LIFE'S LITTLE IRONIES: THE MANCHESTER MANUSCRIPTS

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As R.L. Purdy points out, there is no single manuscript for the collection of Thomas Hardy’s stories entitled Life’s Little Ironies. Instead, for most of the stories there are individual manuscripts extant. Three of these have found their home in Manchester, coming from the author in 1911, via Sydney Cockerell and Walter Butterworth. Cockerell arranged for many of the manuscripts still in Hardy’s possession at that time to be distributed to various libraries and institutions, and evidently offered these three to Manchester through Butterworth. It was apparently Butterworth’s decision to distribute them one each to Manchester Central Public Library, Manchester University Library and the John Rylands Library, the manuscripts being respectively ‘On the Western Circuit’, ‘For Conscience’ Sake’ and ‘A Tragedy of Two Ambitions’.

Purdy gives a general description of the manuscripts but they are worth a more detailed examination. They have certain things in common. The paper of the ‘For Conscience’ Sake’ and ‘A Tragedy of Two Ambitions’ manuscripts is unruled, of a smooth quality, and has no watermarks, merely chain lines running horizontally ten per leaf some 2.6 cm. apart. All three manuscripts have in Hardy’s hand at the top left of fo.1, within square brackets and obviously dating from after the writing and initial publication of the stories: ‘Life’s Little Ironies’.

FOR CONSCIENCE’ SAKE

The holograph manuscript of ‘For Conscience’ Sake’ is a fair copy, consisting of 24 leaves numbered straightforwardly 1 to 24 by Hardy in the top right-hand corner of each leaf. There are no fragmentary or

2 See letters from Cockerell and Butterworth, dated 14 October 1911, 19 October 1911 and 15 December 1911, bound in with the manuscripts of ‘On the Western Circuit’ and ‘A Tragedy of Two Ambitions’ ‘On the Western Circuit’ is Manchester Central Public Library. MS 823.892, U3.4; ‘For Conscience’ Sake’ is John Rylands University Library of Manchester, University English MSS; and ‘A Tragedy of Two Ambitions’ is John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Rylands English MS 124. The John Rylands University Library of Manchester was formed by the merger in 1972 of Manchester University Library and the John Rylands Library.
3 Purdy, Thomas Hardy. 83–4.
glued leaves and no text is written on versos. The paper measures 20.5 cm. by 25.8 cm., and, although originally white, has now browned (particularly fo.1). There are usually 24 lines of writing per leaf (although 29 are crammed on to the last leaf). The ink used is black, with some additions in a lighter ink. A few interlineations, specifically on fo.15, are in a thinner nib than the rest of the manuscript and written over pencil. The manuscript served as copy for the story’s appearance in the *Fortnightly Review* (March 1891, 370–82), and consistent with this contains several compositors’ markings and signatures (fo.1 Scott, fo.4 unsigned, fo.5 Thompson, fo.8 Bristow, fo.12 Read, fo.15 Pope, fo.18 Silver [?], fo.21 Higdon, fo.23 Lupin [?]), has Hardy’s address at the top of fo.1, and on the verso of the last leaf has in pencil ‘Fortnightly’.

The manuscript is now bound in red morocco, with a gold rule approximately 1 mm. from the edge all around each of the front and back covers. The title is in gold capitals on the front, and up the spine in gold is: ‘FOR CONSCIENCE’ SAKE. BY THOMAS HARDY. AN AUTOGRAPH MS’. The page edges are gilded.

Near the left-hand edge of each leaf there are six needle-holes where the manuscript has in the past been sewn together. The position of four of these (two near the top of the leaf and two near the bottom) shows that the manuscript was at some time sewn together with the manuscript of ‘A Tragedy of Two Ambitions’. The two manuscripts have another two needle-holes near the top of the leaf which, because they do not correspond, show that at another, presumably earlier, time they were each sewn independently of the other.

