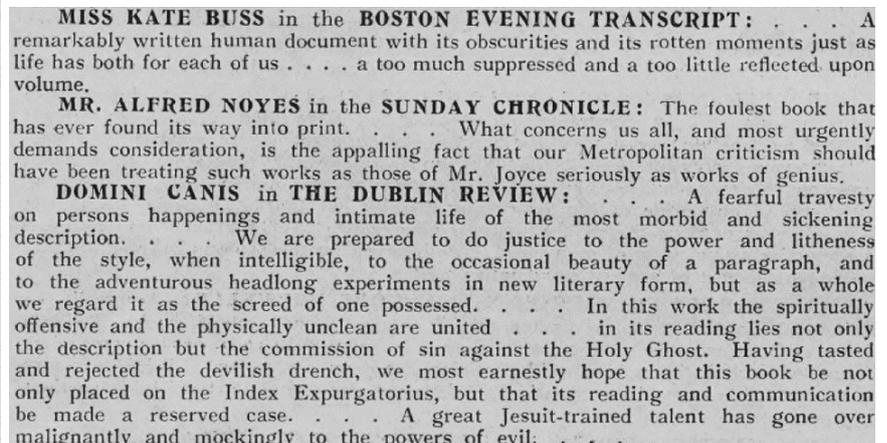
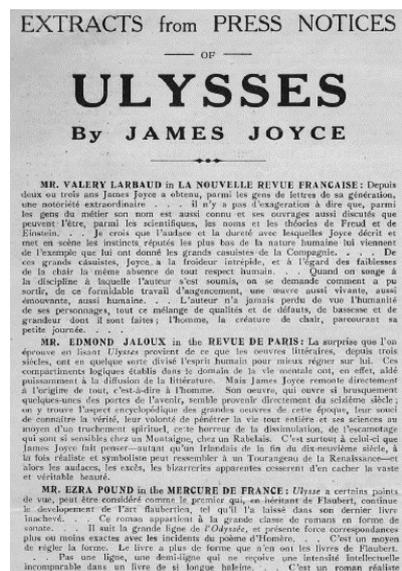


Press Cuttings: From “Noise about Joyce” to “Tress Clippings”

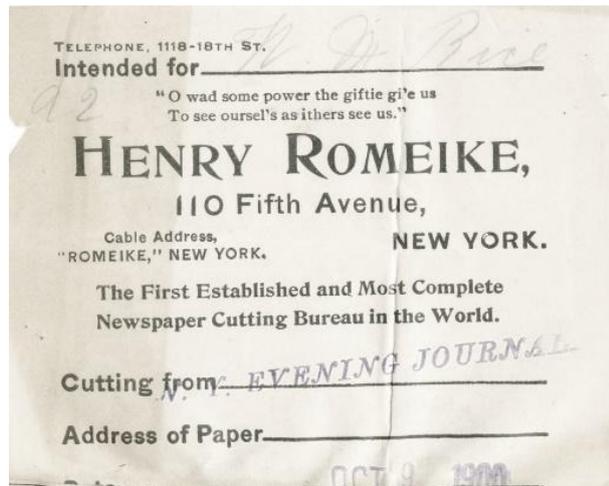
William S. Brockman
Pennsylvania State University

On 10 November 1922 James Joyce wrote to his Aunt Josephine, “Send me any news you like, programmes, pawntickets, press cuttings, handbills. I like reading them” (*SL* 294). Joyce was fascinated with newspapers both as self-promotion and as elements in his fiction. The newspaper industry pervades *Ulysses* and hovers in the background of Joyce’s other works. Mention of newspapers appears many dozens of times throughout his correspondence. He collected, exchanged, and distributed press cuttings – articles clipped from newspapers – for all of his adult life. Clippings preserved in the National Library of Ireland show the diversity of his interests.¹ They include reviews of his works and of books about him, items reporting on his precarious eyesight, and reports of the jail sentence of his literary agent Eric Pinker for theft. The most extensive evidence of Joyce’s fascination with clippings is in the University at Buffalo Joyce collection, so far undescribed except for a locally held catalog but reportedly including thousands of items collected by Joyce.²

