, which she would make the setting for young Daniel Deronda's insight about his possible illegitimacy. This scene must occur when the boy is old enough to comprehend illegitimacy, indeed at the same age as their friends' son whom they had already come to know well, starting even before the weeks at Whitby four years previously.

According to Fitzgerald, the Burne-Joneses shipped Phil off to school several weeks before the Leweses' Wiltshire trip, purely to reduce possibilities that his suspicions about the state of things between his parents might result in some all-too-valid conclusions: "Ned was still drawing from Mary Zambaco, and it was hardly possible that the child could go on much longer without noticing anything" (Fitzgerald 1989: 144). Fitzgerald points out that Georgiana Burne-Jones skirts the topic in her *Memorials* of her husband, with a statement refusing to account for the sudden decision about Phil. The combination of his age and his precarious position *vis-à-vis* an erring parent rendered Phil particularly interesting to George Eliot as

she prepared the scenes in which Daniel questions himself and his environment, puzzling out his status and revising his opinion of Sir Hugo, his putative father, on the basis of his sexual and parental irresponsibility. At this point Daniel, like most people, assumes Sir Hugo has fathered and then adopted him.

With delicate Phil suddenly deposited in new and formidable surroundings, Fitzgerald attributes George Eliot's visit to pure kindness, on the assumption that she wisely knew how unsuited the boy was for public-school life, especially at rugged Marlborough, and her heart went out to him (1989: 157). The Burne-Joneses chose the school capriciously, entirely because William Morris had gone there, even though Morris himself claimed to have learned almost nothing. The pedagogy had lost some of its disciplinarian rigor since Morris had left, but Phil, in contrast with his sturdy, slightly younger first cousin, Rudyard Kipling, had already acquired a reputation for ultrasensitivity.

With Phil Burne-Jones tussling with questions of male adult behavior that carried personal consequences for himself, George Eliot must have been disappointed on artistic as well as personal grounds not to see him; for when the Leweses reached Marlborough, they heard the news that Phil was ill, confined to the school infirmary, and "not to be seen" (Haight 1968: 475). George Eliot had to rest content with a brief stop at the formidable grounds of Marlborough College at a time when she was preparing her Daniel-in-the-cloisters scene. No matter, Marlborough College housed enough upper-class thirteen-year-old boys to contribute to the creation of such a lad.[6]

Fitzgerald believes that Phil's collapse and seclusion in the infirmary were predictable results of a chaotic attempt to remove him from domestic conflict resulting from his father's affair with his model. According to Fitzgerald, one family member had noted the onset of constant worry for Phil several years earlier: "His grandmother, old Mrs MacDonald, had divined the 'growing power of worry' in the nine-year-old boy" (1989: 144). Phil was in his ninth year when he accompanied his mother to Whitby so that she could seek the counsel of George Eliot about her domestic trials. This was the culmination of the time his mother lived apart from his father as much as she could manage, visiting with her family and taking lodgings in Oxford.

A number of the narrator's comments apply closely to Phil's general situation, as well as to Daniel Deronda's. Fitzgerald includes religious crisis among the sources of the boy's difficulty at Marlborough. He endured apathy and "half hysterical times of religious anxiety" (1989: 144). In some of Daniel's moods during his period of conjecture about his situation, his speculations seem to the boy himself "like a doubt of religion, to be banished as an offense, and a mean prying into what he was not meant to know" (Ch. 16). Daniel keeps his self-torturing deliberations entirely to himself, and the narrator's comment about this would also describe family discussions about sending a too-curious boy off to school: "It is in such experiences of boy or girlhood, while elders are debating whether most education lies in science or literature, that the main lines of character are often laid down" (Ch. 16). When Daniel is forced to modify his worship of Sir Hugo as he learns more about his own history, the narrator asks, "who cannot imagine the bitterness of a first suspicion

that something in this object of complete love was *not* quite right?" (Ch. 16). Daniel's bitterness would occur as aptly in a boy in Phil's situation, forced to reevaluate his father.

The return to the Bear Hotel after this less-productive day did not entirely remove George Eliot from places related to Daniel's boyhood. The scene in which young Daniel declares his repugnance to a musical career depends on the feelings of a child called on to perform for guests. In the novel, Sir Hugo asks the boy to entertain his friends by singing a song. Afterward, Daniel insists before the company that he would hate a career as a singer instead of a future as a gentlemanly Englishman, and his emphasis surprises Sir Hugo.

According to Murray's *Handbook*, several generations ago the landlord of the Bear had also called upon a child to amuse his company. He theatrically presented his son to the guests at the inn and required a young Thomas Lawrence to oblige them, either by reciting poetry or by doing quick sketches. The Bear plays up this part of its history of the innkeeper's son, a budding artist who went on to fame as a portrait painter. Murray's reports the father's mode of presenting the boy to the guests: "Gentlemen, here's my son; will you have him recite from the poets or take your portrait?" (*A Handbook for Travellers in Wiltshire* 1869: 66). Following the scene of Daniel's singing performance, the *Deronda* narrator applies a typical *roman à clef* technique by mentioning the source of the detail a few pages later without explicitly connecting it with the character in question. In the novel, Thomas Lawrence himself has painted a portrait of the young Sir Hugo, one of the portraits that Daniel studies fruitlessly in pursuit of resemblances that might prove someone's paternity. After her time at the Bear, George Eliot grafted Thomas Lawrence's personal history onto Daniel's to flesh out scenes of his thirteenth year.

The Beaufort Hunt

An autumn visitor to Wiltshire in 1874 would have good reason to hope for a glimpse of the gentry–aristocracy as they pursued the fox across the chalky downs beneath the high wide skyscapes. In *Daniel Deronda*, fox-hunting helps bring Gwendolen and Grandcourt together so that the prospect of the resulting opportunity to ride to hounds eases Gwendolen's acceptance of a suitor she has determined to reject. Nevertheless, George Eliot sets only two scenes in *Daniel Deronda* on or near the hunting field—the scene in which Gwendolen, supposedly a spectator, is swept along with the hunt, and the scene during her engagement when she corners Deronda for personal conversation as the hunters ride home after the kill.

In Wiltshire, the Leweses probably did not see again the event that forms the action for the important scene in which Rex and Gwendolen set out on horseback together. After Rex attempts to declare his love, Gwendolen, on a preplanned impulse, rides away with the horses and hounds, and Rex follows as best he can until his horse, Primrose, falls and breaks two legs. Gwendolen's indifference to his pain convinces first Rex's father and then Rex himself that Gwendolen cannot return his love. George Eliot and Lewes did not need to travel to Wiltshire to view the spectacle of a large hunt setting out, with its possibilities for someone like

Gwendolen to be swept along. Not only had they already watched the hounds throw off at a hunt many years previously, but on all four days at the end of October 1874, the local Wiltshire hunt, the Beaufort, met at far-flung inns in lonely villages where the Leweses did not venture.[7]

The couple had gone to see the spectacle of the hounds throwing off on a country visit more than a decade earlier. After Barbara Bodichon's honeymoon at the Barley Mow Inn in Englefield Green, she recommended it to her friends for the price, the proximity to Virginia Water, Runnymede, and Windsor, and the friendly proprietors, the Bones. Compact, at the top of the hill, it sits on the curve of a crescent green, and in March of 1862, its landlord introduced them to the sight of the horses and hounds that assembled there, one day the stag hunters, then the fox hunters.

The presence of the Beaufort in Wiltshire twelve years later most likely picked up where the scene at Englefield Green left off. The Beaufort hunted on all four days of the Leweses's visit, but on Thursday and Friday it met and ran in places remote from their itinerary, both north and west of Corsham: on Thursday at Burton and on Friday at the Bell on Sodbury Common, a few miles to the west of Burton. On both days, the Beaufort covered some of the same ground—Dyrham, Tormarton, Wapley, and Acton Turville—all due north of Bath and out of the way of the Leweses. Since Corsham is the westernmost destination mentioned in either Lewes's or George Eliot's journals, their chances of encountering the hunt on either of these two days were small.

