

*A Son and His Father: Edmund Gosse's Comments and Portraits, 1875-1910*¹

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How many still recall Francis Gribble's edition of the *Memoirs of Sarah Bernhardt* or the recollections of Lord Wantage, V.C., K.C.B., "By His Wife"? Sir James Graham, Baronet of Netherby's *Life and Letters of Charles S. Parker*, or W.F. Lonergan's *Forty Years of Paris*, D.D. Tulloch's *Life of Tom Morris*, or Thomas Ward's *Rambles of an Australian Naturalist*? Not many outside of the world of the specialist would likely say they are familiar with any of these literary works, all published in England in 1907. Yet many remember and many still read and yet others do write about the "Most Remarkable Publication," the "Very Human Document," "The Literary Sensation" of the year 1907—as Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* was described upon its appearance.²

Literary critic Vivian Gornick has called *Father and Son* an early example of the modern memoir of "becoming." In that sort of work, she says,

Truth [...] is achieved not through a recital of actual events; it is achieved when the reader comes to believe that the writer is working hard to engage with the experience at hand. What happened to the writer is not what matters; what matters is the large sense that the writer is able to *make* of what happened. [...] the shaped presentation of one's own life is of value to the disinterested reader only if it dramatizes and reflects sufficiently on the experience of "becoming."³

Viewed from this standpoint, writes Gornick, *Father and Son* “performs brilliantly.” So it is not surprising that those who share that assessment have scrutinized the book to discern its literary features: Gosse’s use of narrative structure and strategy, theme, metaphor, simile, allusion, symbolism, irony, comedy, parody, drama, myth, and biblical typology; the book’s place within the genres of confessional literature, tragedy, biography, autobiography, the non-fictional novel; and its contribution to the understanding of parent-child relationships, generational and religion-science conflicts, and so forth. This is a substantial body of scholarly literature, and with those tools this work has been illuminated in varying degrees by careful readings of the text. Gornick argues through an analysis of several other memoirs for the value of her insight about the subservient modern role of “a recital of actual events.” Yet we’re talking here about Edmund Gosse,⁴ and it is unwise to ignore his troubling past performance or the perspective of the historian looking for the “actual events.”

The *littérateur* so formidable in his day was long haunted by “the little demon of inaccuracy.”⁵ It made an early appearance in an 1874 article by Gosse on Norway, but it escaped notice because the criticisms of numerous elementary errors of fact for which he was ridiculed were restricted to Norwegian-language publications and corrections made to him privately in a letter.⁶ He was not so fortunate the next time. “There is not a chapter—nay, if we except the Appendices and index, it would be difficult to find five consecutive pages,” wrote the critic Churton Collins in a systematic, detailed, and widely read critique of Gosse’s *From Shakespeare to Pope* in 1886, “which do not swarm with errors and absurdities.”⁷ Collins’ devastating analysis of Gosse’s study struck a blow to his scholarly profile. At Oxford University, “it became a stock saying for anyone who had made a ‘howler’ that ‘he had made a Gosse of himself.’”⁸

There are those who have maintained that to focus on Collins and similar accounts of Gosse is a distraction. Gosse did make a comeback. He was convinced that Cambridge—the university where he was then teaching—stood on his side against Collins and “the vulgarity we have been suffering from.”⁹ In hindsight, others felt he had been “too severely handled

for his inaccuracies, far too much has been made of them."¹⁰ Gosse was even said to have an "addiction to truth-telling"¹¹ and a "love of truth."¹² Long after his death, his "advocacy of truth" was considered "the most admirable of Gosse's several roles in the history of literary biography."¹³ Gosse's assurances to readers of *Father and Son* on this subject must be understood within that context. The author's word is recurring and emphatic. The memoir, we are told, is not just a narrative but a "scrupulously true"¹⁴ one. It's not just "a *document*,"¹⁵ "a record,"¹⁶ but "scrupulously genuine."¹⁷ It's not one of those "fashionable biographies of the present day [that] deserve no other comment than the word 'Lie' printed in bold letters across the title-page,"¹⁸ but a "record" that can have "no value that is not based on its rigorous adhesion to the truth."¹⁹ For any lingering doubters, the author adds this proof: "none [...] have challenged the general accuracy of the record, and many [...] to a striking degree, have confirmed the exactitude of my memory."²⁰ In two previous notes on *Father and Son*,²¹ I raised the issue of accuracy. The purpose was not to reject the literary-interpretive approach but to advance the type of question that needs to be raised about Gosse's writings.²² I here amplify that investigation to include Gosse's other comments on, and portraits of, his youth and his father between 1875-1910. Given his avowal and the critical contribution that the historical record makes to the memoir's powerful impact, can Gosse's claims of accuracy be sustained?

A second issue raised in this paper concerns not facts but sources. The *Life of Philip Henry Gosse* and *Father and Son* are two detailed studies of their subject. Where did Gosse get his material? And—given that his non-documentary knowledge was necessarily restricted to what he actually witnessed or heard from his parents or others—how did he handle the documents at his disposal? This, too, might appear to be an errant question with a straightforward answer. After all, Gosse noted at various times that he had access to the remarkably rich and sizable cache created over the decades by his father (with additions from other family members)—notes, diaries, memoirs, ledgers, journals, published books and articles, unpublished scientific and religious works, original illustrations, even

various natural history objects. Yet nearly a century ago, Gosse's first biographer raised this very issue. As he was dealing with Gosse's early London life, Evan Charteris wrote to Philip H.G. Gosse (Edmund's son):

I have done the first chapter but now am altogether held up—I must try & find some memoirs dealing with London of that period 1864 etc—

Is it quite certain that your father left no sort of notes—or diary—nothing from which he compiled *Father & Son* for instance? I find *Father & Son* differs as to facts very materially from the life of his father—e.g. as to the extent they were in London—I have however adhered to *Father & Son*.²³

Charteris never received the hoped-for answer,²⁴ but that has not stopped others from seeking it. One observer believed that Gosse “seems to have relied on his memory” in writing *Father and Son*,²⁵ an assessment echoed by an early reviewer who found it “astonishing to mark the accuracy of Mr. Gosse's recollections. For my part, I remember nothing that happened to me before I was eight years old.”²⁶ Another scholar wrote that he “must have read his source materials years before, when writing his *Life of Philip Henry Gosse* (1890), then forgotten the facts and used a version of them to enrich *Father and Son*.”²⁷ These speculations are incorrect. When it comes to Edmund's statements about his past, scholars have been generally indulgent on the subject of their accuracy and only mildly interested in his sources. The goal of this investigation is to methodically examine the former and to delve into and reveal, as far as can be known, the latter.

I.

Throughout much of his life Edmund Gosse was fond of recalling his upbringing, speaking about it in interviews he gave and articles he wrote. He also arranged through literary connections to have his father's story told. The two were intertwined. In telling his father's story, he gained status as the son of a prominent person while fulfilling an act of filial piety. In telling his own story, he promoted his literary career. In 1880, he sent critic

Edmund C. Stedman a "brief autobiography" as background for an article Stedman was preparing on London poets for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in New York. "I should like you to understand how much I have had to fight against," Gosse wrote him, "and through how much pain and sorrow I have reached the happiness I now enjoy."²⁸ Ambition fueled these two impulses. Only weeks after having left the parental home to take up his first job in London at the age of 17, Gosse expressed concern about his father's status as an author (likely related to Philip's announcement that he intended to put an end to his publishing career).²⁹ "I appreciate your jealousy for my literary status," Philip replied in an 1867 letter, "but don't make me 'hominum volitare per ora' ['a well-known person'] too much. Let me be known as—'The worthy father of a worthier son.'"³⁰ Gosse returned to the subject a year later, in asking his father to pay to publish a volume of his poems. Philip wrote again:

You say you *trust* you do not crave fame & ask me why I say you do. When have I said so? Yet this I will say; the desire of fame is a most treacherous insinuating temptation, & sure to grow. And if you have it not, then why do you want to publish? If you have *really* no desire "*hominum volitare per ora*," does not the writing of the poems answer every end?³¹

The interconnectedness of Gosse's story with that of his father is evident during his lecture trip to America in 1884-85. The success of the tour and his father's reputation in America are mentioned in surviving letters home from Edmund and his wife Nellie. Wrote Edmund: "[...] it is quite a surprise to me to find how well known I am in this country [...] and it is less of a surprise but no less of a pleasure to find how warmly *you* are admired here."³²

Gosse's earliest in-print autobiographical statements about his youthful years were carried in five newspapers appearing between 1875-90 in Europe and America. From the age of 25 to 41, he became increasingly prominent in the literary world, and from time to time he provided requested information about his life. Since he was the source of the reported remarks,

they were probably not misquoted.³³ The sketch of Gosse in the weekly Norwegian literary paper *Ny Illustreret Tidende* [*New Illustrated Journal*] was, like that in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, derived from his pen.³⁴ Brief comments by him during his 1884 lecture engagement in America were cited by reporters in articles in the *New York Herald* and *Washington Post*, and a largely derivative article by a critic who had met Gosse appeared in 1890. Not one of these articles is free of error. In addition, some distort Gosse's upbringing or include statements contradicted in later works by him. *Ny Illustreret Tidende* (1875) misstates when his mother died and the circumstances that led to Gosse's first job;³⁵ *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (1882) got the year of his father's second marriage wrong and provides contradictory and distorted information about his school experience.³⁶ An interview in the *New York Herald* (1884) claimed his father was 80 years old (when he was actually 74),³⁷ he mistakenly told the *Washington Post* that he was home-schooled,³⁸ and an 1890 syndicated article repeated errors about him derived from another source and added its own distortions.³⁹ Gosse's writings about his father took on a new and more substantial nature following Philip's death on 23 August 1888. Hardly a week had passed before Edmund had written an obituary notice for *The Athenaeum*.⁴⁰ At the same time, he told his stepmother that "I have been asked [...] to write his life for the Dictionary of National Biography, which has now just reached G, & so is only just in time."⁴¹ Leslie Stephen, then the editor of the *Dictionary*, was an acquaintance of Gosse's, as were two others who wrote obituary notices, the Rev. Charles E. Middleton-Wake and J.S. Cotton.⁴² Unlike the quotes and sketches which appeared prior to the death of Gosse's father, these notices and appreciations are researched and detailed. Yet they, too, are error-laden, even the entries in the authoritative *Dictionary of National Biography*.

The Athenaeum notice was, as far as it went, a sound recapitulation of the major achievements of "the most popular literary naturalist" in England during the 1850s. In a double column article of some 1,300 words, however, virtually all of the attention is on Gosse's career in science. Only one sentence is devoted to Philip's religious career, a distortion which

characterizes Edmund's ensuing portraits of his father. Errors appear throughout the piece.⁴³ Subsequently, the 1,900-word sketch in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, which did not appear until mid-1890,⁴⁴ presents essentially the same Philip Gosse as in the *Athenaeum* (Edmund also wrote the *Dictionary of National Biography* entry on his mother, Emily Gosse).⁴⁵ In composing this assessment, Gosse for the first time turned to his father's publications and manuscripts. He cites some of Philip's religiously infused writings, his final religious book, and (in a four-column survey) one sentence on his religious views and none on his religious work. This is mainly a solid professional effort, marred by numerous minor errors.⁴⁶ And having already begun to look at his father's unpublished autobiography, journals, diaries, and other materials, in 1889 Gosse published in *Longman's Magazine* some reminiscences of his father's early schooling in Poole⁴⁷ before producing his first major biography of his father.

II.