Joyce arranged for publication of collections of excerpts of reviews – frequently negative – in leaflets dedicated to the promotion of *Dubliners*, *A Portrait*, and *Ulysses*.³ Reacting to the *Dublin Review*’s scathing criticism of *Ulysses* by Shane Leslie under the pen name of “Domini Canis” (“A fearful travesty on persons happenings and intimate life of the most morbid and sickening description”) he wrote to Harriet Shaw Weaver in November 1922, “I leave you to make your choice from his article which is having the effect I foresaw. It is the best thing he could have done for the book to give it prestige in England. The fact that it is adverse, in my opinion will not count [...]. I have also received the press-cuttings which might be called ‘Noise about Joyce’. I do not think that Mr Noyes has read the book but you can take a few sentences from his article in the *Sunday Chronicle* [“the foulest book that has ever found its way into print”] to add to the press extracts” (*Letters I* 192).



Newspaper clipping services originated in the late nineteenth century and by the twentieth century were well established. The industry's most prominent name was that of Henry Romeike, who opened an agency in Paris in the early 1880s and then moved to London where he established a press cutting agency with Edward Curtice, Sr. He moved to the United States in 1887 where his firm became a great success, a model for similar enterprises.⁴ The clipping agencies fed the vanity of artists and politicians seeking to track public opinion through sightings of their names in the papers. The procedure was to identify a name or topic, to search through issues of many newspaper titles for any mention, and then to supply the articles to paying customers. The output of these agencies was impressive. In a 1922 article Georges Romeike (son of Henry) wrote that his firm covered some 1,500 newspapers every day, employing between thirty and fifty readers.⁵ These readers – primarily women – had to memorize several



thousand names and subjects of interest to subscribers. They would mark relevant articles, which were then cut out by other employees wielding shears. Articles were identified as to date and source, attached to a slip bearing the name of the cutting agency, and mailed to the subscribers on a frequent or sometimes even daily basis. Subscribers would be charged by the quantity of clippings. Romeike's corporate slogan from Robert Burns's "To a Louse" printed on the firm's slips – "O wad some power the giftie gi'e us | To see oursel's as ithers see us" – echoes in a way that Joyce must have appreciated in Bloom's "see ourselves as others see us." (U 8.662)