On the 28th and the 31st, however, the visitors' first and last days in Wiltshire, they shared the same countryside with the Beaufort, and their paths could easily have crossed, even though the hounds threw off at somewhat remote locations. On Wednesday, the hunters met on the spacious grounds of the Mermaid in Christian Malford, several miles north of Bowood. They started out well, seeing a "good show" of foxes in the woods nearby, but for the most part the hounds had to deal with a "very bad scent." They ran southeast and reached a point east of Bowood, which the Leweses were viewing that afternoon. A kill near Bowood would create the possibility of a slow ride home for some of the hunters to the village of Bromham–Pennicote, all in the vicinity of the evening ride of Gwendolen, Grandcourt, Deronda, and the others at the end of the day's hunting in *Daniel Deronda*'s Chapter 29.

The route on Saturday presents an even greater likelihood that encounters with the Beaufort in 1874 contributed to the hunting in *Daniel Deronda*. During the morning, while the hunt met at eleven o'clock in Bushton, a village about halfway between Calne and Swindon, the Leweses were preparing to leave the Bear Hotel, some twelve miles to the south in Devizes. Their itinerary that day called for a drive through Savernake Forest, then picking up the railroad for the return journey to London somewhere to the east of Savernake.

That morning the hunt rode in a generally southward direction following an elusive fox, past landmarks such as Cliffe Hanging and Yatesbury Withyhead, and then over the downs. With a south wind and a "fair" scent, they reached the village of Beckhampton where the London–Devizes road turns east toward Marlborough.

They then lost the fox somewhere between Beckhampton and Roundway Hill just outside of Devizes. Two roads lead out of Devizes to the north: the one northwest toward Chippenham, the other northeast to Avebury skirting Roundway Hill. Departing from the Bear and taking the London Road toward Avebury would carry the Leweses up Canning Hill with Roundway on the left, and, depending on their timing, would provide them with a perfect view for the sight of the Beaufort hunters as they lost the scent, then turned back northward. The hunt eventually killed their fox far to the north at Bupton Hanging, after nearly half-an-hour's gallop from Roundway. The Leweses proceeded along the road toward Beckhampton and Avebury, and on to Savernake Forest.

The proportion of women then riding with the Wiltshire hunt raises questions about Gwendolen's hunting in *Daniel Deronda*, always treated as a gender issue by her relatives, partly because of the expense and partly because Mr Gascoigne fears that hunting will cost her her respectability no matter how well it shows her off. Among the nobility, military, and barristers riding with the Beaufort Hunt during the years surrounding the setting and publication of *Daniel Deronda*, only a few women rode along. Often a man would join, and his wife follow him a few years later, lending support to Gascoigne's assertions that Gwendolen's marriage would permit her the freedom to hunt, if she marries an approving husband. Lord Estcourt, for example, joined the hunt in 1860, with his Lady following ten years later (Henry 1914). The Earl of Apethorpe started with the hunt in 1861; the Countess, in 1864. In some large families, such as the Neelds or the Kingscotes, the children, boys and girls alike, would join when they became old enough. But not until the 1880s did women, on their own or along with husbands and siblings, begin to join in more significant numbers. A woman positioned like Gwendolen before her marriage, riding without a husband or a crew of brothers, would indeed have called attention to herself had she ridden with the 1865 Beaufort Hunt.

Savernake Forest–Cardell Chase

Past Marlborough, the Leweses' last drive around the west of Wiltshire took them to yet another important model for a *Daniel Deronda* setting, Savernake Forest. The sequence of George Eliot's research indicates that she prepared the confrontation between Mrs Glasher and Gwendolen at the Whispering Stones early in the composition of the novel. Because the plot required a dramatic physical setting, the Leweses began by visiting Salisbury. On 20 October they started a weekend in the area and lounged about the cathedral town, walked to Old Sarum, and then went to regard the monuments at Stonehenge. Either they visited country houses without mentioning it in their journals, or, more probably, they were saving country houses for the following week, and the village of Old Sarum and Stonehenge itself formed their objectives. George Eliot had conceived the Whispering Stones scene as early as July, when she wrote from Earlswood Common to inquire of Bodichon about lodgings near Stonehenge. Stonehenge presents a set of mysterious druidical stones similar to the ones near which Lydia ultimately delivers her prophecies about the marriage of Gwendolen and Grandcourt.

The northwest edge of Savernake Forest touches the southeast corner of the town of Marlborough where the Leweses had paused at the College the day before. It boasts four thousand acres of beeches and several oak trees of individual fame: the King Oak, the Cathedral Oak, and the Braydon Oak. In the middle of the triangular forest, eight paths extend from a central point slicing through the trees and intersecting with other roads to create a radiant system of avenues. The north–south axis extends for four miles, the longest in England. The area southeast of the eight-point conjunction of avenues accommodates a self-contained space among the acres, a gentle valley of green surrounding the warden's lodge. To reach it, a road cuts off the main avenue toward the north and doubles back counter clockwise in the direction of the point where the eight avenues meet.

Savernake Forest makes an attractive model for Cardell Chase where the roving archery meet occurs in *Daniel Deronda.* In the novel, servants spread out the lunch on a grassy plot off the avenue, with the warden's house nearby. Here Mrs Davilow and the other non-archers remain while the central group wanders the woods shooting at random targets, one excursion before their meal, a second afterward. After the morning stroll, during which Grandcourt again delays his proposal to Gwendolen, they return to the Green Arbour by descending a broad slope toward the Warden's House. To assure Gwendolen's footing, they make this walk hand-in-hand, and the narrator describes the joining as a figure of their repeatedly postponed engagement. At this point, despite opportunities, he offers his hand only physically, not through a marriage proposal. George Eliot theatricalizes this setting by calling it an amphitheater. As usual, and particularly during the archery party, the fashionable English world is depicted as artificial and stagy, despite its pursuit of social activities out of doors.

The layout of Savernake Forest accommodates action that occurs within territory clearly mapped by the narrator. But the landmarks George Eliot places in Cardell Chase in *Daniel Deronda* also include significant variations from the originals. In place of Savernake landmarks, she supplies only one named tree, the Double Oak, and adds the High Cross and the Whispering Stones. And Savernake Forest has nothing like the Whispering Stones where Lydia Glasher confronts Gwendolen in an area within a few minutes walk from the warden's house. At Savernake, this would place the confrontation scene near the Cedar of Lebanon and not far from the Ailesbury Column. From this point, Gwendolen's return walk to the green near the warden's lodge would give her time to reflect on Mrs Glasher's information, to resolve to go to Leubronn, and to beat Grandcourt back. She is already in the carriage when he arrives, and he barely catches her to make his farewell. The radial layout of roads in Cardell Chase offers Gwendolen several ways out and permits her to choose one by which to make her escape. George Eliot's name for the forest suggests an emphasis on sport, specifically hunting, and falls in with her association of Gwendolen with Diana, as well as with the *As You Like It* parallels important in these scenes.

Meanwhile, George Eliot's adaptation of the landmarks scattered in Savernake Forest make alterations that render the characters in the scene, specifically Lydia Glasher, at once more druidical and more Christian. The real names of the oaks yield to the fictional Double Oak, suitable not only for what goes on between Gwendolen and Grandcourt but to the entire structure of the novel. The High

Cross, an elevated Christian symbol of suffering, replaces the secular Ailesbury monument. Most importantly, the Whispering Stones appear.

Avebury, visited by the Leweses on the day before, offers an array of prehistoric stones suitable for the prophetic tone of the confrontation scene in *Daniel Deronda*. But the Avebury stones lack the scale of the ones George Eliot places in Cardell Chase: "two tall conical blocks that leaned towards each other like gigantic grey-mantled figures" (Ch. 14). Lewes's conclusion about the unimpressiveness of Avebury in his journal means that George Eliot probably discarded its stones as models in favor of one unit of the Stonehenge circle, thereby securing majesty and mystery both. The archers comment that the stones they see "would be good ghosts on a starlit night" (Ch. 14), and Gwendolen reacts with the fearfulness that has already possessed her in her confrontation with the painting behind the panel at Offendene: "It was as if some ghastly vision had come to her in a dream" (Ch. 14). Looking ordinary and unmajestic in the daytime light to Lewes, Avebury lacked most of the associations of size and shape with which George Eliot surrounds Mrs Glasher's prophecy.