Although the manuscript is a fair copy, there are a number of alterations made within it. None are extensive or of major importance and most appear to have been made during the act of copying the story from its previous draft. Most involve a striving for the correct word or expression rather than any change of authorial intention. There are, however, several alterations worth noting briefly.

There is evidence of earlier forms for the names of two characters. Twice (on fos.9 and 18) Hardy writes or begins to write ‘Falkland’ before correcting it to ‘Frankland’. The Doctor’s name appears on fo.2 at one point as ‘Benton’, and also interlined in the same form at another place where it has been mended to ‘Bindon’. On fo.5 ‘Benton’ is deleted and followed on the same line by ‘Bindon’. In the case of the Doctor it appears that Hardy changed the name whilst making the fair copy. However, the decision to adopt the form ‘Frankland’ was made prior to copying the manuscript, and Hardy’s two slips show that the name was probably in its unrevised form in the draft from which he was working.

Similar revisions to place names indicate that Millborne’s place of origin may originally have been intended as ‘Exonbury’ (altered on fo.3 to ‘Toneborough’), while their week was to have been spent in Brighton not Cowes (changed on fos.15 and 16).
Hardy's attention to detail is evident in the revised descriptions of Percival Cope as 'smoothly shaven' rather than 'with sandy whiskers' (fo.13), and of Reverend Mr Walker as 'a vicar-choral in the cathedral' ('Exonbury' being a cathedral city) rather than 'incumbent of the parish' (fo.8). His satire is made more pointed when Mrs Frankland's raising 'funds for sending petticoats to the Lunar savages' becomes 'funds for making happy savages miserable & other such enthusiasms of this Christian country' (fo.8).

Few changes have a great effect on characterization, although one or two refine Millborne's position and attitudes. For example, in one addition introduced during the copying of Millborne's conversation with the Doctor, Millborne states 'But I have never set eyes on her since our original acquaintance, & should not know her if I met her' (fo.4). He also refers to Mrs Frankland as 'the poor victim' instead of 'the poor thing' (fo.4); a small change, but consistent with his remorse for wrongdoing the lady.

Another revision concerns how he had acquired his wealth. Originally he 'had risen to be manager, & in the course of time a post of responsibility; & having been fortunate in his private investments, had retired from a business-life somewhat early'. This is altered to: ' & had risen to a post of responsibility; when, by the death of his father, who had been fortunate in his investments, the son succeeded to an income which led him to retire from a business-life somewhat early' (fo.2).

There is one clear instance of a deliberate adjustment to the narrative voice. The omniscient, man-of-the-world tone of the narrator who had formerly said 'We who know everything may as well admit, however, that shortly after . . . ' is made more objective (and less objectionable) by being revised to: 'But a searching inquiry would have revealed that soon after . . . ' (fo.24).

All these changes are minor and amount to very little. However, they reveal something of Hardy's creative process and his attitude towards his material. Each new version of a text, be it another manuscript draft or a new printed edition, was an opportunity for Hardy to re-examine and revise a text. At the pre-publication stage, even a fair-copy manuscript such as this (intended as printer's copy) contained many instances of revision (albeit often only minor stylistic alterations), some of which were still tentative in nature and subject to later refinement. An example of this is what is probably the longest insertion in the manuscript, which comes in the last paragraph of the story (fo.24). One sentence originally ended ' . . . burdened with weariness of life'. The last word was deleted and replaced in the margin (in ink over erased pencil) by 'his fellow creatures - ever answering negatively, as he sat and smoked among men, the inquiry in the Hippolytus: "What reserved person is not hateful? - and in the sociable is there any charm?"' The quote is not quite apposite and was replaced at the proof stage of the *Fortnightly Review* text, so that the
sentence read 'burdened with the bitter thought which oppressed Antigone, that by honourable observance of a rite he had obtained for himself the reward of dishonourable laxity'. Even that was not an end to it, as Hardy revised ‘bitter thought’ to ‘heavy thought’ for the first edition of *Life’s Little Ironies*.