In the Preface to his nearly 400-page *Life of Philip Henry Gosse*, which appeared between October and December 1890,⁴⁸ Edmund Gosse referenced as sources his father's unpublished materials (diary, autobiography, scientific journals, letters) and his many publications, explaining to readers that this facilitated his providing a faithful picture of him. Following Gosse's previously noted approach, Philip Gosse's scientific works are analyzed for their literary character and not their scientific content (see, for example, 344-45). A new development in the history of the son's portraits of his father is that Philip Gosse's religious life and work receives a place here (albeit some 20 pages in all). During six decades of his adult years, P.H. Gosse felt it was important not only to document what he did and thought but to preserve those records notwithstanding his extensive travels. In 1900, a dozen years after his death and a month after the death of his second wife, Eliza, a number of his diaries, MSS and books were sold at auction at the Gosses' Sandhurst home.⁴⁹ In the ensuing years Edmund,⁵⁰ followed by his son Philip,⁵¹ and more recently Philip's daughter Jennifer,⁵² have continued the dispersal of the P.H. Gosse

collection. Most of the material that Edmund Gosse preserved appears to have been passed down to his son, and it is mainly thanks to the latter's actions that at least a portion of this cache remains available today in various archives around the world. Some items have serendipitously re-surfaced.⁵³ We know that much of this material may be lost forever, yet what remains is sufficient to provide an insight into Edmund Gosse's work habits in *Life*. In an observation whose significance has passed unnoticed, Gosse provides a hint to readers (intentionally or not) as to how he composed the *Life*. "It is noticeable," he writes,

in dealing with these scientific diaries [of Philip Gosse], that although they were not intended for publication, literary form is never neglected in them. The extreme clearness of observation found its natural expression in perfect lucidity of language. *The consequence was that if, in future years, the naturalist had need to transfer to a manuscript his old notes on any particular species, he could do it almost without revision, and thus save a great deal of labour.* (168-69, emphasis added)

In its first six chapters covering the years 1810-44 (1-179), *Life* is almost entirely a skillfully edited and rewritten version of Philip Gosse's two-volume *Anecdotes and Reminiscences of My Life*, frequently employing his *ipsissima verba*.⁵⁴ Edmund had known about this work from the time his father began it in 1868, and had helped him to verify some details for the second volume.⁵⁵ *Anecdotes and Reminiscences* is the foundation of nearly half of the biography,⁵⁶ supplemented by references to Philip Gosse's printed books, as well as the manuscript material already cited. To a large extent, *Life* is not Edmund Gosse's biography of his father: it is his father's autobiography.

This is Edmund Gosse's method: (1) in recalling Philip's thought processes, present them as the biographer's; (2) change the information or dramatize the moment, as desired; and (3) take large passages from Philip's writings and insert them as if they had come from the biographer's pen. Accuracy is not essential. Examples of the first technique are Edmund's

reflection on Philip Gosse's three-year tenure in Canada, the synopsis and evaluation of it, and the words used. They are presented as Edmund's (*Life* 105) but are all copied from Philip (*Reminiscences* II.216). In detecting "for the first time [...] that peculiar felicity in description" which characterized Philip's writings (*Life* 77), the biographer is presenting as his own the father's words and insight (*Reminiscences* II.186). In reviewing Philip's second thoughts about whether life would have been better had he proceeded to Upper Canada instead of Lower Canada, he is doing the same thing again:

EWG, *Life* (1890), 97:

[...] He was accustomed, long afterwards, to reflect on what he might have done if they had kept to their plans, and struck for the shores of Lake Huron. But bearing in mind the conditions of the experiment, I cannot feel that **the result would have been much better. No doubt the land they could have bought in the northwest would have been far more fertile than at Compton, but it was clothed with heavier timber, which they would have been obliged to fell even before they could build a hut to cover their heads. The labour would have been far more severe, the life even more recluse and savage.**

PHG, *Anecdotes and Reminiscences* II.211 (MS):

[...] Under these considerations, I am inclined to think that we should **not have been really better off in the Huron District. The land, doubtless, was far more fertile there; but then it was clothed with heavier timber, which we should have been compelled to fell, ab initio; even before we could erect a hut to cover our heads. The labour would have been far severer;—the life far more recluse & savage;—**our means even less available.

Examples of Edmund's second literary technique—changing or dramatizing his father's words—can be seen in this brief passage, which illustrates both practices:

EWG, *Life* (1890), 113:

[...] The long solitary years in Canada, however, had set an indelible mark on the face and manners of the naturalist. He found it impossible to join in their gaiety of conversation, and **they asked Lush privately if “Gosse was a minister,” being struck with his fluent** gravity in monologue and lack of capacity for small-talk.

PHG, *Anecdotes and Reminiscences* II.227-28 (MS):

[...] Lush told me that **they asked him if Gosse was a minister, being struck with my fluency of speech** in conversation, their own being somewhat slow,—“that’s a fact!”

Finally, to “save a great deal of labour” we can visualize Edmund Gosse filling out his biography by combining material from two of his father’s MSS resting on the desk before him:

EWG, *Life* (1890), 178-79:

Early in 1844, while he was **chatting one day with his friends in the insect-room** of the **British Museum**, Edward **Doubleday suggested that Philip Gosse would do well as an insect-collector in the tropics. Demerara was originally proposed; then Jamaica, as being less known to naturalists, and, entomologically, absolute virgin ground. The British Museum had almost nothing from Jamaica, nor was anything known of the natural history of the island since the days of Sloane and Browne. Gosse jumped eagerly at the suggested proposal. He had already had some experience in Newfoundland, in Canada, and in Alabama, and the prospect appeared to him delightful in the extreme. He immediately began to prepare. He read up all works which touched upon zoology of the West Indies, made drawings of desiderata, especially of orchids, butterflies,**

and humming-birds, constructed collection-boxes, and gradually bought the necessary materials.

Doubleday introduced him to Hugh Cuming, of Gower Street, as an agent for selling the collection to be made, and this gentleman, himself a successful collector, gave Gosse some useful instructions. [...] In the autumn the elder Mr. and Mrs. Gosse were removed from Kentish Town to a little house at the Oval, Hackney. On October 20, 1844, their son sailed from the Thames on board a vessel bound for Jamaica. Just about the same time two other young naturalists set out on collecting expeditions, Hugh Low for Borneo, and David Dyson for Honduras, both having made like agreements with Cuming to be their sole agent.

PHG, *Anecdotes & Reminiscences* II,260 (MS):

Early in the following year 1844, chatting one day with my friends in the Insect Room, Doubleday suggested that I might do well as an insect-collector in the Tropics. Demerara was proposed; then Jamaica as being yet almost virgin ground. I jumped eagerly at the suggested proposal. I had already had some experience, in Newfoundland, in Canada, & in Alabama; & the prospect appeared delightful.

PHG, Preface, *Jamaica Journal*⁵⁷ (MS):

Early in 1844, having given up my school at Hackney in the previous December, & removed to Kentish Town for residence, I was at the Br. Museum, when Ed. Doubleday said, "Gosse, you would do well as an insect collector in the Tropics." I jumped at the proposal. Demerara was first suggested, & then Jamaica, which I liked better. The Museum had almost nothing from Jamaica, nor was

anything known of the nat. history of the island since the days of Sloane & Browne.

I immediately began to prepare; read up; sketched desiderata (Orchis, Butterflies, Humming-Birds, &c.) made collecting boxes, & gradually bought necessary materials. Doubleday introduced me to Hugh Cuming of Gower St., as an agent for selling my collections, who—himself a successful collector,—gave me some useful instructions. In autumn I removed Mother & Father to Hackney. [...] Just about the same time two other young naturalists set out on collecting expeditions, Hugh Low for Borneo, and David Dyson for Honduras, both having made like agreements with Cuming to be their sale-agent.

Not surprisingly, the image of Philip Gosse in *Life* that endures is that of *The Naturalist of the Sea-shore* (that is the title given to the 1896 edition of *Life*, a re-issue of that book's original sheets). That is the father Edmund Gosse highlighted in his earlier articles about his father, and (as he writes in *Life*) it was the one he found most appealing. In discussing P.H. Gosse's activities on the coast of Devonshire in the late 1850s, he observes:

My father was at his very best on these delightful excursions. His blood was healthily stirred by the exercise, by the eager instinct of the hunt. Extremely serious all the time, with his brow a little knitted, he was nevertheless not at all formidable here, as he so often was at home. His broad face, blanched with emotion [...] had no such terrors for me as it sometimes had when it rose, burdened with prophecy, from the pages of some book of exhortation. The excitement in the former case was one which I could share, and we were happy so long as no stranger intermeddled with our joy. (*Life* 288-89)

Viewed within the context of Victorian biographies, Gosse's *Life* is a typical product. As Michael Millgate has noted,⁵⁸ Gosse had marvellous source

material and he used it. If he frequently did not acknowledge it or departed from its intent in order to achieve a "higher degree of artistic 'truth,'" then he had successfully fulfilled his task. That's why reviewers lauded *Life's* features—the author's literary skill, frankness, and discretion, and his coverage of a life that deserved to be recorded.⁵⁹ There was a price to pay for the Victorians' disregard for accuracy and fidelity to the text. Literary biography in the nineteenth century, observed Richard D. Altick, "combined to suppress, distort, and otherwise render mistaken, inaccurate, or incomplete the record of a life and character as mediated by a biographer from the documentary sources."⁶⁰ Errors of fact, distortion,⁶¹ fictionalized dramatization⁶² and other shortcomings: that's Gosse's *Life of Philip Henry Gosse*.⁶³

III.

After publishing the *Life* of his father in 1890, Edmund Gosse communicated little about his childhood, his youth, or his father. A letter printed in that year defended Philip Gosse's *Omphalos* (1857);⁶⁴ a brief preface to a history of Newfoundland (where his father had once resided) appeared in 1895;⁶⁵ and during a 1901 interview Edmund declared: "No, I will *not* write anything whatever about myself, and I have no autobiography at all."⁶⁶ These pieces were typically unreliable.⁶⁷ Then came his famous memoir. Gosse had turned 58 when *Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments* appeared anonymously in London in October 1907. First-hand witnesses to his upbringing had been fading into the past. His uncle William died in 1893, his stepmother Eliza in 1900, and his aunt Eliza Brightwen (of whom he was fond)⁶⁸ in 1906. In that year he was reminiscing about an early London experience⁶⁹ and his British Museum days.⁷⁰ Everything he had previously written about his upbringing aimed at the factual, even though (as has been shown) that goal was not attained. Now it was his turn to take his unsystematically expressed recollections, fragmentary statements, and personal perspective and interpret them. "We live life forwards," a keen observer has written, "but we understand it backwards."⁷¹

*Father and Son*⁷² roughly covers the years of Gosse's upbringing from 1848-70 (the year before he was born until he turned 20). That means that to be faithful to the past, memory required assistance. As noted, Gosse had before him manuscripts he had previously used in the *Life of Philip Henry Gosse*, which he frequently drew upon again. He also turned to his mother's diaries (FS 9-11, 19)⁷³ and recollections,⁷⁴ "notes" of his father (FS 138),⁷⁵ references to his own early childhood writings,⁷⁶ personal letters (FS Epilogue),⁷⁷ and additional information from works by others (such as his father's *Actinologia Britannica*, 1860, and Anna Shipton's "*Tell Jesus.*" *Recollections of Emily Gosse* (1863). A hitherto unrecognized text is critical: Philip Gosse's *A Memorial of the Last Days on Earth of Emily Gosse* (1857). In 1980, bibliographers of P.H. Gosse traced only five copies of the work; none were added to that total four decades later.⁷⁸ Edmund Gosse knew of the book at least by 1870 and refers to it allusively in *Life*.⁷⁹ In *Father and Son*, he never names the nearly 90-page *Memorial*, yet it serves as the main source for chapters 3-4. There it is quoted, misquoted, and distorted. Passages describing Emily Gosse's distribution of tracts (FS 41), Edmund's reading of prophetic works of Newton and Jukes, the admiration for the poet Toplady by mother and son (FS 44), and his mother's catching cold coming back from Islington (FS 47) are all taken almost verbatim from the book (compare *Memorial*, 14, 42, 47-48, 55). In a technique reminiscent of Gosse's use in *Life* of his father's *Reminiscences*, he set Philip's writing on the desk before him, taking portions of it to bolster his image as an authoritative, knowledgeable narrator:

EWG, *Father and Son* (1907), 50-51:

My Father was in the habit of saying, in later years, that **no small element in his wedded happiness** had been the fact that my Mother and he were **of one mind in the interpretation of Sacred Prophecy**. [...] My recollection distinctly is that when my Mother could endure nothing else, the arguments of this book [Elliott's *Horae Apocalypticæ*] took her thoughts away from her pain and lifted her spirits. Elliott saw "**the queenly arrogance of**

Popery" everywhere, and **believed that the very last days of Babylon the Great** were **come**. Lest I say what may be thought extravagant, let me quote what my Father wrote in his diary at the time of my Mother's death. He said that the thought that Rome was doomed (as seemed not impossible in 1857) so affected my Mother that it **"irradiated her dying hours with an assurance that was like the light of the Morning Star, the harbinger of the rising sun."**

PHG, *Memorial* (1857), 57-58:

It was **no small element in our wedded happiness**, that in very many things we were **of one mind**; and **the interpretation of Sacred Prophecy** was no exception to the category.