On the other hand, George Eliot had seen stones of this size and in this approximate position not on this trip, but the week before on the Salisbury plain. Did George Eliot, like the prehistoric builders themselves, transport the huge rocks across the Salisbury plain and the Wiltshire countryside, placing them in the southeast corner of Savernake Forest, and then adapt the resulting scene for *Daniel Deronda*?

As the Leweses left Wiltshire on Saturday, George Eliot took a huge amount of material for *Daniel Deronda* with her: settings for scenes at Topping, hunting scenes, and the confrontation at the Whispering Stones, along with the details for representing Daniel's boyhood. In the novel, she does not place all the houses, notably Topping Abbey and Gadsmere, in Wessex. But they all come from Wessex, specifically from Wiltshire and a massively productive four-day visit to an area that offered a variety of unique models accessibly clustered near Devizes and especially useful in the first half of *Daniel Deronda*.

The Elms

During the summer of 1875, with *Deronda* still far from finished, the Leweses leased a house north of London for a little more than three months, from the middle of June until the end of September. The location in Rickmansworth offered the combination of convenience and isolation they relished, and the property itself had architectural charm, a large pretty garden, and inviting walks. They had their own carriage for outings and transportation, and proximity to London allowed them to keep it near at hand as they could not conveniently have done had they chosen a house too far from London. Rickmansworth at the time was a thriving Hertfordshire village served by the Grand Union Canal and the London Region Midland Railway, with some attractive tourist facilities and a big hotel called the Swan in the High Street.

In Rickmansworth, the Leweses had chosen an extremely moist portion of Hertfordshire. Three rivers, the Colne, the Chess, and the Gade, wind through an area

also threaded by numerous streams, becks and freshets. In addition, a series of interlocking lakes, edged by reeds and full of fish, have always attracted angling sportsmen. The property they leased, The Elms, though close to the road on the eastern edge of the village, had a large garden behind that yielded to a level meadow which reaches the banks of the narrow River Chess. It all made for a charming view from their upstairs back windows. Across the way to the front, they could gain access to the grounds of Rickmansworth Park, a grand mansion whose owners welcomed walking members of the public.

The Elms contrasted with the Surrey properties that the couple usually leased because of the lowness of the site and the uninterrupted flatness of the immediately surrounding area. George Eliot missed the "far-reaching outlooks" (*GEL* 6:160) and "wide furzy" commons (6:166) she enjoyed in Surrey and Sussex. The house itself she liked: a "fine old red brick Georgian place" (6:164). Its eighteenth-century white pillared doorway, topped by a simple pediment and flanked by two close-sitting Ionic columns, offered a modest but stately welcome. Built in 1720, it resembles another important Rickmansworth residence, the 1740 Basing House building on the site where William Penn, the Quaker founder of Philadelphia, grew up.

Despite George Eliot's description of the summer they spent there as "peaceful" (H&J 145), however, they encountered one discomfort after another. In July, Lewes was impressed to be invited to Lord Airlie's Lodge to meet Queen Sophie of Holland. His repetitions of similar descriptions of the event, in letters to Mary Cross, Alexander Main, John Blackwood, and his son Charles, suggest an excitement to which he thought himself too egalitarian and insouciant to admit. When he (repeatedly) relates the details of this event, he assumes a forbearing, discommoded tone.

In July they learned that the glassy lakes with their ducks and drakes, the flowing streams, and the narrow rivers all had a tendency to swell. The house sat low beside its elm tree, and although the garden and a meadow lay between them and the river, they feared a serious flood, of which Lewes finally was able to write: "The Deluge has passed; our river running so quickly at the end of the garden has *not* overflowed its banks and floated us into Space" (*GEL* 6:159). After a few weeks of respite, at the beginning of August, the rains returned less abundantly. Meanwhile, evening mists settled in the meadow and the garden. "The air has been continually muggy, and has lain on one's head like a thick turban" (6:161), comments George Eliot in a letter.

Lewes would occasionally take the train to town from Watford, to fetch needed books from the Priory or to go to the dentist. On these occasions, George Eliot might bring their landau to meet his returning train at the railway station. One day in September an accident occurred near Watford station. An unpredictable working horse pulling a brewer's cart collided with their vehicle and created quite a scare for Lewes. The incident increased anxiety about driving, and when correspondents helpfully tried to neutralize their disappointment in Hertfordshire by recommending pleasant walks and rides nearby, George Eliot responded that the long slope climbing toward Chenies made carriage rides in that direction a strain.

George Eliot had yet another objection, besides the hilliness on the one hand and the lowness on the other, to the Rickmansworth landscape. Impelled perhaps partly by the collision with the brewer's cart, she complained in a letter to Mary

Elizabeth Ponsonby of the scenery cluttered with "one public house to every six dwellings" (*GEL* 6:166). She blames "the rich brewers in Parliament and out of it, who plant these poison shops" (6:166). From the ancient fifteenth-century inn just across the road from The Elms to the other side of the village, Rickmansworth is said to have had more than fifty public houses, supplemented by three breweries.

At one point, Edith Simcox paid Rickmansworth a visit which she ever after regretted, although she never reports exactly why. Haight implies that she was an unexpected and unwelcome guest, but Simcox's own remarks suggest more that she carried away an emotional disappointment that resulted from some other sort of error of attitude or expression: "*then* [her italics] my poor Darling wanted to receive comfort not to give it and I was rather a brute not to have generously responded" (Simcox 1998: 217).

Worst of all, at the end of July, the news of Bertie Lewes's death in Africa reached them at The Elms. The Lewes boys' efforts at African colonialism had both ended in death, and the couple's morbidness deepened accordingly. They attempted a respite by scheduling a journey to Wales when they left Rickmansworth, one of the several rainy Welsh failures. But George Eliot had finished more than half of *Daniel Deronda*.

After an intervening summer spent mostly in France and Switzerland, the Leweses found the solution to their summer needs in December of 1876, in plenty of time for the summer of '77. Their purchase of the Heights fairly well ended the holiday portion of the English travels of George Eliot and Lewes. They had no more need of summer leases in Surrey, Sussex, or Kent. Journeys abroad still revived them; journeys within England were social visits, primarily to Weybridge, but also to Six Mile Bottom, Sevenoaks, and the two university towns. Entering their late fifties, they were frail enough that they walked far less and drove out a great deal, while their carriage often carried them to and from a desirable footpath. The Leweses had settled in Surrey for good, and when George Eliot married John Cross, although the newlyweds gave up the Priory, they kept the Heights and spent the majority of their short married life there.

The last journeys

With the purchase of the Heights in the wilds of Surrey and Lewes's death two years later, George Eliot experienced new ways of traveling, both at home and abroad. At home, repeated long stays were turning Witley Heights into her primary residence. Of her wedding journey to Italy, a second unprecedented variety of travel, Harris and Johnston comment that "the tone of both GE's letters, and Cross's, is that he is a novice being initiated into the finer points of travel" (192). Despite the years of experience George Eliot had accrued and which eminently suited her to initiate a younger, less experienced traveler, Cross's nervous illness and unscheduled, possibly suicidal, plunge in the Grand Canal in Venice render the effectiveness of the initiation doubtful.

After that disastrous interruption to the wedding journey, the Crosses made their slow way across Europe, stopping for the longest time in Bad Wildbad, a

seriously therapeutic spa in the Black Forest. But they soon set out on several more English journeys, journeys which had something of the air of a royal progress as they visited among Cross's siblings. The wedding visits took them to three areas George Eliot knew well. In August, they spent two weeks at Thornhill, outside Sevenoaks, with the Druces, the family members most conveniently located for frequent visits. The Otters, on the other hand, lived at a considerable distance in Lincolnshire. Ranby, however, is not far from Gainsborough, the land of Maggie and Tom, and as with the ramble on a river in 1859, the 1880 journey included stops at the cathedrals along the way, Ely, Peterborough, and Lincoln. At the end of September, they stopped last at Six Mile Bottom to visit the Halls.

Here George Eliot was returning to a warmly familiar spot full of memories of Lewes and previous visits. She started visiting Six Mile Bottom when Hall inherited it from an uncle in 1872. Six Mile Bottom occupies a broad strip between the Cambridge–Newmarket road and the railway. Its proximity to Cambridge meant that guests invariably included men and boys from the university, and its proximity to Newmarket meant that, eventually, their outings there had to do with horses.