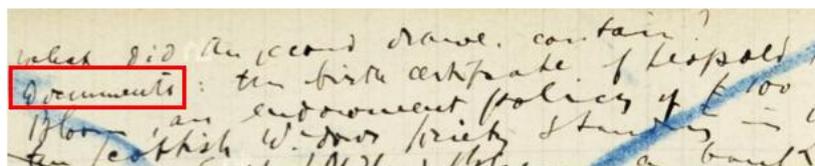
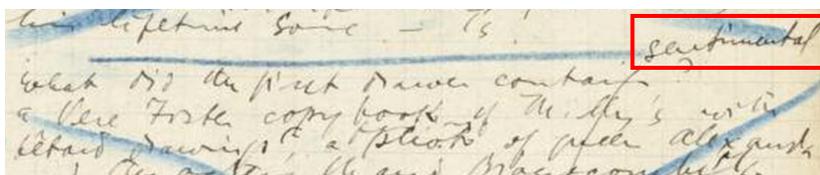
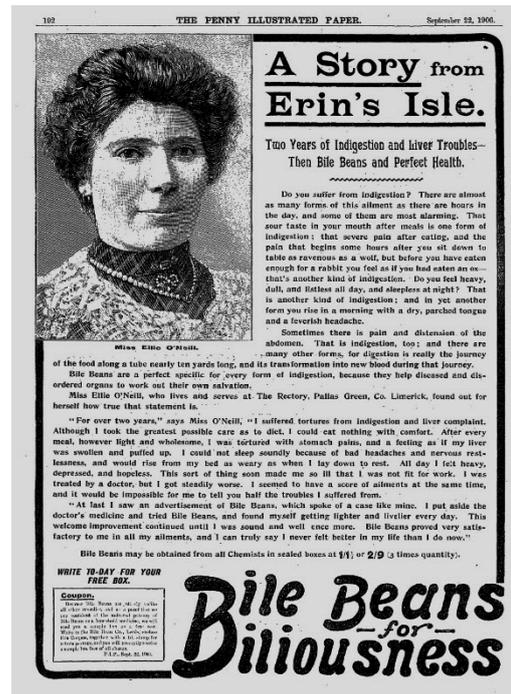
Di un poeta irlandese a Trieste
 Sul prof. James Joyce, che durante la guerra ha scritto romanzi e drammi, celebrati da tutta la critica europea, così ci scrive un suo ammiratore:
 Giovedì scorso fu rappresentato allo «Schauspielhaus» di Monaco un nuovo lavoro, gli «Exiles», scritto a Trieste, da un giovane scrittore irlandese, che fu qualche anno fa una delle figure più note e popolari a Trieste: il prof. James Joyce. Abitavano tra noi i due fratelli Joyce, diversi nel fisico, nell'indole, nel passo, due maestri di inglese ambi due, cioè il professore della Scuola Revoltella o l'«habitué» del Caffè agli specchi. Da alcun tempo la stampa inglese, francese, americana, spagnola, olandese, greca, cinese, pubblica critiche lusinghiere dei lavori del James maggiore, ne

Dopo quattr'anni che non s'aveva alcuna notizia del prof. Joyce, appena rimpatriato, giunge la novella del successo di questo lavoro che la stampa confronta coi capolavori del teatro di Ibsen e di Shaw. E questo lavoro fu scritto a Trieste. Appena scoppiata la guerra, l'autore riparò a Zurigo, nella Svizzera neutrale che fu asilo di tutti gli spiriti non requisiti dai Governi a celebrare la guerra.
 Ci auguriamo di sentire quanto prima quest'opera del Joyce sui nostri teatri, e in prima linea a Trieste, dove fu meditata e finita....
 Distribuzione di viveri ai maestri. Soltanto alle 20 si farà la distribu-

Joyce's interest in news of himself is apparent in his fascination with a clipping now held in the Harriet Weaver Papers at the British Library that he sent to Weaver on 26 August 1919 and identified as "from a Trieste paper which a friend of mine has sent me." (Letters II 449–50)⁶ Written in Italian by Oscar Schwarz, an English language student of Joyce's (though published anonymously), the substantial article hyperbolically praises Joyce the artist who, it claims, has written novels and dramas celebrated throughout Europe. In fact at this point he had published a

single novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and a play, *Exiles*, which had recently been performed in Munich but barely noticed and was closed after the first performance. Schwarz writes appreciatively of Joyce's humor, style of teaching, memorization of poetry, command of Italian, sharing of new poems and notes. He portrays the two Joyce brothers, James and Stanislaus, as familiar figures in the city but distinct from each other in stature and pace. A reader of the article – perhaps Joyce, though the handwriting is difficult to identify, underlined “nel passo” with a reference to a handwritten note in Italian describing Stanislaus's distinctive walk as being well known; as Joyce wrote to Weaver, “nicknamed in Trieste ‘omo salta’ (the man on springs) on account of his walk.”⁷ Schwarz notes Joyce's exile in Zurich, the city being an asylum to all the souls not called by the governments to celebrate the war. Joyce, avoiding British conscription, underlined these last words and wrote “bene!” next to them. Clearly this article impressed him.