It followed, almost as a matter of course, from these persuasions, that she felt a very deep interest in the great work which the Lord is doing among the Papal nations. She **believed that the very last days of Babylon the great** are **come**; and hence, while **the queenly arrogance** and assumption **of Popery** afforded (Rev. xviii.7) one strong ground of presumption that her end is nigh, the mind of my beloved rested on one more delightful and not less conclusive,—that of the out-crowding of many throughout the harlot's domain, from her sins and from her plagues (ver. 4). [...] these [manifestations of work among the Papists] were among the subjects nearest to her heart; they were works for which she counted it joy to contribute her own mite, and to solicit the contributions of others; and they **irradiated her dying hours with the assurance that their light was like that of the Morning Star, the harbinger of the Rising Sun.**

Gosse's use of the *Memorial* and correspondence with his father shed light on one of the key dramatic elements in *Father and Son*: the "Great

Scheme" (FS 187). Here's how Gosse tells it: he is only two months old when, in an unusual ceremony, there is a "solemn dedication" of him "to the Lord" (FS 9-10). The plan—that Edmund should become a minister of the Gospel (FS 22)—is solemnized when he is seven years old in a dramatic scene at his mother's deathbed (FS 52-53). Then, at the age of 10, he undergoes a public baptism (FS, Ch. 8; also 22, 101-2, 141). In due course, the "Great Scheme" leads to an ineluctable breach in the relations between father and son when Edmund is 20.

Here's how the documents Gosse used in composing *Father and Son* portray the Great Scheme. On Sunday, 4 November 1849, just over five weeks after Edmund was born, his mother wrote in her diary:

This day went to the [Brethren's] room for the first time after my confinement. Mr. Balfour prayed for our child, that he may be the Lord's. [...] We have given him to the Lord—& we trust that He will early manifest him to be His own if he grow up.⁸⁰

In *Father and Son*, Edmund misrepresents this single entry in his mother's diary as two separate events, one private, the other public. He calls it the "opening act of that 'dedication' which was never henceforward forgotten," yet acknowledges that "these certain spiritual determinations [...] in their outline, I suppose, [are] vaguely common to many religious mothers" (FS 9). If that is so—and it is so that a religious parent would want their child to be religious—then the characterization of this event as unusual or as a "dedication" is a retrospective explanation made by the adult Edmund Gosse. A two-month-old child would not have had that perspective. Edmund claims in *Father and Son* that his parents wanted him to become a Gospel minister, and whether or not that actually was what he believed,⁸¹ documentary evidence does not exist that they asserted such a requirement. In 1865, after Edmund had turned 16, Philip sought to find him an occupation, in a manner bearing an uncanny resemblance to his own life. It is noteworthy that Philip did not look for missionary or church work for his son but directed him toward a civil service occupation at the British Museum, his very first job. Edmund may not have known that his father also

inquired at the time about a scientific position for him at Kew Gardens.⁸² A letter between the two sheds light on Philip's thinking on this subject. He did desire that Edmund's talents should be "used in the Lord's service,"⁸³ but Edmund apparently misunderstood the intent of those words. He wrote his son in 1868,

If it is service you really want, the Master will do it. But remember, service must be of His choosing, not yours. I think you a little misunderstood Mamma's [Eliza Gosse's] observations. Of course, after we had just sought & obtained a situation for you, in a public office [at the British Museum in London], she was not spurring you to go out as a missionary to the heathen; she alluded to Missions as a sphere of legitimate interest. But there are other ways of serving Christ besides missions & hymn-writing: though I doubt if He would own modern fashionable poetry as one.⁸⁴

The 'dedication to the Lord' and the commitment to become a Gospel minister are followed by the third stage of the Great Scheme, a solemn moment occurring at the deathbed of Edmund's mother in 1857. Comparing texts used by Gosse is critical to understanding this event:

EWG, *Father and Son* (1907), 52-53:

When the very end approached, and her mind was growing clouded, **she** gathered strength together to **say** to my Father, "**I shall walk with Him in white. Won't you take your lamb and walk with me?**" Confused with sorrow and alarm, my Father failed to understand **her meaning**. She became agitated, and **she repeated two or three times: "Take our [sic] lamb,⁸⁵ and walk with me!"** Then my Father comprehended, and pressed me forward; her hand fell softly upon mine and she seemed content. Thus was my dedication, that had begun in my cradle, sealed with the most solemn, the most poignant and irresistible insistence, at the death-bed of the holiest and purest of

women. But what a weight, intolerable as the burden of Atlas, to lay on the shoulders of a little fragile child!

[PHG], "Dying Words of My Emily" [1857] (MS).⁸⁶

After a while **she said, "I shall walk with Him in white. Won't you take your lamb, & walk with me?"** The last sentence **she repeated two or three times**, as she saw that I did not readily catch **her meaning**; but I believe she alluded to Willy [EWG], or else to herself, for "My lamb!" was one of the terms of endearment which I had habitually used to her, especially in these her last sufferings. Her speech was now so thick, that a great deal was unintelligible; only a sentence now & then could be made out.

PHG, *Memorial* (1857), 75-76:

The two maids, who truly loved their mistress, refused to go to bed, and they with me continued to watch for the end. After a while my precious sufferer **said, "I shall walk with Him in white; won't you take your lamb, and walk with me?"** The last sentence **she repeated twice or thrice**, as she saw that I did not readily catch **her meaning**. I believe, however, she alluded to our dear little boy. Her speech was now so thick, that a great deal of what she said was unintelligible; only a sentence now and then could be made out.

It is important to cite the notes that Philip Gosse took of Emily's last moments because they were done in minute detail, constituting almost a tape-recording of those last hours. Captured were the exact words used in their conversations, the reaction of those around her, her steadily failing health.⁸⁷ "I have loved the Lord & his work," Emily tells her husband, and while she is ready to continue it, "I am ready to go, if the Lord so chooses." "*I love you*," she says to him, "better than on my wedding day." Then it is

Monday, 9 February. At approximately 8:30 p.m., Emily begins to experience "paralysis of the tongue." Around 10 p.m., her husband and their two devoted maids are together in the room with her. Her speech is slurred. She sees that Philip has not captured the meaning of one of her statements, so she repeats it "two or three times": "I shall walk with Him in white. Won't you take your lamb, & walk with me?" Finally, Philip appears to grasp her reference to "your lamb" and writes down that it points "to Willy, or else to herself". In the published account, Philip believes the words refer "to our dear little boy." In this heart-wrenching moment captured by a naturalist esteemed throughout his half-century career for minute, accurate, and objective depictions meticulously rendered with pen and brush, there is no mention—as claimed in *Father and Son*—of Emily's mind "growing clouded," of "a little fragile child" being present or "pressed" toward his mother. The words "your lamb" have been changed by Edmund in *Father and Son* to "our lamb". There is no mention of any "dedication." Documents fortify the case that Edmund's account of the deathbed scene is fiction.

Edmund describes the fourth stage of the Great Scheme as his baptism, which he dates to 12 October 1859. It was the "central event of my whole childhood," he wrote in *Father and Son*. "Everything, since the earliest dawn of consciousness, seemed to have been leading up to it. Everything, afterwards, seemed to be leading down and away from it" (FS 131). Surviving documents indicate different interpretations of the event by father and son. In that there is not much surprise, given the difference of opinion among Christians about the meaning of baptism. Writing in 1860, Philip maintained it is a subject "so little understood in the church of God."⁸⁸ Edmund recalls he had just turned 10 years old when he was baptized (his father writes that he was eleven);⁸⁹ Edmund that it was a "remarkable ceremony" (FS,132), which drew people from around the area though it was not unusual for Brethren, and Edmund's baptism did not appear to draw any special notice.⁹⁰ Early in 1873, father and son corresponded about the baptism of four children of Col. Bewes, a member of Philip's St. Marychurch prayer assembly, which had taken place on 25 December. It reminded Edmund of his own experience, and this is what Philip wrote:

I cannot concur with you in your thoughts about baptizing children, nor in your regret that [you] yourself was enabled to confess your union with Christ so young. Of course all depends on the *reality*, the *truth*, of such a confession. If you had *really* accepted Christ as your Saviour then, you were *really* united to Him in His penal death, & in His resurrection; & was it not right to avow this? You speak as if some heavy burden had been laid upon you, to which your youth was unequal; but, assuming that your faith, (though a *child's* faith), was real, your *new life* was real, & the indwelling Holy Ghost in you was real. The public avowal of this,—whatever your after experience,—was, I am sure, a source of strength; not of weakness. You do not, I hope, look on baptism as a vowing or promising to do any thing,—an aspect wholly unwarranted by Holy Scripture:—it is, “An answer,” an avowal, “of a conscience, good toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”—as [I] Peter iii.21, describes it [...] Such was the truth that *you* were taught when, at eleven years old, you were put under water & lifted out; & such was the truth that you, through grace, confessed. Your recent revival confirms my confidence (long indeed wavering) that your confession was no mistake, but a blessed reality; & this being so, I am sure it has never harmed you. May the life then put into your infant heart, shine more & more unto perfect day.⁹¹

In *Father and Son*, the fifth and final stage of the “Grand Scheme” is described in order to allow the reader to follow to its ultimate rupture what Edmund presents as a misguided plan. Set in context, Edmund Gosse writes,

This book is the record of a struggle between two temperaments, two consciences and almost two epochs. It ended, as was inevitable, in disruption. Of the two human

beings here described, one was born to fly backward, the other could not help being carried forward. There came a time when neither spoke the same language as the other, or encompassed the same hopes, or was fortified by the same desires. But, at least, it is some consolation to the survivor, that neither, to the very last hour, ceased to respect the other, or to regard him with a sad indulgence. (FS,5).