The Leweses had always visited in the autumn, and Lewes never missed getting in some tennis, which, after the failure of the horseback riding, he continued to believe highly therapeutic. A large red building with Tudor touches, the house, despite its low situation, has extensive views. To the east, its bay windows and conservatory overlook the tennis grounds, so that George Eliot and the other guests could watch the play without going outside if they chose. On their earliest visits, they toured the area, inspecting farms and listening to Hall's plans for improvements. In 1876, they went into the town of Newmarket, dwarfed by its attached racing grounds, and surrounded by stud farms and racing stables. In the village, the party visited the stables attached to the Palace, the compact red-brick residence that Charles II had maintained for the racing. Trainer Joseph Heyho proudly displayed for them Kisber, the current Derby winner, whose name had already taken its place among the champions listed on the Derby souvenir mugs of 1876. In 1878, in the company of Turgenev, also a guest, they attended the racing itself.

Caroline Jebb assessed George Eliot's manner at Six Mile Bottom during her 1880 visit as the new Mrs Cross, and concluded that it manifested jealousy, bitterness, and insecurity about her new husband. These ill-natured comments may correctly identify the sources of George Eliot's unease on her wedding visit to Six Mile Bottom, but they also hint at vanity on the part of Jebb. Six Mile Bottom, in any event, was a place full of memories of happy times with Lewes, and this visit preceded by less than two weeks the onset of the ill health that became her terminal illness.

Because of this illness, George Eliot followed up her wedding visits with an interlude begun at the end of September, her last seaside visit. With Emily Clarke (the niece whom she had befriended all her life) living in Brighton, she had extra reasons for choosing this particular seaside location, which she considered "the least damp and most conveniently reached of coast places" (*GEL* 7:329). Brighton had changed indeed since the Prince Regent frolicked there early in the century. After a slump between the twenties and the forties, the railway went through and guaranteed the town's further prosperity. Two piers reached out to sea, and in

1868 "magnificent" Turkish baths had opened (Bishop 1879: 351). The Royal Pavilion, as late as the 1850s, was, according to John George Bishop's guide, "a sealed book" (350), unvisitable by the public. In 1880, it housed a library to which sixpence gained admission and privileges, and people could enjoy tours and concerts in its fantastically-orientalized rooms.

Elsewhere in Brighton, the facilities showed effects of the phases of the technological progress that separated the Georgian and the late Victorian periods. A huge aquarium faced the Channel, complete with alligators and sea lions and filled with water "pumped by steam power direct from the sea" (Bishop 1879: 33). George Eliot and Lewes visited it in 1878. Bishop's *Illustrated Guide* advertises H.J. Lawson's private bicycle ground on the London Road viaduct (Bishop 1879: 20), and there were two skating rinks. George Eliot praised the convenience of the "public tennis court which can be bespoken for a particular hour" where "Johnnie gets a game of real tennis—jeu de paume—every day" (*GEL* 7:329). The Brighton School of Photography on Preston Street attracted some of the ubiquitous amateur and professional photographers. Indeed, the *Comic Guide to Brighton* of 1875 uncomically describes the beach as "not a very nice place, as it suffers from an incurable plethora of nursemaids, itinerant photographers, and nasty wet dogs" (Damon and Pythias 1875: 6). Bathing machines still facilitated swimming in the Channel, as they had in the time of the Napoleonic wars, but they shared the shingle beach and the beachside road beside it with cameras and bicycles.

The water-drinking and sea-bathing therapies that had established Brighton as a health resort in the eighteenth century had also changed during the years since Dr Richard Russell advocated his urine-flavored potion of sea water and other unappetizing ingredients. Ward and Lock's 1880 *Picturesque Guide to Brighton* proposes that the salubriousness depended on its situation and its cleanliness, rather than the sea bathing or the waters. Victorians, including George Eliot, still relied on change of air as a potentially effective therapy. According to Ward and Lock, having no marshes, nearby river mouth, or decaying vegetable gardens means that "No watering-place can be mentioned at once so stately, so unexclusive and so clean … She is like an English matron, stately and well-preserved. She knows how to behave and expects to be treated with respect" (*Picturesque Guide to Brighton* 1880: 55–6). George Eliot arrived in hopes that the air would improve her, but she went home disappointed ten days later. Indeed, both she and Lewes provide poor testimony to Brighton's salubriousness, for both died shortly after they visited there—she within ten weeks of her return; he after only two.

Although George Eliot died soon after her return from Brighton, the visit was not her last stay at an English hotel. The Brighton and London line stopped in Godalming, so she had no need to travel through London to arrive home at Witley Heights. The London house on Cheyne Walk, in any event, was not yet prepared. While Cross took responsibility for moving books and furniture from the Priory, they rejected the thought of an interlude in Winchester in favor of the convenience of proximity to their new home: "Johnnie has finally decided that we shall give up Winchester and simply take up our abode in some Kensington Hotel he knows of,

so that we may overlook our servants' preparations, and supply any want that may disclose itself" (*GEL* 7:338). George Eliot, therefore, beginning on 29 November 1880, came up from Surrey and poised herself for the move by checking into Bailey's Hotel. She remained at Bailey's until the 3rd of December, before sleeping her first night at Cheyne Walk. She had nineteen days left to live.

Bailey's Hotel, then four years old, was as different as possible from the sprawling coaching inns the Leweses had frequented on the road in such places as Newark and Dorking. The project of Sir James Bailey, MP, it had both dignity and luxury. A modern five-storey block well-located on the corner, it was built just across from the Gloucester Road underground station where, at the time, Metropolitan and District trains were running a service at five-minute intervals. The station was so tasteful, with a rooftop balustrade and a piquant angled position on Gloucester Road, that it enhanced rather than detracted from the attractiveness of the location. If the thought of George Eliot on the Tube overtaxes one's historical imagination, the hotel still offered stabling for horses and carriages. Bailey's describes itself as "fashionable … intelligently located" and embodying "important local and architectural history" (*The History of Bailey's Hotel*, leaflet provided by Bailey's). Despite its lack of height, the hotel's restrained red-brick Renaissance architecture made it like a hotel of the future, with a simple, proportioned exterior, a grand circular staircase and gilded Corinthian columns inside, and a strategically fashionable urban location where few hotels offered competition.

During her stay at Bailey's, George Eliot did some reading and took advantage of the proximity to shopping and to the museum area built up after the 1851 Exhibition. On the third day, she walked to the South Kensington Museum (later the V&A). Besides providing access to these conveniences, Bailey's met George Eliot's hotel requirements in the chilly November weather just as she had expressed them on her return from Germany with Lewes nearly twenty-five years previously. As at the Lord Warden in Dover in 1855, she could savor the comforts of "English mutton, an English fire, and an English bed" (H&J 257). Again as in 1855, this "first-rate English hotel" was a stop in the process of moving into a new phase of life, this time life on the banks of the River Thames in a tall house in Chelsea.

Conclusions and implications

George Eliot's stay at Bailey's concluded a lifetime of careful choices in lodgings during many periods away from home. As travelers, she and Lewes had planned journeys carefully, then executed their plans with flexibility, spontaneity, and vigor. They relied much on friends' opinions, and their friends, especially Bodichon, the Crosses, and Charles Lewes's in-laws, were as peripatetic as the Leweses themselves. They researched guidebooks in advance, and they carried the books with them both in England and abroad. Despite their care, they experienced the usual proportion of travel disasters: damp sheets at a hotel in Germany, "execrable" accommodation at the Hotel de Strasbourg in Paris (GHLJ 24 August 1857), no hotels at all in Wales in 1859. On the other hand, they generally found places to stay that had much charm and happy views: of the deeply carved Derwent

valley at Matlock Bath, the dissolving peninsulas at Whitby, the sweep of the Surrey valley at Redhill. They depended heavily on the frequent, reliable, ever-expanding railway service at the same time that they took advantage of outdated facilities, the lodgings at the abandoned coaching stops and the Georgian watering places. They visited friends, sought out healing air, and, by no means incidentally, gathered material for George Eliot's fiction no matter where or when they went. The identifiable results of George Eliot's journeys throughout her fiction enhance descriptions of her creative methods.