A TRAGEDY OF TWO AMBITIONS

The manuscript of ‘A Tragedy of Two Ambitions’ is a fair copy in Hardy’s hand, with a number of minor authorial corrections made during the copying. It consists of 36 leaves, numbered 1 to 36 by Hardy in the top right-hand corner of each leaf. At the top left of fo.1 is written (probably not by Hardy) ‘Universal Review’, in which periodical the story first appeared (December 1888, 537–60). The first leaf also contains alternative titles bracketed together, with the rejected and crossed-out ‘The Shame of the Halboroughs’ a line beneath the chosen one.

The manuscript is now bound in red morocco, plain front and back except for a thin gold line running approximately 3 mm. inside the three outer edges and ending at the spine in a trefoil shape. In gold up the spine is: ‘HARDY – A TRAGEDY OF TWO AMBITIONS’. Bound in with the manuscript are copies of Sydney Cockerell’s letter to Walter Butterworth, offering the three manuscripts (14 October 1911); Butterworth’s letter to Sir Alfred Hopkinson, then Chairman of Council of the John Rylands Library, offering the manuscript of ‘A Tragedy of Two Ambitions’ (19 October 1911); and Butterworth’s letter to the Rylands Librarian, Henry Guppy, sending the manuscript (15 December 1911).

Of the authorial alterations in the manuscript most are in themselves of little importance, being stylistic (for example, the less stilted ‘changed their clothes’ for ‘renovated their attire’, fo.31) or striving for the *mot juste*. A few, however, have a small bearing on matters such as plot and characterization, and merit more detailed comment.

By far the largest related group of revisions concern the occupation of Halborough senior at the beginning of the story. When the reader first meets him, he is in ‘the light clothes of a country tradesman’ rather than ‘the white clothes of a miller’ (fo.2), and in a couple of instances the change from ‘Miller’ to ‘Millwright’ and ‘mill-house’ to ‘millwright’s house’ are required. The change of occupation also occasions revisions concerning Halborough senior’s neglect of his business. Thus, ‘No bran ready for Dairymen Kench,
the bakers out at Anglebury waiting for their flour’ becomes ‘No stones dressed for Miller Kench, the great wheel out at Anglebury waiting for new float-boards’ (fo.2). Similarly, ‘Already dealers sent their corn elsewhere & only one millstone was kept going, though the mill contained two. Already he found a difficulty in meeting his liabilities, & appeared in the markets only at uncertain intervals,’ becomes ‘Already millers went elsewhere for their gear & only one set of hands was now kept going, though there were formerly two. Already he found a difficulty in meeting his men at the week’s end, & though they had been reduced in number there was barely enough to do for those who remained.’ (fo.4).

These represent skilful enough adaptations by Hardy to accommodate the change; however, in another instance he uses the necessity of change to even better effect. Originally the mother had died ‘killed by the damp of the mill-stream’; this will not now do, so Hardy revises to ‘worn out by too keen a strain towards these ends’ (fo.3). It seems a more fitting irony that she should die because of her fruitless ‘great exertion and self-denial’ aimed at sending her sons to university, rather than simply because they lived in a damp place. These changes are made in the early leaves of the manuscript, but by fo.12 Hardy is using ‘millwright’ without needing revision, which indicates that the decision to alter the occupation was made by the time he reached this point in copying the manuscript and thus necessitated emendations to the earlier leaves but not thereafter (although fo. 13 still has ‘machinist’s’ replacing ‘tradesman’s’).

Another revision bears on the father’s character. When he has been jailed for disorderly conduct and this threatens the smooth running of his sons’ plans, the manuscript first tells us that the only good thing from their point of view is that ‘so far as it appeared the Millwright had withheld his name’. This sounds as though there is some good in the father and his thoughts for his children. However, Hardy’s revision removes this by making the difficulty of identification merely a reporting error: ‘the millwright’s name had been printed as Joshua Albury’ (fo.23).