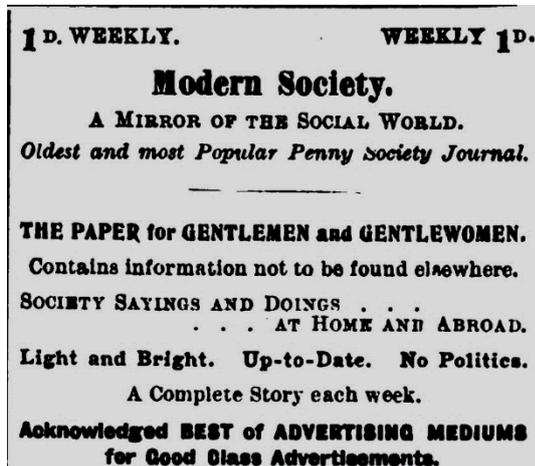
A newspaper clipping forms part of the opening scene of “A Painful Case” in the description of the contents of Duffy's desk. In the desk is “a little sheaf of papers held together by a brass pin. In these sheets a sentence was inscribed from time to time and, in an ironical moment, the headline of an advertisement for *Bile Beans* had been pasted on to the first sheet” (D 108). *Bile Beans* was a widely advertised trade name for an herbal concoction popular in the early twentieth century touted as a cure for indigestion and “biliousness” – ailments that would have been likely to afflict the dour James Duffy.⁸ Was the inclusion of the advertisement an “ironical moment” in Duffy's reflection on his own character or, as has been suggested, a correspondence with the “ordered Aristotelian view he tries to impose on the world”?⁹ For the purposes of the present essay, the question is moot; the appearance of the advertisement is significant in the simple appearance of the clipping at an early stage in Joyce's writing and in its bracketing of the story between the introduction of Duffy and the climax when he reads of Emily Sinico's death in a newspaper account.



The three clippings enumerated and described in the “Ithaca” episode of *Ulysses* show the variety of uses to which they can be put. All three are contained in a table in the Blooms' front room in two drawers whose contents are minutely enumerated. Two

are located in the first drawer, “unlocked”, and the third is in the second drawer. Joyce had a firm concept of the nature of these drawers' contents from early on in the composition of the episode. The draft in the “Ithaca” manuscript notebook, though in many places divergent from the sequence and content of the episode's final version, gives the drawers' contents in a

manner remarkably like the final result.¹⁰ Two notations are particularly revealing. At the top of the handwritten list of the first drawer's contents is written the word "sentimental". The term parallels the designation "documents" which begins the list of the second drawer's contents. "Documents" survived into the published work (*U* 17.1855), but "sentimental" was dropped. These terms were the author's notes to himself, categorizing at the outset the distinct nature of at least part of each drawer's items.



The first clipping, "from an English weekly periodical *Modern Society*, subject corporal chastisement in girls' schools," (*U* 17.1801 – 3) could be seen from several perspectives. Extensive debates occurred throughout the early twentieth century British press regarding juvenile punishment – a topic that Bloom in his role as reformer would have been attentive to. As "a mirror of the social world," as the periodical advertised itself, it would have been likely to have published such an article. The clipping recalls the brutality of corporal punishment in the British navy as parodied in "Cyclops" (*U* 12.1333 – 59). Recalling the presence of Milly in the drawer's

other objects (such as her "epistle" (*U* 17.1792), it brings the issue home in a personal way to Bloom's fifteen year old daughter. But the clipping could take on a completely different cast in the context of the two erotic photocards in the drawer (*U* 17.1809). It could remind the reader of "The Honourable Mrs Mervyn Talboys" in "Circe" who asserted that Bloom sent her one of the erotic photographs featuring the señorita "practicing illicit intercourse" with the torero, and whom Bloom "implored" "to chastise him as he richly deserves" (*U* 15.1067 – 72).