The fruits of George Eliot's English travels demonstrate that what I have called her literary pointillism is undemonstrably complex. Drawing physical descriptions from sights she viewed, carefully researching legal plots, inserting parallel and counterpointing plots and characters from her extensive reading not only of Shakespeare and Dante, but also from popular culture sources, she creates complex, multi-layered novels of almost infinitely rewarding complexity. Moreover, the number of models I have managed to find in England promise that dozens more "widely sundered elements" still await identification, models that did not turn up within the limits of my own three years of retracing George Eliot's steps to English destinations.[8] Dozens more must line the routes of both her English and her Continental travels.

Meanwhile, among George Eliot's characters, it is safe to say that none is, as Haight declares of Deronda, entirely "imagined" (1968: 489). Instead, when her contemporaries associated characters with one or another of her acquaintances, they were oversimplifying. The characters resist identification with any single living model precisely because they come from so many originals.

George Eliot's travels, especially her beachside conversations, extend Nancy Henry's idea that her work delivers "coded communications" to Lewes in *Theophrastus Such*. As I have argued elsewhere, George Eliot conducted a similar coded communication with him about his academic ambitions through the satirical names in *Middlemarch* and *Daniel Deronda*. George Eliot's jokey creation of allegorical characters (Pike and Tench of *Middlemarch*, for example, and Quicksett and Puller in *Daniel Deronda*) make fun of Lewes's dreams of success within the academy. Half-dialogs detected by Anderson, Redinger, Paxton, Bodenheimer, and Gray, together with the ones noted here, demonstrate that coded communications make up a substantial strain of George Eliot's creative method, and supplement her generalized didacticism by delivering specific advisory messages to specific people.

Probably, and I suspect this is even truer of *Theophrastus Such*, all George Eliot's novels contain communications that remain undecipherable to the uninformed, but were piercing to the models themselves as they recognized their very own words in a best-selling work. As Fanny Houghton wrote wearily while anticipating the publication of *Felix Holt*, "It is too much to hope that no member of her own family will figure in it" (11 December 1866, quoted in Haight 1968: 394). At the same time, the composite method must have perplexed them. People have long speculated on Isaac Evans's responses to the character of Tom Tulliver. If the construction of Tom as an unloving, unyielding, and unimaginative boy hurt Mr I.P. Evans of Griff House, the later scenes between the adult Tom and Maggie

could not fail to bewilder him completely, as he could hardly deduce that Tom the adult was based on someone he had never met, Ben Leigh Smith. George Eliot, responding sympathetically to the beachside narrative of Barbara Leigh Smith, did not spare her friend's dictatorial brother, though Isaac Evans lacked the knowledge to recognize at what point Tom ceases to be him and begins to be someone else's brother.

George Eliot's "coded communications" establish a full (and rather strange) relationship among a number of important Victorians previously unconnected in this way with her or with each other. In particular, tracing her travels reveals most conspicuously her dialogic artistic relationship with Edward Burne-Jones. What Georgiana Burne-Jones told her (and where she told it) became more than desperate confidences; they were the raw material of relationships, incidents, settings, metaphors, and allusions throughout the two last novels. Meanwhile, the words George Eliot puts into Maggie's or Dorothea's mouths, if she first heard them in narratives on the beach, promote Bodichon and Georgiana Burne-Jones to the status of quasi-collaborators whose narratives went so far even as to provide specific dialog for George Eliot's novels.

Among the large number of Victorians proposed as models for George Eliot's characters, many of them thought they recognized specific identifying details about themselves. In addition to the people found along the travel routes, the following probably had still more reason to believe themselves models: John Chapman, Herbert Spencer, Charles Bray, Emilia Pattison, Robert Brabant, Oscar Browning, Emanuel Deutsch, Robert Lytton, Jane Senior, Octavia Hill, Edward Bond, Edmund Gurney, and the Macdonald family, all in addition to the usual Warwickshire models, family models, and the author herself as model. (In a companion work, a closer detailing of George Eliot's European travels, I will add to this list, identifying as models people met on the Continent, such as the Gräfin von Baudissin, Lady Castledown, and Mrs Francis Wingfield.) The technique of adapting the ideas and relationships of her friends and putting the results into the mouths of her characters makes George Eliot all the more a voice of Victorianism, not only because of her content and technique, but also by being the ventriloquistic, composite voice of many important individual Victorians.

The identification of friends who needed and obtained George Eliot's advice was thus part of a complex creative process that might draw on the memories of a recent gesture on a beach at a Channel resort, a dimple in a marble bust at Naples, or the falling of the light in Arbury Park. Masses of her finest details survived from her girlhood life in Nuneaton, or appeared in her reading for some long-finished review, or happened the day before she wrote them down in the draft of a novel. Because the majority of her settings are English, her English travels were at least as much part of her creativity as were her childhood years in Warwickshire or her journeys to Italy. From the granite islands and beachside cliffs, from Weybridge and Dorking, from Wiltshire, Devonshire, and Yorkshire, George Eliot fed her creative imagination on the sights of England.

Notes

1 Introduction

1 When referring to my subject before she assumed her pseudonym, I call her by her birth name, either Mary Ann or Marian Evans, depending on which she was going by at the time. Afterward I call her George Eliot, but, following Barbara Hardy's practice, without ever shortening it to the surname alone, as she was not really a person called George Eliot. Accepting the obligation of calling people what they want to be called would require applying the name Marian Lewes (which she preferred for most of her adult life) and shortening it to "Lewes," which could not help but cause confusion between herself and her life's companion. Harriet Adams points out that the novelist did not begin calling herself Mrs Lewes until after she announced her circumstances to her family in 1857, and questions biographers' frequent application of a specifically marital vocabulary about her living arrangements. On the one hand, I use the term "elopement" here in its secondary *OED* definition, which applies it to flights that do not necessarily end with marriage. On the other hand, for convenience sake, I refer often to the couple as "the Leweses." Meanwhile, my own preference lies with "Marian Evans."

2 Harris and Johnston's edition of George Eliot's journals, which appeared in 1998, helps prompt attention to her travels because much of the previously unpublished writing includes narratives of her visits to both English and foreign destinations. Moreover, the editors have included the helpful heading "Travels in Britain" in their comprehensive "Explanatory Index" (391–447). George Henry Lewes's journals, available at the Beinecke Library at Yale University, also devote much space to the time the couple spent away from their various homes in London.

3 The directness of George Eliot's early adaptions of Midlands personalities in her first fiction, *Scenes of Clerical Life*, has deflected scrutiny from models originating later and elsewhere, and combining elements from a number of sources. In the *Oxford Companion to George Eliot*, John Rignall concludes of George Eliot's characters that "generic resemblance is the most that should be claimed for nearly all of them after *Scenes of Clerical Life*" (2002: 50). Catherine Middleton (1981) and Henry Auster (1970) also make the assumption that Warwickshire supplied most of the characters and settings that George Eliot derived from historical people and places. Mudge and Sears, in the "Index to Originals" from their *George Eliot Dictionary* (1924), draw about three-quarters of their list from Warwickshire. What follows demonstrates the need to revise the general assumptions that only memories of her girlhood home provided models for George Eliot's fiction, and that only the early fiction contains characters based on identifiable originals.

4 Despite the large number of good biographies written about George Eliot since 1968, I rely mainly on Gordon Haight's because of its highly factual and for the most part chronologically-arranged compilation of the events of her life, including the journeys

within England. In the *Biography*, Haight discards the Pattison "canard" (1968: 449) on the basis of the mismatches between the eminent scholar and the moribund failure. He devotes an entire appendix to demolishing the suggestion that George Eliot based Casaubon on Pattison (563–5). See also Birch (2004) and Nuttall (2003).

5 In addition to Henry's suggestion regarding "coded communications," other authors over the years have described portions of George Eliot's fiction they believe she directed at specific acquaintances. Roland Anderson (1973), for example, perceives the famous Chapter 17 of *Adam Bede* as her part of a dialog with John Blackwood, while Ruby Redinger (1975) believes the same about "Brother Jacob." Nancy Paxton's *George Eliot and Herbert Spencer* (1991) also offers a less explicit version of this function of the novels by describing them as, in part, responses to and critiques of Spencer's books that, one by one, refute his ideas. Pam Hirsch reports that Barbara Leigh Smith, Bodichon, and Evans shared "a kind of shorthand" (1999: 65) based on their mutual understanding of *The Arabian Nights*, an allusion George Eliot includes in *Middlemarch*. More recently (2001), Beryl Gray has suggested that Caterina Sarti embodies George Eliot's coded message to Charles Dickens concerning his construction of Tattycoram in *Little Dorrit*.