A couple of small revisions concern Rosa being sent to a ‘high-class’ rather than merely ‘good’ school (fo.7). Originally she was sent off to ‘as good a school as the limited means at their command would afford’, which is revised to her being placed ‘under as efficient a tuition at a fashionable watering-place as the means at their disposal could command’ (fo.4). The introduction of the ‘fashionable watering-place’ serves not only to emphasize their sacrifice, but also to reveal the pretensions behind their schemes.

Two revisions are topographical, and show Hardy fixing the Narrobourne of the story quite precisely as the real West Coker. One revision (made whilst writing the fair copy) gives the father’s intention to pass through ‘the intervening town of Ivell’ rather than ‘Shernton’ on his way to Narrobourne from Fountall Gaol (fo.25): Yeovil is on the
direct route from Wells to West Coker, whereas Sherborne is not. The other topographical revision names the previously anonymous hill between Narrobourne and Ivell as ‘Hendcome’ (fo.26): the link with actual places is increased in the first edition when it is given its real name of Hendford Hill.

Two revisions are bowdlerizations of the text. ‘Just God’ (fo.29) is deleted as being an inappropriate expletive in the mouth of Cornelius, then a theological student; whilst Joshua’s blasphemous ‘Damn the Church, she is’ is reduced to ‘To tell the truth, the Church is’ (fo.36). This latter revision was probably made in order to protect Hardy from the sensitivity of editors and the wrath of magazine readers. In any case, as a means of having Joshua condemn himself, the original words lack subtlety and are out of key with the generally understated satire directed against Joshua.

A similar effect of making less explicit the selfish and unChristian thoughts of the brothers is achieved by the deletion of the speech (probably to be by Joshua): ‘To think he should just have been resolved upon ruining us all, should have pronounced my disgrace with such exultation’ (fo.30). This comes at the point when the two brothers delay attempting to rescue their drowning father. Their action is indefensible and callous enough without one of them uttering such words. It is better that their wickedness remains implicit in the description that they waited ‘each thinking the same thought’.

Small refinements to the detail and plot of the story are evident in a few revisions. Mr Fellmer is given a daughter, and his first wife dies, not ‘after a brief married term of a few months’, but ‘in the year after her marriage at the birth of a fragile little girl’ (fo.15). At his death Halborough senior is wearing a ‘kerseymere coat’ not a ‘fustian [acket]’ (fo.30), because his coat had been described as fustian before he had gone away to Canada much earlier in the story. A similar correction of detail (or possibly a late change to the plot) is behind the deletion of ‘late’ in the description of Rosa as ‘the late curate’s sister’ (fo.32). There has been a jump in time of six months and Joshua has now moved to a ‘living in a small town’. She is thus the ‘late curate’s sister’, but as Cornelius is now curate in Joshua’s place the epithet is not needed. The possibility that the deletion came about because Hardy only then decided that Cornelius was to be curate at Narrobourne is perhaps borne out by the tentative nature of the manuscript at the end of that same paragraph (where we are informed of the fact): ‘Cornelius had succeeded to his place as curate’ is revised to ‘Cornelius had thereupon succeeded to the vacant curacy’ (fo.33).