The *Father and Son* account chronicles through its various phases how Philip Gosse's relentless hounding of his son over the latter's religious attitude provokes a response. One moment, when the two are in the orchid hot house at the parental home at Sandhurst, Edmund becomes exasperated by his father's incapacity to respect every person's "privilege to fashion his inner life for himself" (FS 227). The son explodes in an hysterical outburst (FS 224). The bond between father and son is severed. Except the documents do not substantiate that this is what happened. Compare:

EWG, *Father and Son* (1907), p. 227:

[Epilogue, quoting a letter from PHG]

"This dreadful conduct of yours I had intended, after much prayer, to pass by in entire silence; but your apparently sincere inquiries after the cause of my sorrow have led me to go to the root of the matter, and I could not stop short of the development contained in this letter."

PHG-EWG, 21 January 1870:

[original letter, CUL Add. 7041,30]

"That dreadful letter of yours I had intended, after much prayer, to pass by in entire silence; but your apparently sincere inquiries after the cause of my sorrow have led me to go to the root of the matter, & I could not stop short of the development contained in that communication."

In other words, Edmund made his declaration not face-to-face but in a *letter* to his father. He did not throw off “once for all the yoke of his ‘dedication,’ and, as respectfully as he could,” take “a human being’s privilege to fashion his inner life for himself,” (*FS* 227) as the last sentence of *Father and Son* memorably asserts.

As has been shown elsewhere,⁹² the final separation between father and son did not come in 1870, when Edmund was 20.⁹³ Surviving correspondence between father and son confirms that it was postponed for two years. After that, letters and visits became less frequent. In August 1875, when Edmund married Nellie Epps in London, neither Philip nor Eliza Gosse attended the wedding of their only son.

The five stages of the Great Scheme have been examined in detail here and set alongside the source documents used by the author. When that is done, the *a posteriori* construction of the narrative, its deliberate distortions and questionable conclusions, are apparent. As has been noted, Gosse expressed a reticence to dwell on his father’s religious life (considered by Victorians to be a personal matter), focusing instead on his career as a naturalist. More attention is devoted to it in *Father and Son*, only to reveal that Edmund’s knowledge in this area was elementary, and deficient when he travelled beyond excerpts from a parental manuscript. Philip Gosse was a keen student of biblical prophecy for over 50 years, and he wrote much on the subject. It was not one iota less important to him than all his efforts as a naturalist. In *Father and Son*, Edmund incorrectly renders the names of prophetic authors and titles of prophetic works,⁹⁴ omits mention of any of his father’s prophetic writings, misrepresents his knowledge of them,⁹⁵ and displays an unfamiliarity with his parents’ prophetic views.⁹⁶ Nothing “was symbolic, nothing allegorical or allusive in any part of Scripture, except what was, in so many words, proffered as a parable or a picture,” Edmund states. “Both of my parents, I think, were devoid of sympathetic imagination; in my Father, I am sure, it was singularly absent. [...] They went [...] to the cultivation of a rigid and iconoclastic literalness” (*FS* 49). Edmund then cites the following example of his parents’ prophetic exegesis, which needs to be set alongside Philip Gosse’s own statement:

EWG, *Father and Son* (1907), 49-50:

This [literalness] was curiously exemplified [...] in what is called "the interpretation of prophecy," [...]. When they read of seals broken and of vials poured forth, of the **star** which was called **Wormwood** that fell from Heaven, and of men whose hair was as the hair of women and their teeth as the teeth of lions, they did not admit for a moment that these vivid mental pictures were of a poetic character, but they regarded them as positive statements, in guarded language, describing events which were to happen, and could be recognised when they did happen.

PHG, *The Rainbow* (1866), 269-270⁹⁷:

[...] are the predictions of the [Book of] Revelation of this simply narrative character? Take the third Trumpet, with its dozen distinct particulars, the fall of the great **star**, named **Wormwood**, to the earth, and its results upon the waters—is it likely that this expresses such a fact as the **simple sense of the words implies?**

[...] When Mr. [Richard] Chester says the seven vials cannot be regarded as **symbols**, has he not written without his usual caution? Here is an angel with a bowl in his hand; the bowl is made of gold; it is full of a fluid, called wrath, which can be poured out; he does pour it out *upon the sun* (let our astronomical readers notice this circumstance); and the result is that the sun (or the angel?) acquires a power of scorching men with (not solar heat, but) fire. I cannot think that my honoured brother really means that there is nothing of **symbol** in all this; that he really expects these conditions to occur some time or other, in the plain simple common sense of the terms.

Edmund's characterization of his parents as prophetic expositors would set them among the Futurists—exactly the opposite school to which they

belonged. They were Historicists, and among the distinctions between the two was that in England from around the mid-1840s (when Philip Gosse first wrote on the subject) literalism in prophetic interpretation was associated with Futurism, not Historicism.⁹⁸

Finally, like all of Gosse's other family portraits, *Father and Son* is replete with factual errors, faulty transcriptions, conflicting accounts, dissimulation, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation.⁹⁹ By the time *Father and Son* was in its fourth impression in 1908, Edmund was telling an interviewer how "greatly surprised" he was to receive letters almost daily from around the world about his depiction of the religious epoch in which he had been raised. There is, Edmund commented, "a great interest [...] in this question of the breaking away from the bondage of the old religious order [...] the passing away of the old formalities and severities of religion."¹⁰⁰ Regardless of Edmund's emergence from his religious upbringing, he did not let that tamp down his behind-the-scenes solicitude for his father's reputation. In 1910 he appears to have arranged for one or two notifications to coincide with the centennial of his father's birth. A newspaper article, based on Edmund's entry on his father in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, appeared under a column headed "Obituary" and "Wills and Bequests" in the London *Times* (retaining some of the errors already cited). It referred to Philip as "perhaps the most popular writer on natural history of his time," and to his "strict and narrow evangelical views."¹⁰¹ At the same time, a program of speakers at the Zoological Society of London recalled the "very high value" of Gosse's contributions to science. Edmund was present at the event.¹⁰²

IV.

Edmund Gosse was the author of numerous literary biographies, and he took his craft seriously. His observations on two autobiographies published after *Father and Son* are worth noting for the harsh words they contain about writers who veer from factual truth. In a 1920 review of works by and about Samuel Butler, Gosse stated that he had no quarrel with that writer's *Way of All Flesh* as long as it was considered "as a story, invented

with the help of recollections which the novelist was at liberty to modify." But Gosse decried the characterization of the work "as a full and true record [...] with nothing changed but the names of the persons," because it was evident that Butler had colored incidents in his life. To Gosse, the *Way of All Flesh* was thus really "a romance founded on recollection."¹⁰³ Similarly, in reviewing Margot Asquith's 1920 *Autobiography*, Gosse made this point: "The standard by which any autobiography must be tested is that of truth. [...] in an invented tale facts may be modified in the interest of entertainment, in autobiography this should never be done. [...] there must be no faintest suspicion that the facts have been tampered with. [...]"¹⁰⁴ Does it matter that in the course of his numerous statements about his youth, Gosse was following Victorian biographical practice even as he condemned it?¹⁰⁵ For the scholar whose sole aim is to appreciate a writer's "gifted and skilled literary hand," perhaps not. For the historian seeking insight into the writer, his subject and his milieu, certainly yes.

In the course of his numerous statements about his youth, Edmund may have been giving expression to what he felt was the truth of a lived experience, even if he knew that such a truth did not extend to factual accuracy and events didn't happen as described. He may have been traumatized by the death of his mother and his ensuing experiences, may have felt trapped by what he later perceived as a Great Scheme and an environment from which he needed ultimately to escape, and may have been crushed by a father who—withstanding the love that the son knew he felt for him—failed a parental responsibility "not to seek to control children" but to maintain a "calibrated distance [...] in which [a] relationship allows each party to grow."¹⁰⁶ Likely he believed that his interpretation of events—the product of "a gifted and skillful literary hand with an acute sense of audience and of dramatic effect"¹⁰⁷—was validated by his masterpiece,¹⁰⁸ an end justifying the means. Be that as it may, there is a remarkable consistency to Edmund Gosse's remarks on, and portraits of, his father and his early years. In varying degrees, every one of his printed recollections of his childhood over a nearly 35-year period—whether appearing in Europe, America, or England, whether consisting of his quoted or composed words,

whether uttered early or late in his literary career—is riddled with error, distortion, contradictions, unwarranted claims, misrepresentation, abuse of the written record, and unfamiliarity with the subject. Why this was so is best left to a more speculative forum. That it is so is undeniable.

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Notes

¹ I would like to thank University of Toronto professors Michael Millgate and R.J. Helmstadter; University of Toronto history PhD candidate Steve Beckow; and my wife Gila for their invaluable comments on the first draft of this paper, which was completed on 7 November 1973. I am likewise grateful to Gila for her helpful suggestions and careful reading of the current revision, which is based upon the findings detailed in the first draft. That initial version was written from the perspective of a married twenty-something graduate student who was about the age of the son portrayed in *Father and Son*; this one is completed as the author is a grandfather older than the father in that work. “Let advanced years declare wise things” (Job xxxii:7).

² “Most remarkable,” *Athenaeum* (16 November 1907), 604; *Spectator* (16 November 1907), 792; “Very Human Document,” *Saturday Review* (23 November 1907), 649; *Spectator* (30 November 1907), 890; “Literary Sensation,” *Spectator* (23 November 1907), 844; and *Athenaeum* (30 November 1907), 677.

³ Vivian Gornick, *The Situation and the Story: The Art of Personal Narrative* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 91, 108, 93-101. Others have expressed a similar view: “[...] autobiography is not absolutely faithful to lived experience but is a process by which the writer creates a significant order to answer his declared needs. [...] Autobiography is concerned with becoming, not being” (Roger J. Porter, *The Double Self: Autobiography and Literary Form in Gibbon, De Quincey, Gosse, and Edwin Muir*. Yale University PhD dissertation, 1967, ii, 9).

⁴ Sometime during 1883-84 Gosse dropped the use of his middle name “William,” preferring “to be known simply as Edmund Gosse” (“News and Notes,” Boston *Literary World*, 27 December 1884, 480; also London *Pall*

Mall Gazette, 13 February 1885, 4. Gosse's middle name appears on the title page of the 1883 edition of his *Seventeenth-Century Studies*, but not in the second edition of 1885. To distinguish him from his mother Emily (EG), the initials "EWG" are used here.

⁵ Review of EWG, *The Life and Letters of John Donne*, *The Athenaeum* (11 November 1899), 645.

⁶ EWG, "The Present Condition of Norway," *Fraser's Magazine* n.s. IX (February 1874), 174-85. For the incident, see Elias Bredsdorff, editor and compiler, *Sir Edmund Gosse's Correspondence with Scandinavian Writers* (Copenhagen: Scandinavian University Books, 1960), 8, 114-20.

⁷ [J. Churton Collins], "English literature at the Universities," *Quarterly Review* 163 (October 1886), 300.

⁸ Evan Charteris, *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1931), 194 [hereafter Charteris].

⁹ EWG-Nellie Gosse [hereafter NG], 31 October 1886 (Cambridge University Library [hereafter CUL], Add. 7020, 121).

¹⁰ Clement Shorter, "Mr. Edmund Gosse—An Impression," *Good Words* 44 (April 1903), 254.

¹¹ St. John Adcock, *The Glory That Was Grub Street* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1928), 71.

¹² William Bellows, *Edmund Gosse* (London: R. Cobden-Sanderson, Ltd., 1929), 10.

¹³ Richard D. Altick, *Lives and Letters* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 245.

¹⁴ [Edmund Gosse], *Father and Son: A Study of Two Temperaments* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), Preface, v.

¹⁵ [anon.], *Father and Son* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), v.

¹⁶ [anon.], *Father and Son* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), 1, 373.

¹⁷ Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son* (London: William Heinemann, 1912), Booklover's edition, Preface, ix.