6 Although George Eliot's fiction predates the paintings of the foremost French pointillist, Georges Seurat, the impressionist painters working at the same time as she were anticipating his more extreme version of their own pre-pointillist techniques.

7 Haight (1968) and Anna Kitchel (Evans 1950) produce the most extensive lists of Lydgate models, and have engaged in many efforts to identify these and other originals. At the same time, authors from Patrick McCarthy in 1973 through Kirstie Blair in 2001 (who also mentions work by Karen Gendele, John Forrester, and Peter Allan Dale) have attempted to relate Lydgate's science to the theories of various nineteenth-century medical contemporaries.

8 As Eric Leed argues in *The Mind of the Traveler* (1991), the process of departure enables travelers to shed "disreputable realities" of their positions at home. He offers the example of Alexander Kinglake who departed from Europe with joy: "The liberation Kinglake celebrated at the boundaries of his world was from the watchful and judgmental eye that reinforces respectabilities, law, cleanliness, propriety" (43).

9 Harriet Adams (2000) points out that, during this period, Evans continued to sign her letters with her birth name, indeed that she assumed "Lewes" only in matters related to securing their lodgings (as urgent a factor abroad as at home) (54). During the German elopement, the couple traveled in Bohemian intellectual circles in which they could admit their questionable circumstances without fear.

10 The many authors who have written about George Eliot and the visual arts include, among others, Sophia Andres (1996a), Gillian Beer (1986), Felicia Bonaparte (1979), Hilary Fraser (1986), Juliet McMaster(1990), Joseph Nicholes (1992), Nancy Paxton (1991), Joseph Wiesenfarth (1997), and Hugh Witemeyer (1979). The Leweses' experience illustrates John Pemble's conclusion that the Victorian perceived art collections positively, regarding them as valuable forces against Philistinism (1987: 76).

11 George Eliot and Lewes's travel places them in the category James Buzard (1993) calls "anti tourists," travelers who considered themselves better educated, more cultured, and more tasteful than the common hoard.

12 Richard Wrigley and George Revill's collection, entitled *Pathologies of Travel* (2000) contains several essays relevant to the Leweses' travel. Their experience, for example, confirms Ralph Harrington's observation in "The Railway Journey and the Neuroses of Modernity" concerning the ways in which the railways leveled class differences, a conclusion also offered by Wolfgang Shivelbusch in *The Railway Journey* (1980: 70). Although the carriages provided different accommodations according to price, the railways deprived the wealthiest travelers of the autonomy of traveling alone in charge of a privately owned vehicle (231). Meanwhile, "despite the efforts of railway companies to provide entirely separate facilities for the different passenger classes, it was in practice impossible to keep them apart entirely and people of all sorts and conditions inevitably met and mixed

particularly at stations" (230). On trains, the Leweses often encountered acquaintances who contributed useful advice about the journey, but they took care to avoid the day-trippers and holidaymakers they referred to as "cockney[s]" (*GEL* 5:278). See Chapter 7 regarding their return journey from Torquay.

13 Like Harrington's essay, Wrigley and Revill's "Introduction" to their volume notes the health-related issues connected with travel. People have always traveled to improve both physical and spiritual health; at the same time, travel often yields discomforts that harm health. Their points about relationships between health and travel apply with double strength to the Leweses, who often gained weight and health along the way, but also suffered from various maladies that either afflicted them as they journeyed or did not improve.

14 John Walter Cross, whom George Eliot married late in life, describes their honeymoon journey in highly-colored terms because of his mysterious, possibly suicidal plunge into the Grand Canal. He asserts strongly how George Eliot gained (and sustained) health almost miraculously as soon as they left England. He divides their short marriage into two portions, "travelling and illness" (3:424), categories that imply how absolutely he identified his wife's healthy periods with their travel.

15 I refer to the Scilly Isles and Channel Islands as part of George Eliot's English travels simply because they are not Scottish, Irish, or Welsh, and because she spent a significant length of time there just as she was beginning to publish fiction.

16 Such classic studies of the time as those by W.J. Harvey (1961), Barbara Hardy (1959), Reva Stump (1959), and Jerome Thale (1959) follow formalist methodologies that emphasize the artistry of the novels and remain suspicious of making connections between biography and literature. Even Middleton and Auster, exceptions to this pattern, concentrate on models for settings rather than the more slippery project of identifying originals for characters. The George Eliot biographers of the past twenty years most often disregard identifying models in favor of analysis of the fiction, and draw their fresh conclusions from the second large groups of letters in Volumes 8 and 9 of Haight's collection published in 1979, and Baker's collections of Lewes's in 1995 and 1999.

17 See the author's "Targetting *Blackwood's*" (1996) for a more detailed description of George Eliot's publication strategies.

18 The 1881 obituaries, by emphasizing her country origins, contributed to the consensus of the day that her early novels succeeded best. Of George Eliot's contemporary critics, David Carroll (1971) reports that "Unanimously, they agree, the early novels are infinitely superior to the later ones. The latter lack the 'charm' and the 'magic' which Virginia Woolf was to suggest male reviewers expect to find in their womenfolk. The critics support their conviction with a few, repeated clichés. When she is relying on her own early experiences, George Eliot is able to create concrete, living characters; when she has to rely increasingly upon her own imagination and theory, then the characters are painstakingly constructed. The decline of her genius represents the victory of the philosopher over the artist" (37). With attention focused on her life, and favor settling on the early novels, identifications centered on Warwickshire.

19 Ruby Redinger's *The Emergent Self* (1975) observes the paucity of George Eliot's references to her mother, as does the author's review of Ina Taylor's *A Woman of Contradictions: The Life of George Eliot* (1988) which presents evidence of the flimsiness of the Mrs Poyser–Mrs Evans identification.

20 Regarding Casaubon, Haight's denial that she modeled him on Mark Pattison keeps alive the suggestion that Emilia Pattison Dilke saw herself as Dorothea (1968: 449). Kali Israel's *Names and Stories: Emilia Dilke and Victorian Culture* (1999) provides a fascinatingly detailed description of how Emilia Pattison Dilke did see herself.

21 Writing in 1993, T.J. Winnifrith trivialized such efforts, including his own, by calling them a game (65). But he concludes his article on originals in *Scenes of Clerical Life* by asserting, as I do, that the changes George Eliot makes in her adaptations yield important artistic effects.

22 On the one hand, the coded communications limit historical accessibility to this aspect of George Eliot's novels; few 21st-century readers possess the comprehensive knowledge of Victorianism, much less the knowledge of her personal family relationships, that would permit accurate readings. On the other hand, the coded communications, along with the composite characters, involve many well-known Victorians, to whose stories they contribute an important new body of fact. That George Eliot designed her novels partly to teach a contemporary a lesson not only adds material to the person's biography, it raises his or her importance as a Victorian figure.
23 Over a hundred years ago, Frederic Evans, Isaac Evans's clergyman son, displayed the cupboard to biographer Charles Olcott, along with some yew trees and a table on which Casaubon is supposed to have laid down his head to die (1911: 175). In 1989, Robin Evans kindly displayed the same article for me, producing the same result that the Reverend Evans produced on Olcott—awe, reverence, and recognition.
24 I also acknowledge that, on their own, some of my suggestions appear generic. For example, George Eliot would not need to travel to Cornwall to create her allusion to Jack the Giant Killer in *Felix Holt* (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, when considered together with other details of southwestern England included in the same novel, the likelihood that memories of her journey there yielded this detail from the area increases.