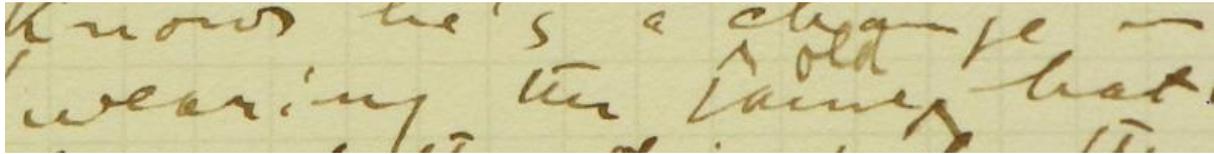
The second clipping, "a press cutting of recipe for renovation of old tan boots" (*U* 17.1813 – 14), is an item of interest to Bloom, who thinks earlier in the day "Mulch of dung. Best thing to clean ladies' kid gloves. Dirty cleans" (*U* 4.481), not to mention the dozens of other practical ideas that pop into his mind during the course of the day. This is the kind of everyday advice that filled many newspaper pages of the time. It fits in with numerous other instances of Bloom's wisdom as when "renovation" comes up earlier in "Ithaca":

For what reason did he meditate on schemes so difficult of realisation?

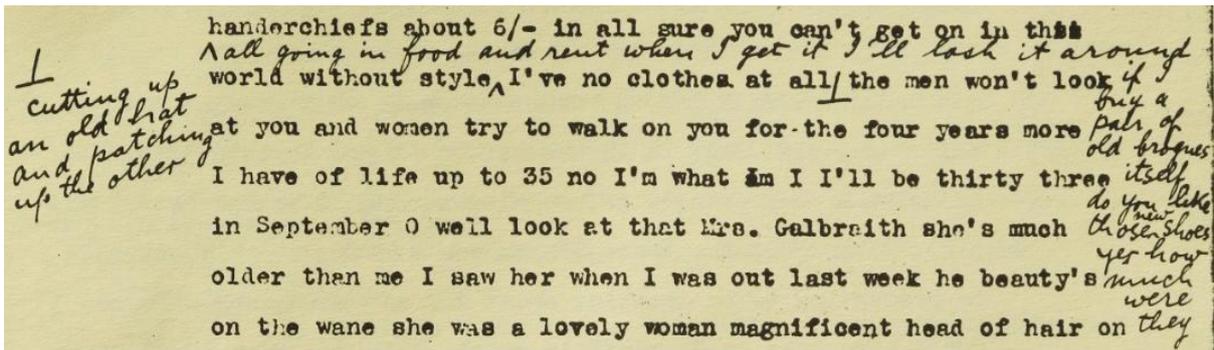
It was one of his axioms that similar meditations or the automatic relation to himself of a narrative concerning himself or tranquil recollection of the past when practised habitually before retiring for the night alleviated fatigue and produced as a result sound repose and renovated vitality. (*U* 17.1754–58).

This "renovated vitality" has a particular irony in the light of Blazes Boylan's signature "tan shoes" (*U* 8.1168; 10.307; 10.1241; 11.337; 11.761). Of course, "Nausicaa's" Tommy Caffrey also wears tan shoes (*U* 13.77) which his sister is concerned might suffer if he urinates carelessly. In the Rosenbach manuscript "tan boots" appears immediately following the crossed out word "hats."¹¹ Old hats were on Joyce's mind when he was composing and revising "Ithaca" and "Penelope" in the summer and early fall of 1921. Molly thinks of Bloom "God knows hes a change in a way not to be always and ever wearing the same old

hat” (U 18.83–84). In the Rosenbach manuscript Joyce had written “same hat” but in revising it added “old” above the line.¹² Later, wishing that she had newer clothing, Molly



thinks “whats that for any woman cutting up this old hat and patching up the other” (U 18.471 – 72). Joyce added the phrase to the typescript (as “an old hat” but revised on the placards to “this old hat” (JJA 16.313). As slang for something that is old fashioned or outmoded, “old hats” would have been appropriate as the subject of the “recipe for renovation,” but perhaps Joyce found the reference to Boylan to be more important.