¹⁸ "The Ethics of Biography," *The Spectator* (5 February 1910), 211 (qtd from a lecture by EWG on the art of biography at the London Institution, 31 January 1910).

¹⁹ [anon.], *Father and Son* (London: William Heinemann, 1907), 317.

²⁰ Cancelled preface to *Father and Son*, dated March 1908 (cited in D. Wertheimer, "Gosse's Corrections to 'Father and Son,' 1907-1928," *Notes and Queries* n.s. XXV, August 1978, 330; hereafter *Corrections*).

²¹ D. Wertheimer, "The Identification of Some Characters and Incidents in Gosse's *Father and Son*," *Notes and Queries* n.s. XXIII (January 1976), 4-11; hereafter *Identification*.

²² Some literary scholars have raised questions about Gosse's reliability as a scholar; none has utilized the corpus of his work as is done here. For earlier doubts, see literary critic Ludwig Lewisohn, who in 1922 said EWG cultivated "a learning so prodigious in mass and inaccurate in detail that his name was always greeted among scholars with something between an obeisance and a grin" (*Transatlantic Dialogue: Selected American Correspondence of Edmund Gosse*, ed. Paul F. Mattheisen and Michael Millgate (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 24; R.H. Super, "A Grain of Truth about Wordsworth and Browning, Landor and Swinburne," *Modern Language Notes* 67 (June 1952), 419-21; William White, "Sir Edmund Gosse on Walt Whitman," *Victorian Studies* I (December 1957), 180-82; George Graham Harper, *A Study of the Prose Works of Sir Edmund Gosse, 1872-1907* (Northwestern University PhD dissertation, 1959); Robert L. Peters, "Edmund Gosse's Two Whitmans," *Walt Whitman Review* XI (March 1965), 19-21; Howard R. Wolf, "British Fathers and Sons, 1773-1913: From Filial Submissiveness to Creativity," *Psychoanalytic Review* LII (Summer 1965), 197-214; William James Gracie Jr., *Father-Son Conflict in Selected Victorian Autobiographies and Autobiographical Novels* (Northwestern University PhD dissertation, 1969) and the same author's "Truth of Form in Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*," *Journal of Narrative Technique* IV (September 1974), 176-87; *Father and Son*, by Edmund Gosse, ed. James Hepburn (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), Introduction; Peter Allen, "Sir Edmund Gosse and his Modern Readers: The Continued Appeal of *Father and Son*," *ELH* 55 (Summer 1988), 487-503; Kathy Rees, "Edmund Gosse Entertains: *Gossip in a Library* (1891)," *Nineteenth-Century Prose* 43, Nos. 1/2 (Spring/Fall 2016),

81. Frederic R. Ross offers a rare and important assessment of EWG's positioning of his father in the history of science in "Philip Gosse's *Omphalos*, Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*, and Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection," *Isis* 68 (March 1977), 85-96.

²³ Evan Charteris-Dr. Philip Henry George Gosse [hereafter PHGG], undated letter, CUL Add. 7032, 45. Charteris may have been referring to the fact that neither the trip to Tenby (18 June-August 1854) nor to Weymouth and Ilfracombe (March-April, July-6 September 1855), are mentioned in *Father and Son* (FS, 33), although they were treated in EWG, *The Life of Philip Henry Gosse F.R.S.* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1890 [hereafter *Life*]), 252-54, 257, 259.

²⁴ Perhaps frustrated at being unable to locate an urtext, Charteris ended up creating documents in his *Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse*. In 1973 I was in the Manuscripts Reading Room at Cambridge University Library when a weekly London newspaper asked the under-Librarian (and later Head) Mr. A.E.B. Owen for a copy of EWG's letter to "My extremely precious Papa" dated 3 June 1858 and printed in Charteris, 7-8. The letter was sought to illustrate a supplement they were doing on children's handwriting. Owen found—as I had already done—that the requested letter did not exist. The document printed in Charteris was a conflation of three separate letters (CUL Add. 7027, 23, 31, 32). I have annotated my copy of Charteris's work with a large number of errors, distortions, and other contradictions which I have detected.

²⁵ Thus, the interpretation of the remark in the Preface that the recollections should be done while "memory is still perfectly vivid" (citing FS 1907, vi; Ross, 88 n. 9).

²⁶ Claudius Clear [W.R. Nicoll], *British Weekly*, 31 October 1993.

²⁷ Ann Thwaite, "Daddy dearest," London *Guardian* (2 November 2002), B37.

²⁸ EWG-E.C. Stedman, 11 February 1880, *Transatlantic Dialogue*, ed. Paul F. Matthiessen and Michael Millgate, *op. cit.*, 74-75.

²⁹ The statement of P.H. Gosse [hereafter PHG] appears at the end of his book *A Year at the Shore* (Douglas L. Wertheimer, *Philip Henry Gosse:*

Science and Revelation in the Crucible. University of Toronto PhD dissertation, 1977, 310; hereafter Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*).

³⁰ PHG-EWG, 18 February 1867 (CUL Add. 7041, 6. Gosse, a good classical student, must have had in mind Virgil's "virum volitare per ora" (*Georgica* 3,9; as cited in C.T. Lewis and C. Short's *Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: 1962 [1879]), 1281. It is possible that PHG may also have thought of the pejorative sense to the phrase "to make a name for ourselves" in Genesis XI:4.

³¹ PHG-EWG, 10 February 1868 (CUL Add. 7041, 11). A month later, PHG wrote: "I appreciate your filial regard to my literary reputation. But how would you have me care for it? I have never sought to write what was not worth the reading, & always do my best" (PHG-EWG, 3 March 1868, CUL Add. 7041, 14).

³² EWG, "My beloved Parents," 12 December 1884; the other letters are EWG-PHG, 7 January 1885 and NG-Eliza Gosse, 12 January 1885 (all three are CUL Add. 7018, 80-82).

³³ EWG's providing Stedman with autobiographical information, as cited, is an example of how we know that the published material came from Gosse and was not likely a misrepresentation of his words. Another instance comes from EWG's diary for his trip to America. In the entry for 18 January 1885 he wrote: "Miss [Jeanette] Gilder [of the *New York Critic*] to interview me with a stenographer" (*Edmund Gosse, America. The Diary of a Visit, Winter 1884-1885*, ed. Robert L. Peters and David G. Halliburton, *English Literature in Transition: 1880-1920*, Special Series, No. 2 (1966), 11-12.

³⁴ K.A. Winter-Hjelm, "Edmund William Gosse," *Christiana* [now Oslo], Norway *Ny Illustreret Tidende* (14 February 1875), 49-50, with illustration of EWG (the article started on the front page). For EWG's sketch and the accompanying letter of 20 January 1875 to editor K.A. Winter-Hjelm, see *Sir Edmund Gosse's Correspondence with Scandinavian Writers*, ed. and compiled Elias Bredsdorff, *op. cit.*, 78-86.

³⁵ *Ny Illustreret Tidende*:
ERRORS OF FACT: EWG claims his family lived in London until 1855

(actually 1857); that his mother EG died in 1855 (actually 1857); and that he went up to London alone in 1867 to assume a position that *he* had obtained (actually PHG had sought a position for EWG and enlisted the help of the Rev. Charles Kingsley: Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 376-78).

CONTRADICTIONS: Here, EWG states "I was brought up to be a naturalist" (*FS*, 22, claims a "minister of the Gospel"); "My childhood was spent mostly in the open air" (compare remarks about his sickly state, *FS*, 83-84, 101, 119, 157, 200-201); EWG "found congenial sports and comrades" at his early schools (contrary to *FS*, 152, 190-91, 193); that Keats's "Endymion" was the spur to his desire to become a poet (not his father, *FS*, 117-18).

³⁶ Edmund C. Stedman, "Some London Poets," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 64 (May 1882), 874-92, esp. 876-78.

ERRORS OF FACT: EWG states (877) that PHG was 40 when EWG was born (he was 39); that Eliza and Philip were married in 1862 (actually 1860); that "he found a cheerful home in the house of some nice old ladies at Tottenham" in 1866, which was actually obtained by PHG (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 378).

DISTORTIONS: EWG said "his peculiar education made it difficult to pass an easy examination, but he got through": At Thorn Park (1863-66) EWG had studied French, Latin, and continued with Greek and German; EWG was told in 1865 in applying for a position at the British Museum that a familiarity with modern European languages would be helpful, so for nine months he "was put through a rigorous programme, acquiring an elementary knowledge of Italian, Hebrew, Danish, and Swedish, and progressing in Latin, Greek, German, and French" (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 378, 375).

³⁷ "An English Poet's Arrival. Edmund W. Gosse, Son of the Eminent Naturalist—Why He Comes Here," *New York Herald* (30 November 1884), 10 (reprinted in *Boston Herald*, 1 December 1884, 4). EWG was interviewed by the *Herald* and *New York Times* upon his arrival (see *Edmund Gosse, America. The Diary of a Visit, Winter 1884-1885*, entry for 29 November 1884, 1). *The New York Times* interview contained most of the same information as in the *Herald* and likely misquoted him in stating

when PHG had been in Newfoundland, Canada and Jamaica (“Arrival of an English Poet,” *The New York Times*, 30 November 1884, 2).

³⁸ “Original and Otherwise,” *Washington Post* (25 December 1884), 2: “Mr. Edmund Gosse, the English poet and essayist now lecturing in this country, is not a college bred man; neither did he ever attend school, his education being obtained wholly at home, under his mother’s supervision.” On EWG’s schooling, see *Identification*, 5-8.

³⁹ Louise Chandler Moulton, “Edmund Gosse. The Story of a Self-Educated Man—A Personal Sketch of the Noted Writer and Poet,” *Fort Worth, Texas Gazette* (25 May 1890), 11, which was reprinted in the *Boston Author II* (15 June 1890), 86-89. Though unacknowledged, Moulton based her piece upon the *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* article by Stedman.

ERRORS OF FACT: *Madrigals, Songs and Sonnets* came out in December 1870, not the summer (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 441); EWG maintains that “on the very day of his marriage” he received “an unsolicited appointment as translator to the board of trade.” EWG learned of the offer on 4 August (Charteris 75); he learned the offer was confirmed on 11 August (Charteris 77); he got married on 13 August. Concerning the Board of Trade job, EWG sought Kingsley’s help for one job and was looking for another, then he got the one as Translator (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 467).

DISTORTIONS: EWG’s school education was from 1860-66 (*Identification*, 5-8) yet is incorrectly described as “not of long duration”; EWG “eagerly studied the continental languages” while working at the British Museum, something he had actually done previously (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 378, 375); EWG’s *Madrigals, Songs and Sonnets* was written with J.A. Blaikie but not “prepared and brought out” by them. PHG investigated the cost of printing the book, offered to manage its commercial and artistic aspects, to correct the proofs and to pay half of the production expenses (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 432).

⁴⁰ [E.W. Gosse], “Mr. Philip Henry Gosse, F.R.S.,” *The Athenaeum* (1 September 1888), 294-95 (I am grateful to Marion Fleischer, of London *New Statesman*, for confirmation of this identification). In 1871, Gosse was on the regular staff of *The Athenaeum* (see CUL Add. 7041, 47).

Douglas Wertheimer, "Edmund Gosse, Comments and Portraits, 1875-1910"

⁴¹ EWG-NG, 31 August 1888 (CUL Add. 7021, 83; and see 89, 90).