2 Points of departure

1 Although most English Grand Tourists followed approximately the same route (across the Channel to France, then across the Alps and down through Italy), both Newdigate and the Leweses made certain they reached as far south as Paestum before returning to the north of Italy.
2 Miller also did work at Lacock Abbey, George Eliot's model for Topping Abbey in *Daniel Deronda*. See Chapter 8.
3 Although Sir Hugo takes a great deal of pleasure in raising Daniel, the child he has acquired while traveling abroad, Daniel considers himself injured by the secrecy Sir Hugo maintains about his origins, especially the identity and fate of his mother.
4 See, in particular, Leed's epilog to *The Mind of the Traveler* (1991).
5 These occur in *Middlemarch* in the chapter in which Fred and Rosamond Vincy ride across a specifically Midlands landscape to visit Stone Court, and in the narrator's introduction to Offendene, unfortunately not the site of Gwendolen's childhood in *Daniel Deronda* (Ch. 3).
6 The following details come from these journals, kindly made available for reading by George Eliot's great-great-grandnephew, Robin Evans.
7 Writing more generally about the Midlands landscape as a whole, Rignall acknowledges that, in the case of Hetty, the fields do not nourish her as they do characters in, for example, *Middlemarch*. Conceding that "the speech of the midland landscape in Eliot's work is not, of course, uniform" (1993: 152), he exemplifies its desolate side through Hetty's journey.
8 Exploring relationships between rurality and nationality, Elizabeth Helsinger describes Hetty as one of the wandering women outcasts at whose cost communities like Hayslope sustain their continuity (1997: 223).
9 See Roland Anderson's 1973 article about Chapter 17 of *Adam Bede*, as well as the author's *George Eliot and Intoxication* (2000: 41–4) regarding Blackwood's negative responses to her rawboned realism and the effects of his response on her fiction. See also Chapter 4's section on "Jersey cows."
10 These suggestions call into question Middleton's conclusion that *Silas* has not prompted identifications of Raveloe.
11 Although Tenby is Welsh rather than English, I refer to it both here and in Chapter 3 because of its central importance to George Eliot's life and fiction writing. Nearly always, the Leweses' other attempts to holiday in Wales failed because of the weather.

12 Cara Bray delivered this information to Charles Lee Lewes in a ms letter written 28 March 1890, now in the George Eliot collection at the Beinecke Library at Yale University.
13 In *Three Experiments,* Dr Fulton eventually gives up doctoring for mercantile pursuits, a decision much favored by his wife Jane. Though unlike the Lydgates as characters, the couple anticipates the Lydgates' predicament some twenty-five years before George Eliot began the actual drafting of *Middlemarch.*
14 Although Sara Hennell mentions this address in her *Memoir,* Haight, citing Cara Bray's diary, puts the new home on Clarence *Place* rather than Clarence *Row.*
15 Featherstone is also a Whitby name, that of a local author, specifically Peter Featherstone, and George Eliot could have heard the name again there when she visited in 1870. In any event, many of these are common English names that, nevertheless, happen to cluster in a London area with which George Eliot was familiar.
16 The inclusion of these essays in collections of George Eliot's prose measures their success. Between 1883 and 1992, the Riehl essay appeared in five collections, the Young in four, and "Silly Novels" in six (Baker and Ross 2002: 436–8).
17 For more on Maggie, her rowing, and the London river, see Chapter 5's section on "The mill on the Thames." Daniel's rows on the Thames would carry him past the site of George Eliot's future home.

3 Seasides

1 The *George Eliot Letters*, for example, contain six letters from St Leonard's to Coventry during one two-week period in 1848, five of them of considerable length.
2 The Brighton guide for 1846 mentions no fewer than ten first-rate hotels, including the Old Ship Inn (where the Rawdon Crawleys and the George Osbornes stay just after their marriages in *Vanity Fair*), along with a mass of gardens, baths, and other notable buildings (*The Stranger's Guide in Brighton* 1846: 99–100).
3 Haight's note in the *George Eliot Letters* identifies this allusion to Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather* (1954, 1:265, n.5).
4 Rosemarie Bodenheimer also connects St Leonard's and *Middlemarch.* She believes that Evans's melancholy there resembles that of Dorothea when she returns to Lowick after her honeymoon (1994: 80).
5 In Elaine Showalter's pioneering 1977 *A Literature of Their Own,* she cites this quotation to help classify George Eliot among the "feminine" women novelists of the nineteenth century who worked within the patriarchal tradition by endorsing virtues of repression and submission in their women characters (129).
6 Charles Olcott, for example, speculates that she acquired a feel for public house conversation because her father repeated such exchanges to his wife within hearing of their little daughter (1911: 18).
7 Thackeray spent some of his childhood at Belleville, the house opposite Rock Villa, on Tunbridge Wells Common. This information comes from a tourist brochure entitled *A Circular Promenade*, available at the Royal Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centre. The brochures sold at the sites where George Eliot visited (and which are still open to tourists) vary greatly in reliability. Some, such as the individual college brochures available at Oxford, are written by scholars who have lived the experience of the locale as part of a lifetime of intellectual inquiry and provide the most reliable sources available. In other spots, family members or local enthusiasts have written descriptions out of love and loyalty, less rigorously historical but full of first-person observation. I have drawn, I hope judiciously, on all kinds of sources (contemporary to both then and now), hence the appearance on my bibliography of clearly tourist-oriented material (which, most often, has provided primarily facts and dates) side by side with scholarly historical sources.
8 In the *Biography* (1968: 133), Haight erroneously changes the direction of the move: from Spa Cottage to Park Cottage, instead of the reverse.

9 Karen Mann's excellent 1981 article "Self, shell and world: George Eliot's language of space" describes the shell as "a crucial metaphor linking nature and art" (448) and details the appearance of shells as metaphors throughout the fiction, a frequency traceable to George Eliot's seaside experience in general, but to Tenby in particular, as it was at Tenby that she read Gosse's descriptions and then searched for shells herself.
10 Margaret Oliphant reviewed it in *Blackwood's* in 1857, discarding the idea that legislative reform could improve the lot of women.
11 Whereas Haight believes that Leigh Smith and Chapman actually consummated their relationship, M.C. Bradbrook makes a persuasive case that Leigh Smith resisted his attempts; other sources for versions of the sequence of events include Hirsch's and Hester Burton's.
12 In Hirsch's entry on Barbara Bodichon in the *Oxford Reader's Companion to George Eliot*, she strengthens the suggestion she makes in her biography regarding the connections between Maggie and her subject (2000: 32).
13 See Nancy Cervetti's extended analysis of this passage in *Scenes of Reading* (1998).
14 The schooner arrived in Ilfracombe just after a sail to the Channel Islands with Herbert Spencer as a guest, who voices no complaints about life on the *Coquette* despite a 36-hour becalming on the way to Guernsey. Although he slept badly aboard and welcomed the softer beds at Marshall's Royal Yacht Hotel, he evaluates the cruise as "prosperous" with "gentle breezes and sunny seas" (1904: 567) that allowed everything to proceed as planned.
15 In "Fiction as vivisection" Richard Menke parallels Lewes's dissection with George Eliot's character construction on the basis that both processes "see into the life of things by dissecting without murder" (2000: 645). He concludes that "Scientists like Lewes used vivisection to probe the inner recesses of living creatures; Eliot appropriates something of the outlook and rhetoric of physiology to construct a fictional character that conveys the impression of being animate, pre-existent, and available for vivisection" (646).

4 Islands

1 This journey supports Shilvelbusch's conclusion that in nineteenth-century horse-drawn coaches, the passengers conversed, rather than keeping silent, reading, and avoiding eye contact as in the railway carriages that replaced them (1980: 75–6).
2 Bowley's *The Fortunate Islands* (1990) is the source for all the following information on the Scilly Isles.
3 Thanks to Mary Billot of the Societé Jersaise for useful information about locations in and near Gorey, including a picture of the Gorey races painted by Philip John Ouless.
4 Harris and Johnston mistakenly render George Eliot's word as "towns" instead of "towers" (280).
5 In *Bloom*, Amy King also notices similar descriptions in George Eliot's travel journals and *Adam Bede*. She emphasizes the careful botanical study carried forth in Gorey and connects it with Hetty's surname (2003: 172).
6 Auster attributes the strong contrast between Loamshire and Stonyshire to similar contrasting adjacent areas of Staffordshire and Derbyshire, an identification that does not exclude the contribution of this juxtaposition as well (1970: 103).

5 Brief stays in country shires

1 Nancy Henry finds a similar transfer from international to local setting in *Middlemarch*: "The clash between the locals and the railway surveyors in *Middlemarch* stages colonial conflict on English ground" (2002: 102). Shilvelbusch points out that, visually, the experience of railway travel compresses time and telescopes space (1980: 61), an effect demonstrated in George Eliot's mental juxtaposition of Newark and Gainsborough.