One final change of detail is worth noting. When Mrs Fellmer first meets Rosa she is surprised because she had expected ‘a Dorcas, Rhoda or Tryphena’ (meaning, a plain and homely type). This is changed to ‘a Dorcas, Martha or Rhoda at the outside’ (fo.18) – possibly because of the personal associations that the name Tryphena may have had for Hardy (in the shape of his cousin Tryphena Sparks).
ON THE WESTERN CIRCUIT
Unlike the other two (and contrary to what Purdy suggests), the manuscript for ‘On the Western Circuit’ does not appear to have served as printer’s copy for any of the printed versions of the story. It lacks the customary compositorial markings that distinguish a printer’s copy and has distinct differences from all printed versions. It is, nevertheless, a complete manuscript. It is foliated 1 to 32 by Hardy in the top right of each leaf; an additional leaf, 9a, follows fo.9; and there are eight lines written on the verso of fo.9 to be inserted into the text on the recto. Below the story’s present title are two rejected ones, ‘The Writer of the Letters’ and ‘The Amanuensis’. The paper measures 19 cm. by 25.45 cm., but has been trimmed so that odd letters of additions in the right-hand margins of fo.13 and fo.30 are cut away. It was originally white in colour, unruled, of smooth quality (but rough on the verso), and with horizontal chain-marks. Leaves normally contain 24 lines of writing, but some have more. The ink is black, with a few insertions in a lighter ink and a considerable number of pencil corrections. Each leaf has just two needle-holes (which on some leaves merge together), where the manuscript was sewn together at some former time. The manuscript was rebound in 1988 in red morocco with a gold line approximately 1 mm. from the edge around three edges front and back. The title is given on the front in gilt capitals, and up the spine in gilt is: ‘ON THE WESTERN CIRCUIT. THOMAS HARDY. AUTOGRAPH MS.’ Bound in with the manuscript are copies of an extract from Hardy to Sydney Cockerell (11 October 1911); a letter from Cockerell to Walter Butterworth (14 October 1911); and a letter from Butterworth to Alderman Plummer, Chairman of the Libraries Committee, Manchester, offering ‘On the Western Circuit’ (19 October 1911). The whole is boxed in turquoise.

The story was completed in 1891 and appeared in both Harper’s Weekly (28 November 1891) and The English Illustrated Magazine (December 1891). Hardy had sent it at the beginning of September 1891 to the literary agent, A.P. Watt, who had arranged for its simultaneous publication in Britain and America. The extant manuscript, as already mentioned, was not the printer’s copy for either magazine; however, it does appear to be a direct ancestor of this no longer extant printer’s copy, in that revisions being made by Hardy whilst writing the manuscript appear in the magazine versions. For example, on fo.32 Hardy first wrote ‘In his hand were several’; ‘were’ is mended to ‘was’, ‘several’ deleted, and following on the same line is ‘a pocket-book full of. . . .’ Indeed, many of the revisions in the manuscript were obviously made by Hardy as he wrote it out. It is nevertheless possible that some of the alterations were made not at the

4 ibid., 83.
time of the manuscript’s composition, but were written on to it at a later date, possibly when Hardy was preparing copy to send to *The English Illustrated Magazine*; the pencilled emendations in particular may be in this category.

The reason that this manuscript was not sent to the printer is simply that Hardy felt it necessary to bowdlerize the story for magazine publication. There are two main aspects concerned with the bowdlerization of ‘On the Western Circuit’. The first is the impropriety of a married woman conducting what amounts to an illicit love affair, albeit vicariously through the nominal role of scribe. Thus, for the magazine reading public Edith Harnham becomes a widow living with her uncle, rather than the frustrated and unfulfilled wife of a rich wine-merchant. The other aspect is that of Anna’s physical relations with Raye and the resultant pregnancy. The magazine versions carefully avoid this subject, so that, for example, when in the manuscript and in later published texts Anna has to leave the house upon Mr Harnham discovering her condition, in the magazine texts she goes away because ‘The damps of winter, aggravated, perhaps by her secret heart-sickness at her lover’s non-appearance’ made her ill.

The relationship between the manuscript and its printed texts is similar to that of the extant manuscript of *Jude the Obscure* to its printed forms, that novel also being extensively bowdlerized in its serialized form. A factor that makes matters difficult for a textual editor is that it is far from certain that Hardy consulted this non-bowedlerized manuscript when preparing the text for the first edition of *Life’s Little Ironies*. Instead he seems to have rewritten the passages that had been affected (it is worth noting that none of the passages are marked in the manuscript for substitution or bowdlerizing). One example will serve to illustrate this:

*Manuscript:*

had wished to have her near her in preference to anybody else; allowed her to do almost as she liked, & to have a holiday whenever she asked for it. This kind young lady was the wife of a rich wine-merchant of the town: in

*The English Illustrated Magazine:*

and since the loss of Mr Harnham some fifteen months ago, had wished to have her near in preference to anybody else, though she had only lately come; allowed her to do almost as she liked, and to have a holiday whenever she asked for it. The husband of this kind young lady had been a rich wine-merchant of the town, but Mrs Harnham’s uncle lived temporarily with her now; in