⁴² Gosse had known Stephen (1832-1904) at least since 1874 (Charteris 64-65). For his friendship with Middleton-Wake (1828-1915), whom Gosse identifies (CUL Add. 7021, 89) as the author of the obituary for PHG in the *Saturday Review*, Vol. 66 (1 September 1888), 263-64; see for example "The Book of Gosse", Vol. I (CUL Add. 7034), 13 February 1886, 14 August 1887, and CUL Add. 7021, 56. For James Sutherland Cotton (1847-1918), whom Gosse thought (CUL Add. 7021, 83) was the author of the obituary for PHG in *The Academy* (Vol. 34, 1 September 1888, 140-41) see Diderik Roll-Hansen, *The Academy 1869-1879* (Copenhagen: Rosenkildt and Bagger, Anglistica VIII, 1957), 210 n. 14. Cotton was the editor of that publication from 1881-96.

⁴³ *Athenaeum*:

ERRORS OF FACT: *The Ocean* appeared in 1845 not 1846; *Introduction to Zoology* in 1844 not 1848; *Illustrations of the Birds of Jamaica* in 1849 not 1851; *A Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica* in 1851 not 1852; PHG contributed two articles to the *Proceedings* and two to the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, not 60 (see R.B. Freeman and Douglas Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse: A Bibliography*. Folkestone, Kent: Dawson Publishing, 1980, index; hereafter Freeman & Wertheimer).

INCORRECT TITLES: "Popular Ornithology" should be *Popular British Ornithology*; PHG published no such monograph with the title "The Prehensile Armature of the Papilionidae" (see note below concerning the *Dictionary of National Biography*).

⁴⁴ E[dmund] G[osse], "Gosse, Philip Henry," *Dictionary of National Biography* XXII (1890), 258-60. The earliest reviews of this I have seen date from July 1890 (*The London Quarterly Review*, Vol. 74, 369-71, and *The Spectator* (12 July), 60).

⁴⁵ James D. Woolf, an early EWG biographer, mistakenly characterizes EWG's *Dictionary of National Biography* accounts of his parents as "excellent" (J.D. Woolf, *Sir Edmund Gosse: A Biographical and Interpretive Study*. Vanderbilt University PhD dissertation (1953), 1, n. 1). The 200-word notice E[dmund] G[osse], "Gosse, Emily," *Dictionary of*

National Biography XXII (1890), 258, displays the following deficiencies: ERRORS OF FACT: Emily was born on 10 November 1806 not the 9th; she died on 10 February 1857, not the 9th; her mother was the daughter of an Englishman, and her parents “on both sides” were therefore not “of old New England families,” Robert Boyd, *Emily Gosse: A Life of Faith and Works* (Inverness: Olivet Books, 2004), Chapter 2 and 22 n. 12); Anna Shipton’s *Tell Jesus* appeared not in 1858 but 1863 (R. B. Freeman and Douglas Wertheimer, “Emily Gosse: A Bibliography,” *Brethren Historical Review* 17 (2021), forthcoming).

⁴⁶ *Dictionary of National Biography*:

ERRORS OF FACT: *Romance of Natural History*, “Second Series,” appeared in 1861 not 1862; *Year at the Shore* in 1865 not 1864; *Mysteries of God* in 1884 not 1887; *Wanderings through the Conservatories at Kew* in 1856 not 1857; *Memoir of Emily Gosse* should be *Memorial of Emily Gosse*; *Popular Ornithology of Britain* should be *Popular British Ornithology*; *The Antiquities of Assyria* should be simply *Assyria*; the supposed article on “The Prehensile Armature of the Papilionidae” (also cited in *The Athenaeum*) is confused or conflated with an article with a similar title that appeared in the *Transactions of the Linnean Society* ser. 2, II (April 1883), “On the clasping organs ancillary to generation in certain groups of the Lepidoptera” or with the preliminary sketch of this entitled “The Prehensores of Male Butterflies of the Genera *Ornithoptera* and *Papilio*,” *Proc. of the Royal Society* 33 (17 November 1881); *The Aquarium* had six, not five, color plates; PHG did not publish “about sixty-two” separate papers in the *Transactions of the Royal Society*, but two, nor was his earliest contribution to it “Notes on an Electric Centipede,” which appeared in the *Zoologist* Vol. I (1843), 160; nor did any but the first two of the five listed papers on the rotifera appear in Royal Society publications (these three were published in the *Popular Science Review*, Vol. I, 1862); the preservation of marine animals in artificial circumstances was not then (1854) considered “impossible” (see footnote below on the *Life of Philip Henry Gosse*); PHG was not “recommended by the authorities of the British Museum to undertake the collecting of undescribed birds and insects in the tropics,” he

went on his own responsibility (copy of a letter of PHG-W.W. Saunders, 8 August 1846 in the MS notebook *The Testimony of Prophecy* in the possession of Geoffrey Barrow, of Bromley, Kent), though with the encouragement of some of the Natural History Museum's employees; PHG's book *Life in its Lower, Intermediate, and Higher Forms* (1857), originally serialized in *Excelsior* I-VI, (December 1853-November 1856) was favorably received (it ran to five English and two more American "editions") but had nothing to do with evolution; PHG's "professional career as an author" did not end in 1865 (after that year he published six pamphlets on prophecy and one book of religious expositions; wrote 104 entries for a Bible dictionary; assisted in the publication of a famous three-volume work on rotifera; and published 70 articles in various journals; see Freeman & Wertheimer, *passim*).

⁴⁷ PHG, "A Country Day-School Seventy Years Ago," *Longman's Magazine* XIII (March 1889), 512-34. In a headnote to the article, EWG refers to "the following pages" having been found among "the unpublished papers" of his father. It has been pointed out (D. Wertheimer, "Some Hardy Notes on Dorset Words and Customs," *Notes and Queries* n.s. XXI, January 1974, 26) that it is uncertain whether this was a separate memoir or an edited version of PHG's *Anecdotes & Reminiscences of My Life* I [1868-69], 142-235 (CUL Add. 7016); hereafter *Reminiscences*.

⁴⁸ EWG, *The Life of Philip Henry Gosse F.R.S.* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd., 1890, hereafter *Life*); Freeman & Wertheimer, 132.

⁴⁹ See *Torquay Directory* (14 November 1900), 4; *Torquay Times* (16 November 1900), 4; and the *Western Times* (16 November 1900), 1; and *Catalogue of Furniture and Effects, Valuable Books, and Orchids [belonging to PHG]. Sandhurst, Torquay Road, St. Marychurch*. Torquay: Directory Office, 1900. Among the items sold were drawings of sea life, butterflies, orchids, birds (*Catalogue* items 628, 632), insects (291-93), drawings and paintings, rotifera, infusoria, orchids, insects, *Testimony of Prophecy*, notes on prophecy, "Discourses" (443-56), and "seven MS books, various" (458).

⁵⁰ EWG gave *Referenda for Jamaica* to E. Ray Lankester in 1915 (now at the Smithsonian Institution); in 1923 he gave unpublished natural history studies to his cousin, James Gosse, of Adelaide, Australia (“Sir Edmund Gosse at Home. An Adelaide Kinsman’s Memories,” *Adelaide, South Australia Register*, 26 May 1928, 4); “many years” prior to 1931, EWG gave his *Tristram Jones. Fragment of an Autobiographical Romance* (undated MS, c. 1872) to Norman Gullick, who returned it to PHGG (N. Gullick-PHGG, 5 April 1931, CUL Add. 7032, 96). The MS is currently at Cambridge (CUL Add. 2768, 15).

⁵¹ PHGG is the source of most of the donated papers of his grandfather, PHG: Cambridge University (mainly between 1941-51); University of Leeds (1950s); Jamaica (*Voyage to and Residence in Jamaica* to Jamaica Institute, Kingston, 1939); Canada (*Entomologia Terrae Novae* to National Museum of Canada, 1952).

⁵² For example, Jennifer Gosse donated *Entomologia Alabamensis* to the British Library in 2007.

⁵³ For example, two MSS came from the London antiquarian book dealer Quaritch’s: Geoffrey Barrow found *Testimony of Prophecy* there in 1962, and took it before it was thrown away; R.B. Freeman was given PHG’s *Infusoria*. [Vol.] 4 in 1975 as a gift from John Collins, who purchased it there in the early 1960s; H.F.V. Johnstone, of Poole, Dorset, purchased PHG’s *Correspondence Book* [hereafter *Correspondence Book*] “many years” prior to 1973 for a few shillings (all personal knowledge).

⁵⁴ In a useful transcription and annotation of the Newfoundland portion of *Reminiscences*, Ronald Rompkey notes that “passages” from it appear in *Life* (R. Rompkey, “Philip Henry Gosse’s account of his years in Newfoundland, 1827-35,” *Newfoundland Studies* 6, (1990), 210-66). Since Rompkey’s interest was not in how EWG used the material, he does not carry the observation any further. In noting that “Certain other interesting phrases [in the MS of the work] struck out by Gosse have been retained” (212, 265 n. 21), he does not note that it was EWG who marked the passages.

⁵⁵ See the letters of PHG-EWG: 8 May 1868 (CUL Add. 7041, 21), 9 June 1869 (CUL Add. 7041, 27) and 21 November 1874 (CUL Add. 7018,

63; the help which Edmund was then providing with information on Jamaica is excluded from the imperfect version of this letter as printed in *Charteris* 70-71).

⁵⁶ *Life* and *Reminiscences* correspond precisely in presenting the chronological episodes in PHG's early career. *Life* Chapter I corresponds to *Reminiscences* I, 1-372 (all of the volume); II equals II, 1-91; III equals II, 92-204; IV equals II, 206-22; V equals II, 223-35; VI equals II, 236-60 (end of volume and autobiography). Anyone who looks at the manuscript of the autobiography today will also find occasionally long passages that must have been marked off by Edmund as of special interest; some of them, such as the long section quoted in *Reminiscences* II (71-90), appear in a bowdlerized version in *Life* (this one, on 53-60).

⁵⁷ PHG, *A Voyage to and Residence in Jamaica: from 1844 to 1846* (Institute of Jamaica, Kingston).

⁵⁸ Michael Millgate-D. Wertheimer, *in litt.*

⁵⁹ See the following reviews of *Life*: *The Times* (4 December 1890), 13; [John Dennis, as identified for me by C.A. Seaton of] *The Spectator* 65 (20 December 1890), 905-6; *Saturday Review* 71 (3 January 1891), 17-18; *Speaker* III (10 January 1891), 50-51; *Literary World* (16 January 1891), 53-54; *John Bull* (17 January 1891), 36; Samuel Waddington, *Academy* 39 (24 January 1891), 82-83; *London Quarterly Review* n.s. 16 (April 1891), 15-35; [F. Jeffrey Bell, as identified for me by Marion Fleischer, of the London *New Statesman*], *Athenaeum* (18 April 1891), 508-9; E.P. W[right?], *Nature* 43 (30 April 1891), 603-6; F.M.H., *Sunday at Home* 38 (2 May 1891), 426-29; Carrie M. Derick, *Canadian Record of Science* IV (July 1891), 358-69; and Mrs. Andrew Crosse, *Temple Bar* 93 (December 1891), 477-93.

⁶⁰ Richard D. Altick, *Lives and Letters*, 228.

⁶¹ My own heavily annotated copy of the *Life* contains errors of these types which I have uncovered, from which I select a few examples here: MISREPRESENTATION: EWG's claim that PHG's Canadian farm partner, Ann Jaques, "found it almost intolerably irksome" to be solely responsible for household management, is the exact opposite of what PHG wrote

(*Reminiscences* II, 208). An on-going example is EWG's consistent censorship of PHG's negative view of Roman Catholicism. *Life*, 34, line 10 from the bottom, should read "his best, when undebased by Popery" (this has been crossed out in the MS, *Reminiscences* II, 19); *Life*, 38, line 4 from the top, which is an unacknowledged quote, should read "The Popish chapel" instead of "the Roman Catholic chapel," and six lines down, "Catholic chapel" should be "Popish chapel" (see *Reminiscences* II, 31); and *Life*, 43, line 19 from the top, should read "the Papist Irish as a class," and the line immediately preceding the beginning of this quote (which gives an entirely different color to the whole) is: "It was not exactly Irishmen, but Papists, that really constituted the anti-English party in Newfoundland; & whose rancour & insolence was soon to grow, under priestly teaching, to formidable dimensions." (*Reminiscences* II, 43).