2 In his third (1999) book of literary puzzles, John Sutherland, better instructed by a Lincolnshire correspondent, concedes that his earlier conclusion about *The Mill on the Floss* (that George Eliot mishandles the water in the flood scenes of the novel) fails to take account the unique forces of the Eagre.
3 See Chapter 3 regarding similarities between Barbara Bodichon and Maggie Tulliver, including, possibly, a desire to learn to row independently of boatmen or other men.
4 Thanks to the British Library Print Room for help in identifying the artist.
5 See the "Appendix" to Joseph Wiesenfarth's edition of George Eliot's *A Writer's Notebook* for a reference that shows George Eliot's awareness of Hope and his collecting.
6 The Betchworth inn is opposite the vicarage, but the Leweses dined at the White Horse the night of their walk in that direction. Wotton Hatch stands on the Dorking–Guildford coach road, their likely choice when they lunched at "a little roadside inn" (H&J 109) the next day.

6 Spas

1 This paragraph generalizes from standard sources on the history of watering places, as well as from personal observation at Leamington, Tunbridge Wells, Malvern, Harrogate, Matlock, and other spas.
2 Because of its Berlin setting, "Armgart" shows the importance of George Eliot's European travel as well, the subject of a companion work-in-progress.
3 Telephone interview, September 1992.
4 Henry Jephson's large and fancy house probably supplied the model in the *Middlemarch* auction chapter for the house the Larchers buy: "a mansion near Riverston already furnished in high style by an illustrious Spa physician" (Ch. 60).
5 Oscar Browning asserts that "The Legend of Jubal" was also "suggested, probably, by one of the Harrogate concerts" (111).

7 Whitby, Devon, Oxford, Surrey

1 Philip Attwood summarizes Zambaco's own artistic achievement (although she did most of this work later in the century) as "painter, medallist and sculptor who ventured into the decorative arts, dress design, and even, in the 1890s, photography" (1986: 36).
2 Other visitors to Whitby—Bram Stoker, Elizabeth Gaskell, and, more recently A.S. Byatt and Michel Faber—have drawn on its atmosphere as settings for novels.
3 Thanks to Judith Flanders for verifying the daily dress of the women in the Pre-Raphaelite circle.
4 On Dorothea and various saints, see Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979), Hilary Fraser (1986), Judith Johnston (1992), Patricia Marks (1999), Sherry Mitchell (1997), and Susan Stiritz (1997).
5 Rosemarie Bodenheimer (1994) productively parallels Mrs Meyrick and Mrs Cross, but the daily lives of the well-off Cross daughters do not at all resemble the days of unavoidable industry in which the Meyrick sisters engage, at least not during the time they lived at Weybridge. At the same time, Kathleen Adams (1980) mentions that the Crosses earlier suffered financial reversals.
6 See the author's " George Eliot's earliest prose, the *Coventry Herald* and the Coventry fiction" (1986b).
7 The Ottery St Mary website, along with numerous other sources, makes the Thackerayan connection.
8 A thread of the Victoria Listserv directed me to Tipton St John and hence to Cadhay Manor. Thanks to Eileen Curran, Kyriaki Hadjiafxendi, Paul Lewis, Malcolm Shifrin, Roy Vickers, and Michael Wolff.
9 Neil Hertz (1985) and Barbara Hardy (1997) agree that the novel follows a plot of exorcism of Casaubon's presence from Lowick, and Hardy adds a solar-myth motif, finding

Will associated with the western-facing section of Lowick, previously Casaubon's haunts, while Dorothea favors the eastern locations. But the architecture of Cadhay challenges rather than confirms Hardy's scheme because of the evidence that at Lowick, as at Cadhay, all the major rooms face east. One small detail supports the location of the library on the same range as the boudoir. On the evening when Dorothea waits for her husband to leave the library and come to bed, "she opened the door gently and stood outside in the darkness waiting for his coming upstairs with a light in his hand". Eventually, she "did hear the library door open, and slowly the light advanced up the staircase" (Ch. 42). If the library is on the other side of the house from the boudoir she could not possibly stand just outside her boudoir door and "hear the library door open". Hence, according to the Cadhay plan and the *Middlemarch* text, the love scene between Dorothea and Will in the library must also take place in a west-facing room.

10 See the author's "*Middlemarch* Dorothea's husbands in the Vatican museums" (1992).

11 In Ch. 37, the narrator indicates that during the year following Dorothea's honeymoon, "the summer had gradually advanced over the western fields beyond the avenue of *elms*" (my italics). The manuscript in the British Library verifies that George Eliot wrote *elms* rather than *limes*, a slip of the pen that occurs in all editions of the novel (more material for one of John Sutherland's literary puzzles). But the manuscript in this section also indicates the importance of altering the route of the avenue so that it terminates at the tower. When the narrator observes that Dorothea "had been so used to struggle for and to find resolve in looking *along the avenue* towards the arch of western light that the vision itself had gained a communicating power," the italicized phrase (my italics), which she added in revision, indicates the importance of the framed vision to George Eliot's conception of Lowick despite the error about the elms.

12 In *Nature's Museums* (1999), Carla Yanni points out that many Victorian scientists, including Acland, found no conflict between evolution and religion. She emphasizes the vagueness of the reports of the Huxley–Wilberforce encounter and Huxley's status as an intruder at the university (89). She describes Acland as a "natural theologian" (85) who believed that science, and the museum built at Oxford to advance it, had the final objective of showing the glory of the divine plan. Acland's conservative opposition to vivisection constitutes another difference between him and Lewes, famously agnostic, who practiced vivisection himself.

13 Rick Rylance, in his heroic description of Lewes's psychology, also points out T.H. Huxley's status as an outsider at Oxford at this time. Not until 1877 did Huxley receive the offer of a chair in physiology and a college mastership (2000: 166). Rylance persuasively demonstrates elements of Lewes's psychology in George Eliot's fiction.

14 The historical exhibit in the Infirmary's lower corridor displays a copy of the photograph.

15 See Robert Colby's *Fiction with a Purpose* (1967) regarding the fit between George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and the Victorian novel of education.

16 According to Sellar (1907), Zibbie Cross's song from *The Spanish Gypsy* gained her an invitation to Sunday at the Priory during the meeting at the Hand and Spear with Lewes in 1867, but since George Eliot had not at that time yet published the poem, Cross's dating of August 1869 prevails as the date of the occasion when George Eliot first heard her lyric set to music.

17 Gillian Beer believes that Bessie Parkes's rides in the Campagna also relate to this detail about Dorothea. According to Beer, "Bessie Parkes and Barbara Bodichon provided models of Dorothea's possibilities, and measures of her curtailment" (1986: 165).

8 Country houses

1 Eventually the Leweses met socially the young Marquis of Lansdowne, Bowood's proprietor, but at the time of their visit had not yet made his acquaintance.

2 As Marlene Tromp points out (2000), Grandcourt's spaniel changes gender, probably to suit the Cowper allusion.

3 Although archives at Bowood include no references to a hill covered with "American shrubs" (Ch. 13), as the narrator describes the setting for Grandcourt's non-proposal to Gwendolen, Bowood has some famous rhododendrons, a species usually included in these popular nineteenth-century plantings. Thanks to Simon Veret on the Victoria Listserv who supplied material on this subject.
4 Daniel's mission has formed part of repeated assessments of the kind and degree of the novel's imperialism. See arguments by Susan Meyer (1993), Katherine Bailey Lineham (1992), Edward Said (1993), Julian Wolfreys (1994), and others. But Nancy Henry (2002) raises the voice of caution by pointing out that Daniel does not define his mission in such a way that it is pre-Zionist. Rather than proposing to establish some sort of colony, he intends to seek knowledge about Palestine.
5 Folly Farm is not the Corsham Court folly which rises from Corsham village close to the entrance to the house, but a property along the Chippenham road.
6 George Eliot had already visited an English public school in 1867, when she dined with the boys at Eton as a guest of Oscar Browning (1890: 97).
7 This and subsequent information, including quotations, come from the archives of the Beaufort Hunt.
8 I am particularly curious about the striking chapel–stables in *Daniel Deronda* which do not match the stables at Lacock Abbey.

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