The third clipping, a “local press cutting concerning change of name by deedpoll” (U 17.1866 – 67), is in some ways the most prosaic of the three, as “Ithaca” provides the text of the cutting, which follows the formulaic pattern of other similar notices of the period. A “deed poll” was a common way to accomplish a name change at the time, and was often documented by a classified advertisement in a newspaper. Virag’s name change has already been reported in “Cyclops” by Martin Cunningham (U 12.1640). Quoting the text of the classified ad in “Ithaca” presents the statement as a performative act by Bloom’s father and also preserves Virag’s words in a way that recalls the gramophone recording of “poor old greatgrandfather” that Bloom imagines in “Hades” (U 6.964). This item encapsulates the dual roles of clippings, in this case firstly as news and a transformative event, and secondly as an archival document, its function having been changed into nostalgia. In Bloom’s drawer, it coexists with several other items related to his father that launch Bloom into several pages of “reminiscences” (U 17.1887) and “remorse” (U 17.1893) and then into his consideration of departure from 7 Eccles Street (U 17.1958).

"DUBLINERS."

DUBLINERS (Grant Richards, 3s. 6d.) is a collection of short stories, the scene of which is laid in Dublin. Too comprehensive for the theme, the title is nevertheless typical of a book which purports, we assume, to describe life as it is and yet regards it from one aspect only. The author, Mr. James Joyce, is not concerned with all Dubliners, but almost exclusively with those of them who would be submerged if the tide of material difficulties were to rise a little higher. It is not so much money they lack as the adaptability which attains some measure of success by accepting the world as it is. It is in so far that they are failures that his characters interest Mr. Joyce. One of them—a capable washerwoman—falls an easy prey to a rogue in a tramcar and is covered out of the little present she was taking to her family. Another—a trusted cashier—has so ordered a blameless life that he drives to drink and suicide the only person in the world with whom he was in sympathy. A third—an amiable man of letters—learns at the moment he feels most drawn to his wife that her heart was given once and for all to a boy long dead.

"Dubliners" may be recommended to the large class of readers to whom the drab makes an appeal, for it is admirably written. Mr. Joyce avoids exaggeration. He leaves the conviction that his people are as he describes them. Shunning the emphatic, Mr. Joyce is less concerned with the episode than with the mood which it suggests. Perhaps for this reason he is more successful with his shorter stories. When he writes at greater length the issue seems trivial, and the connecting thread becomes so tenuous as to be scarcely perceptible. The reader's difficulty will be enhanced if he is ignorant of Dublin customs; if he does not know, for instance, that "a curate" is a man who brings strong waters.

News clippings are not as prominent in *Finnegans Wake* as in *Ulysses*, but they and bits of press notices do appear in the text as floating documentary objects lost from their original context but used anew. Think of the numerous items "persianly literated" (FW 183.10) in Shem's house, "tress clippings from right, left and cintrum" (FW 183.29). This appears immediately following the "garters" of a list of a variety of women, hinting at a female association. Joyce maintained that the long tresses of Livia Svevo (wife of his friend Italo Svevo) were an inspiration for the *Wake*'s Anna Livia Plurabelle (JJ II 561). Just as Joyce had gathered positive, middling, and negative reviews of *Ulysses* in the *Extracts*, Shem is equally open to all varieties of "clippings." Joyce must have saved for years a cutting of the *Times Literary Supplement*'s review of *Dubliners* which notes that "the reader's difficulty will be enhanced if he is ignorant of Dublin customs; if he does not know, for instance, that 'a curate' is a man who brings strong waters".¹³ In the *Wake* this becomes part of a logical proposition: "Let a prostitute be whoso stands before a door and winks or parks herself in the fornix near a makeussin wall (sinsin! sinsin!) and the curate one who brings strong waters (gingin! gingin!)" (FW 116.16 – 19). Reference in