⁶² DRAMATIZATION: The meeting between publisher John Van Voorst and PHG (*Life* 157) resulting in the publication of PHG's *Canadian Naturalist* is not as described in *Reminiscences* II, 244; the squirrel episode in Alabama (*Life* 133) exaggerates PHG's account in *Letters from Alabama* (1859), 129-30; the appearance of Wombwell's traveling menagerie (*Life* 22-23) goes beyond the story in *Reminiscences* I, 291.

⁶³ ERRORS OF FACT: There is a copy of *Life* (1890) in the Family Collection in which there are 27 minor corrections of facts, misprints, and a few added phrases that have been made in Edmund's holograph. None of these were incorporated in *Life* or are included here. Carbonear in 1827 was not then the third largest city in Newfoundland (*Life* 33), nor does PHG state that it was (it was in fact the sixth; see *Carbonear Star and Conception Bay Mercury*, (1 May 1833), 71; PHG's brother Tom stayed at Compton four (*Reminiscences* II, 212) not six months (*Life* 102); PHG was connected with Brethren after his return from Jamaica (*Life* 213, 378), as the investigative note by Robert Boyd convincingly shows ("Philip Henry Gosse, 1810-1888," *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Broadsheet* No. 2 [March-April, 1969], 4-5); the description of the origin of the Plymouth Brethren (*Life* 213) is without merit (see Tim Grass, *Gathering to His Name. The Story of Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland* (Milton Keynes, England:

Paternoster, 2006), 9-48, H.H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren*, 1967, 37, 111, and F. Roy Coad, *A History of the Brethren Movement*, 1968, 166); the idea of the aquarium (*Life* 235) was hardly new, as PHG himself noted in *The Aquarium* (1854), 4-13; though only two of the 16 reviews of the *Birds of Jamaica* (1847) that I've seen note the absence of illustrations in the book, neither complains about it (*Life* 212); nor did any of the 29 reviewers of the *Devonshire Coast* (1853) refuse to believe that the sea-anemones depicted there were real (*Life* 340); "Oehlenschläger" (*Life* 30: Adam Oehlenschläger was one of EWG's favorite Danish authors) should read "Oehlschlager" (*Reminiscences* II, 2, PHG was not referring to the same person); the titles of the following books are incorrectly rendered in *Life*: *Rambles of a Naturalist on the Devonshire Coast* (*Life* 241, 245, 261) and *A Year at the Shore* (*Life* 341); the Linnean Society is repeatedly misspelled; the quote claimed to be from PHG's journal (*Life* 199) is really from *A Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica*, 303-4: compare the MS journal *Voyage to and Residence in Jamaica: from 1844 to 1846* (Institute of Jamaica, Kingston), entry for 11 March 1846, 47b, which is *not* what is here; and a supposed letter of 1878 (*Life* 325) cites PHG's *Mysteries of God*, which was not published until 1884.

DISTORTION: PHG was forced to leave boarding school at the age of 15 because he was expelled (*Reminiscences* I, 287-90), not due to the expense (*Life* 23); the article which PHG "composed" for the *Youth's Magazine* (*Life* 28) should read "copied" (*Reminiscences* I, 314-15); PHG was let go prematurely from his position at Garland's at the end of 1826 and was replaced by Garland's nephew (*Reminiscences* I, 338), the job did not come "to a natural close" (*Life* 29); PHG did not go to Drury Lane because of "some literary reminiscence" (*Life* 155), but because it was recommended to him by a local preacher for its cheap lodging (*Reminiscences* II, 243); the supposed quote in *Life* 54-55 is a misrepresentation of the original (*Reminiscences* II, 74-75), as is the one from the *Canadian Naturalist* on p. 111 (see 141, and for the error in the *Life* 241-42 citation from the *Devonshire Coast* see that book, 151-52); the quote from the obituary of the Royal Society (*Life* 348) should read PHG was "one who did more than

almost any of his scientific contemporaries to popularise the study of natural objects" (Vol. 44, xxvii-viii) not "more than all"; of 93 statements acknowledged to be quotes that I have checked against the originals, only three (*Life* 186, 203, 272) were transcribed without error. Many contain small mistakes, but others include deliberate changes, apparently to "improve" the literary style of his father (generally speaking, PHG preferred long, his son short, sentences); "My father used to say" (*Life* 67) should be "write" (see *Canadian Naturalist* 41); "In his diary" should read "MS autobiography" (*Reminiscences* II, 228).

UNACKNOWLEDGED 'BORROWINGS': There are too many instances of this to describe here. Samples include Chapter 5, which draws throughout on *Letters from Alabama*, and Chapter 7, from *Naturalist's Sojourn in Jamaica*. Some other instances have already been cited.

⁶⁴ EWG, "The Late Mr. P.H. Gosse and Geology," *Spectator* (25 October 1890), 559.

⁶⁵ D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial, and Foreign Records*, with a Preface by Edmund Gosse (London: Macmillan and Co., 1895), ix-xi. Preface dated London, March 1895.

⁶⁶ "T.A.C.," "About Myself. Not by Edmund Gosse," *Candid Friend*, 22 June 1901, 297-98.

⁶⁷ EWG's *Spectator* letter was an able defense of *Omphalos*, though he misstated the "disappointment and annoyance" that the book caused its author (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 254). The preface to Prowse's *Newfoundland* contains a minor misstatement: it is incorrect that soon after PHG left Newfoundland in 1835 "the other members of my family [who were in Newfoundland] also returned" (x). See Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 91; PHG, *Reminiscences* II, 96, 212-13. The *Candid Friend* repeats a number of misstatements previously made by EWG, although it is not known if he was the one who provided that information to the interviewer.

ERRORS OF FACT (all from p. 297): EWG did not face "the Metropolis alone and almost penniless at the tender age of seventeen"; PHG's "cherished dream" was not to "see his offspring a successful Nonconformist minister, and to die happy after sitting on the steps of the pulpit when that offspring

had concluded his first sermon" (see PHG-EWG, 1 February 1868, CUL Add. 7041, 9; 21 January 1870, CUL Add. 7041, 30); EWG was not appointed Translator to the Board of Trade and "got married that very day"; EWG was 21 not 20 when *Madrigals, Songs, and Sonnets* was published in 1870; EWG's first article on Ibsen (the first time the Norwegian's name appeared in England) was published in *The Spectator* in 1872, not 1871.

⁶⁸ EWG-Austin Dobson, 4 May 1906 (University of Leeds, Brotherton Collection [hereafter LeBL]). EWG wrote the entry for Eliza Brightwen in the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the introduction and epilogue to *Eliza Brightwen. The Life and Thoughts of a Naturalist*, ed. W.H. Chesson (1909).

⁶⁹ EWG refers to his brief work in London with T.J. Barnardo, the missionary to children, "When I first came up to town, in 1868" (the year was 1866) in EWG-Charteris, 29 September 1905 (Charteris 294).

⁷⁰ EWG recalled his days as an Assistant Transcriber at the British Museum in a London lecture ("The British Museum Forty Years Ago. Mr. Gosse's Reminiscences," London *Daily Graphic*, 11 October 1906, 10; *The Academy*, 20 October 1906, 387).

⁷¹ Jonathan Sacks, *Covenant & Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible. Genesis* (New Milford, CT: Maggid Books, 2009), 347.

⁷² Unless otherwise indicated, references in the footnotes in this paper are to William Irvine's edition of *Father and Son* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), cited as *FS*. Irvine claims to have used the 1907 first impression of the book, but he silently corrected several misprints. The following page numbers for each chapter of the Irvine edition are given to facilitate reference to other editions of *Father and Son*. Chapter I = pp. 5-14; II = 15-38; III = 39-53; IV = 54-71; V = 72-87; VI = 88-102; VII = 103-18; VIII = 119-35; IX = 136-53; X = 154-69; XI = 170-86; XII = 187-210, and Epilogue = 211-27.

⁷³ EG's *Diary for 1849* (with subsequent additions for 1851, 1854-55), and her *Diary for 1854* (covering 1 January-27 April) are at LeBL. EWG refers to the former diary as "a little locked volume, seen until now, nearly sixty years later, by no eye save her own" (*FS* 10, 40). A diary entry under

10 November 1855 is cited in PHG's *Memorial* (1857), 1-2, making that not more than 50 (not 60) years before it was last seen.

⁷⁴ EG, *Recollections of the Earlier Life of Emily Bowes, to the year 1835* (CUL Add. 7035, II). The notebook is untitled and undated; the title given here is the one assigned to the work in PHG's holograph.

⁷⁵ PHG's notes about members of the Brethren assembly in St. Marychurch are at the West Yorkshire Archives, Leeds (Symington Collection, Box 7, c. 1860-70). EWG read the notes to George Moore (Moore-EWG, 15 November 1905) and lent what Moore called the "little biographies" to him in February 1906. Moore urged EWG not to use them in what became *Father and Son* (Charles Burkhart, *The Letters of George Moore to Edmund Gosse*, W.B. Yeats, R.I. Best, Miss Nancy Cunard, and Mrs. Mary Hutchinson. University of Maryland PhD dissertation, 1958, 58-60). See also Charteris 305-7.

⁷⁶ For example, "Edmund William Gosse FRS," *History of the British Sea Anemones and Corals* (2 Vols., n.d.) (LeBL); similar volumes are at Cambridge and in the Family Collection.

⁷⁷ Only 50 of the letters exchanged between EWG and PHG from 1867-68 have been traced (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 383 n. 61).

⁷⁸ Freeman & Wertheimer, 59; R.B. Freeman and Douglas Wertheimer, "Emily Gosse: A Bibliography," *Brethren Historical Review* 17 (2021), forthcoming. Excerpts from the book, focusing on EG's breast cancer, were made by Frank Ellis, "Cancer: A Memoir," *Areté*, No. 7 (Winter 2001), 69-87.

⁷⁹ PHG-EWG, 20 June 1870 (CUL Add. 7041, 38); *Life* 270.

⁸⁰ Both quotations are found in EG, *Diary for 1849*, entry for 4 November 1849, and both are misquoted by EWG. EG wrote "prayed for us & for our child" (not "prayed for our child"), and "early manifest him to be His own" (not "really manifest him to be His own"). There are also other transcription errors.

⁸¹ The autobiographical sketch he had written for *Ny Illustreret Tidende* in 1875 claimed he was raised to be a naturalist (see note 35, above).

⁸² PHG-J.D. Hooker, 1 & 8 November 1865 (Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, London, *English Letters* LXXXVII, 71, 75); Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 376-77.

⁸³ PHG-Thomas Edgelow, 20 January 1863 (CUL Add. 7018, 39, this is a copy of the letter).

⁸⁴ PHG-EWG, 1 February 1868 (CUL Add. 7041, 9).

⁸⁵ "I much regret that Mr. Edmund Gosse did not publish his own autobiography in his father's life-time: there are several points, theological as well as scientific, which I should have liked to see cleared up, notably the question about the 'lamb' in the first Mrs. Gosse's last words to her distracted husband" (A.R. Hunt, "Mr. P.H. Gosse and Mr. Edmund Gosse," *Torquay Directory and South Devon Journal*, 15 July 1908, 6). Hunt knew PHG for more than 30 years.

⁸⁶ [PHG], "Dying Words of My Emily" [c. 10 February 1857] (CUL Adv. c.82.5, 53), unsigned but in PHG's holograph, consists of a single leaf folded in half to make 4 pages, filled with notes made in the days before, and the day of, EG's death. Nearly all of the notes re-appear in *Memorial*.

⁸⁷ The recounting is in "Dying Words of My Emily," *op. cit.*

⁸⁸ PHG, "[Explanation of the phrase] 'Were saved by Water.'—I Peter iii.20," *Bible-Reader's Journal* No. 19 (1 July 1860), 430. PHG remained consistent about his views on the subject: "To ascribe to the mere performance of the [baptism] rite upon the body, a spiritual change of the most stupendous character, in the person so treated, is not only without any real support from Scripture, but quite contrary to all its teachings" (PHG, *The Mysteries of God* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1884), 72).

⁸⁹ PHG-EWG, 6 January 1873 (CUL Add. 7041, 56). It's possible that PHG meant in his eleventh year (see Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 405 n. 17).

⁹⁰ The uniqueness of EWG's child baptism is exaggerated in *FS*, 124-27. Three daughters of PHG's Brethren friend Henry W. Soltau (1805-75) were baptized at the ages of 10, 11, and 12 (Mildred Cable and Francesca French, *A Woman who Laughed. Henrietta Soltau Who Laughed at Impossibilities and Cried: "It Shall Be Done."* (London: China Inland Mission, 1934), 38. In modern times, young people were believed to be suitable for baptism by the age of 14, according to Patricia Beer, who grew up in a Brethren household and was herself baptized at the age of 12 (Patricia Beer, *Mrs. Beer's House* (London: Macmillan, 1968), 141-45). Absence of

evidence is not evidence of absence, but EWG's baptism (though claimed to have attracted people from the Torquay area) is not mentioned in the *Torquay Directory* for 1859 or 1860.

⁹¹ PHG-EWG, 6 January 1873 (CUL Add. 7041, 56). Edmund's letters have not survived.

⁹² Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 425, 453-62.

⁹³ Following PHG's letter cited (and changed) at the end of *FS*, EWG refers to himself as "an honest young man" of "twenty-one years" (*FS*, 227). The letter was written on 21 January 1870, making him 20 years old.

⁹⁴ William Lincoln's *Javelin of Phineas* (*FS*, 171) should be *Phinehas*; EWG says he "early read aloud" to his parents prophetic works of Andrew John Jukes (1815-1901), and incorrectly claims that "each of my parents was inordinately fond" of his writings (*FS*, 21). EWG cites Jukes' *On the Apocalypse* (*FS*, 171), whose title in later editions he changed to *On the Pentateuch*, but Jukes published no work with either title (see *Corrections*, 331).

⁹⁵ EWG claims to quote directly from Edward B. Elliott's well-known *Horae Apocalypticæ* (1844 and later editions) in *FS*, 50, when he is actually quoting from PHG's *Memorial*, 57.

⁹⁶ *FS*, 208-9, misunderstands PHG's "any moment" expectation (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 361 n. 55).

⁹⁷ PHG, "Futurist Principles Examined," London *Rainbow* III (1 June 1866), 268-71.

⁹⁸ Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism. British and American Millenarianism 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 103-12, esp. 39; Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 337-38, 359 n. 36-37. EG shared her husband's adherence to the views of E.B. Elliott (see PHG, *Memorial*, 56-57; Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 147 n. 23).

⁹⁹ Nothing short of an annotated edition of *Father and Son* could include all relevant examples. The following selection is from my own heavily annotated copy of *FS*.

FACTUAL ERRORS: The supposed accession of money that occurred during an attack of nervous dyspepsia on PHG in EWG's third year [1851-52],

couldn't have occurred at the same time, as they received the money in July 1850 (*Life* 225) and the dyspepsia occurred in December 1851 (*Life* 233, and *Naturalist's Rambles on the Devonshire Coast* [1853], 1-2); EG was not a governess in Ireland (*FS*, 15), but Berkshire and then Brighton (CUL Adv. c.82.5, 25), nor did she help both brothers through college (*FS*, 16), but only Edmund Elford Bowes (*Life* 16, and *Identification* 10); the dual disaster which struck the Gosses in 1856—first a bad investment in a Cornish mine, then the loss of an annuity—did not happen then (*Identification*, 10). The former took place in 1854, when they lost money on Castle Dinas (tin; not Wheal Maria—see CUL Adv. c.82.5, 47, and *The Mining Journal* (1853) 756-57, 811; and (1854), 288, 375, 427, 587, 596, 632, 739, and the latter, if it was the annuity given EG by Jonathan Elford Bowes, had ceased in 1823 (CUL Add. 7035/II, 7035/XIII/ 20); EWG's account of *Omphalos* is mistaken and fictionalized in virtually every aspect (Wertheimer, *P.H. Gosse*, 245-66, 503, and Frederic R. Ross, "Philip Gosse's *Omphalos*," *op. cit.*, 85-96); EWG could not have seen Holman Hunt's *Finding of the Saviour in the Temple* in Torquay sometime between 1860-62 (*FS*, 166), because it was not shown until 1865 (*Identification*, 10).

CONFLICTING ACCOUNTS: *FS*, 7, states PHG was originally a Wesleyan, but *Life* 367, and *Reminiscences* I, 12-13, 16-21 note he was an Independent; EG did not dislike teaching (*FS*, 15), but referred to it as "the greatest pleasure of my life" (CUL Add. 7035/II, p. [26], and Anna Shipton, *Tell Jesus* (1911 ed.), 92; PHG did not find it irksome (*FS*, 94) to visit his congregants (*Life* 358, and CUL Add. 7018, 29); EWG had met other children before he was 10 (CUL Adv. c.82.5, 34), contrary to what he says (*FS*, 111); EWG complains of the "torment of a postal inquisition" from his father (*FS*, 211), but in 1868 he wrote his father that "your letters are like angel visits to me, and that if you should out of the overflowing of your heart give me a long epistle, it will be the better taste of the 'all too-precious you'" (CUL Add. 7027, 77; see also CUL Add. 7018, 3). Moreover, after examining PHG's *Correspondence Book*, I have calculated that for every year between 1869-75 EWG wrote his father more letters than he received back (319 to 232); the version of EWG's walk with the Scripture reader (*FS*, 47-48) is far more dramatic than EWG

had described it to his daughter Tessa in 1883, where he incorrectly dates it to 1855 instead of 1856 (EWG-Tessa Gosse, 13 September 1883, CUL Add. 7035/VIII, 3); the fact that EWG disliked accompanying Mary Grace Burmington on visitations to the poor (*FS*, 95) diverges from his 1873 statement that “I am very happy, as you know, in the society of labourers and poor tough people” (EWG-W.B. Scott, 26 February 1873, LeBL); EWG’s assertion he was unable to describe anything new (*FS*, 121), is contrary to his discovery of a new sea-anemone (*FS*, 101 misdates the discovery to 29 June 1859, which should be 1858; see PHG, *Actinologia Britannica* (1860), 137); EWG’s statement that PHG had “yearned and waited for a son” (*FS*, 188) contradicts the claim that “the advent of a child was not welcomed” (*FS*, 8). DISSIMULATION, MISREPRESENTATION AND UNACKNOWLEDGED ‘BORROWINGS’: “Long afterwards, my Father told me” (*FS*, 8) should note that this account is taken from EG’s *Diary for 1849*; when EWG says “I am not sure [...] I am not positive” whether the Clifton cousin nursed his mother (*FS*, 55), he does not acknowledge that *Memorial* 59-60 states quite clearly that she did; if the “old paper I have been copying shows tears shed upon it more than forty years ago” (*FS*, 213) there were no traces of tear stains to this researcher on that document (PHG-EWG, 25 October 1867, CUL Add. 7041, 8); when EWG speaks of how his mother used to repeat the last lines of a poem (*FS*, 45) he has simply copied what Anna Shipton stated in 1863 in *Tell Jesus* (1911 ed.), 86; the quote from PHG about the Papal Dominions (*FS*, 67) is taken from *Memorial*, 58; additional examples of misrepresentation can be found in EWG’s use of PHG’s notes on members of the St. Marychurch Brethren assembly (West Yorkshire Archives, Leeds, Symington Collection, as cited).

FAULTY TRANSCRIPTIONS: Errors of this type occur in *FS*, 19 (compare CUL Add. 7035/II [16-17]); 63 (compare *Memorial*, 72-3); 171 (*Javelin of Phineas* should be *Phinehas*); 213 (compare CUL Add. 7041, 8); 218 (compare CUL Add. 7041, 26); 10-11 (*Diary of Emily Gosse*, LeBL); 61 (compare *Memorial*, 76); 225-27 (compare CUL Add. 7041, 30).

¹⁰⁰ *Great Thoughts from Master Minds* (London) ser. 6, IV (4 April 1908), qtd “Father and Son. The Need for Discipline,” Hobart, Tasmania

(Australia) *Mercury* (4 September 1908), 3. I have been unable to trace a copy of the original article. In the article, the interviewer states on the basis of what EWG told him, that "Not only was 'Father and Son' [initially] published without a name, but its author would not even allow the publisher to issue any preliminary announcement as to its appearance." This is of dubious accuracy. Prior to the book's publication, Heinemann's New York representative wrote that though it is "to be published anonymously [...] the name of the author is to leak out at once" (*Corrections*, 329). Every one of the London reviews of *Father and Son* in the first month of its 1907 publication explicitly identified the work as written by EWG (*Daily Telegraph*, 25 October, 12; *Daily Mail*, 26 October, 3; *Westminster Gazette*, 26 October, 4; and Claudius Clear [W.R. Nicoll], *British Weekly*, 31 October, 93).

¹⁰¹ [anon.], "Centenary of P.H. Gosse," *London Times* (6 April 1910), section 2, 13. There is a clipping of this article at Cambridge on which EWG has written at the bottom, "Richard Garnett" (CUL Adv. c.82.5, 85). Garnett, who was friendly with EWG at the British Museum, died in 1906.

¹⁰² "Societies. Zoological," *The Athenaeum* (7 May 1910), 558. It seems likely that EWG initiated the event.

¹⁰³ Edmund Gosse, "Samuel Butler," *Edinburgh Review* 231, January 1920, 52.

¹⁰⁴ Edmund Gosse, "Autobiography and Mrs. Asquith," *Books on the Table* (London: William Heinemann, 1921), 122.

¹⁰⁵ In an inscrutable remark, Gosse wrote that he did not consider *Father and Son* "an autobiography" (*Father and Son*, 1907, 313).

¹⁰⁶ Jonathan Sacks, *Judaism's Life-Changing Ideas* (New Milford, CT: Maggid Books, 2020), 19.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Millgate-D. Wertheimer, *in litt.*

¹⁰⁸ During the past decade, a "Five Best" column by different writers in *The Wall Street Journal* has several times singled out *Father and Son*, exemplifying the book's continued appeal. In "Masterpiece: His Father, the Believer," Dan Hofstadter called it "the finest Edwardian literary response to those puzzling Victorians [...] a model of how one generation may

compassionately reconsider its immediate forebears” (27 October 2012, C13). Other columns have noted its portrayal of father-son relationships: “Five Best: Alexander Waugh on books that capture the complexities of father-son relationships,” 12 June 2008, W8; “Five Best: Erica Wagner on memoirs of fathers by their sons,” 22 July 2017, C10; family trouble (“Five Best Books on Family Trouble: Claire Tomalin,” 24 November 2018, C12); and as a childhood memoir (“Five Best Memoirs of Childhood: Laura Marcus,” 16 February 2019, C8).