the *Extracts of Press Notices of Ulysses* of the *Sporting Times*'s attack on *Ulysses* ("enough to make a Hottentot sick") appears in book 1, episode 7 of the *Wake* in Justus's condemnation of Mercius: "Is it not the fact (gainsay me, cake-eater!) that, while whistlewhirling your crazy elegies around Templetomblount joyntstone, (let him pass, pleasegood-jesusalem, in a bundle of straw, he was balbettised after hay-making) you squandered among underlings the overload of your extravagance and made a hottentot of dulpeners crawsick with your crumbs?" (FW 192.33 – 193.3).

THE SPORTING TIMES (THE "PINK'UN"): The main contents of the book are enough to make a Hottentot sick . . . not alone sordidly pornographic, but it is intensely dull.

Clippings take on a historical significance from the moment they are extracted from their page of origin. They are not news, but the recirculated and repurposed extractions from the news which live on as history or evidence or commentary in a way that the news, aiming to be up to date, does not. The context in which the news stories originally appeared is lost in clippings, but is largely irrelevant as the clippings take on their own independent meanings defined by the contexts of letters or of the fictional texts that they inhabit. For Joyce they are scraps from real life, part of the flotsam of historical and topographical fact that underpins the fiction.

¹ “Newsclippings Arranged in Chronological Order”, *The James Joyce – Paul Léon Papers in the National Library of Ireland: A Catalogue*, ed. Catherine Fahy (Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1992), 232.

² Luca Crispi, “ReCollecting Joyce at Buffalo: Revising and Completing the Catalog”, in *Genitricksling Joyce*, eds. Sam Slote and Wim Van Mierlo, European Joyce Studies 9 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 15–16. Dirk Van Hulle makes extensive use of the Buffalo collection to “give an impression of the immediate reception of ‘Work in Progress’ in the press”; *James Joyce’s ‘Work in Progress’: Pre-Book Publications of Finnegans Wake Fragments* (London: Routledge, 2016): 9.

³ *Extracts from Press Notices and Reviews of Dubliners* (London: Grant Richards, 1914); *Extracts from Some Press Notices of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce* (London: Egoist Press, 1916); *Extracts from Press Notices of Ulysses by James Joyce* (Harlesden: Leveridge, 1922).

⁴ J.O. Baylen, “Romeike, Henry”, *American National Biography Online*, accessed 23 February 2016, <http://www.anb.org/articles/16/16-01406.html>.

⁵ Georges D. Romeike, “Who Is Mentioned Oftenest in the Newspapers?” *American Magazine* 93 (February 1922): 15.

⁶ Oscar Schwarz, “Di un poeta irlandese a Trieste”, *L’era nuova* (14 August 1919), 2. Add Ms 57345, Harriet Shaw Weaver Papers, British Library. I am grateful to Erik Schneider for his assistance in identifying the author and determining bibliographic details.

⁷ Though Joyce writes “salta,” the word to which he refers looks more like “susto.”

⁸ “A Story from Erin’s Isle: Two Years of Indigestion and Liver Troubles – Then Bile Beans and Perfect Health”, *Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* 92, no. 2365 (22 September 1906): 192.

⁹ Mary Power, “The Bile Beans Advertisement”, *James Joyce Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (Summer 1976): 462.

¹⁰ James Joyce, “II.ii.7. Partial draft: ‘Ithaca’”, The Joyce Papers 2002, MS 36,639/13, National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

¹¹ James Joyce, *Ulysses: A Facsimile of the Manuscript*, intro. Harry Levin, pref., Clive Driver (New York: Octagon Books; Philadelphia: Philip H & A.S.W. Rosenbach Foundation, 1975), L 849 – 50.

¹² *Ulysses: A Facsimile*, L873 – 76.

¹³ E. E. Mavrogordato, review of *Dubliners*, *Times Literary Supplement* no. 548 (18 June 1914): 298.