*First edition:*

and being without children had wished to have her near her in preference to anybody else, though she had only lately come; allowed her to do almost as she liked, and to have a holiday whenever she asked for it. The husband of this kind young lady was a rich wine-merchant of the town, but Mrs Harnham did not care much about him. In

A detailed study of what Hardy did to the text for the magazine and
first edition texts would be well worthwhile. It is, however, outside the scope of what I am concerned with here, which is the manuscript itself and what is shown there of the story’s genesis.

There are many examples in the manuscript of a word or phrase being substituted for another. Often the reason is purely stylistic or has little significance in itself; for example on fo.1 the substitution of ‘homogenous pile of mediaeval architecture’ for ‘perfect mediaeval ensemble’, of ‘edifice’ for ‘building’, and ‘clack’ for ‘whizz’. There are, however, instances where a substitution holds greater interest. For example, Raye is described as ‘practical’ instead of ‘intellectual’ (fo.3); Edith Harnham is ‘mobile-lipped’ rather than ‘sensitive-lipped’ and answers her husband in a ‘languid’ not ‘soft’ voice (fo.8); before she has written to him, Raye thinks of Anna as ‘that peasant maiden’ not by her name (fo.13).

A series of revisions serves to emphasize this urban-rural divide between Raye and Anna. As early as fo.6 the reader is told in writing that has not been corrected or revised that Raye is from London, but before this (fo.3) and several times after (fos.10, 17) there are insertions or substitutions that specifically mention London. Additions refer to her as an ‘unfledged young maid servant’ and him as ‘the end-of-the-age young man’ (fo.11), to her as ‘the unlettered peasant’ and him as ‘the fastidious urban’ (fo.31). The following slightly longer revision also concerns the unworldly aspect of Anna’s character: ‘She was too innocent to be reserved & she answered his remarks readily, after a little coaxing.’ becomes ‘Unreserved – too unreserved – by nature she was not experienced enough to be reserved by art & after a little coaxing answered his remarks readily.’ (fo.5)

Some revisions, however, refine the references to Anna’s lack of education, for the simple reason that if she appears too uncouth Raye is hardly likely to be deceived into thinking her capable of writing the letters. For example, Anna’s use of extreme dialect is removed when ‘what go is er to me, if I can’t read em!’ becomes ‘what good is it to me, if I can’t read a word in it!’ (fo.15) This change is necessary to accord with her education by Mrs Harnham. At one point we were originally told that Mrs Harnham ‘had insisted upon her getting a copybook, & beginning to learn’; but some revisions and an addition placed at the foot of the leaf make it that Mrs Harnham ‘had taught her to speak correctly, in which accomplishment Anna showed considerable readiness, as is frequent with the illiterate; & soon became quite fluent in the use of her mistress’s phraseology. Mrs. Harnham also insisted upon her getting a spelling and copybook, & beginning to practise in these. Anna was slower in this branch of her education’ (fo.16). The detail concerning the training of Anna’s speech is added here for the reader’s benefit because the information was originally to have been learned through a conversation between Anna and Raye. but (perhaps lest Raye is made too aware that Anna’s good speech is merely imitation of her mistress) ‘that Mrs Harnham had instructed her in
speaking, & was now teaching her other things’ (fo.5) is deleted; a rejected intermediate pencil revision had Mrs Harnham ‘instructing her to speak grammatically’, and interlined three lines below is the general statement ‘She was even taking the trouble to educate her’. In the same deleted passage Raye had said to Anna ‘you speak very nicely’; the last word was to be replaced by the pencilled ‘intelligently for a young girl’ before the lines were deleted (fo.5).

There are also revisions that may be said to bear upon the plot of the story. One of the most important of these is the brief episode in which the crowd pushes Edith Harnham and Raye together. This is an afterthought added at the foot of fo.9 and marked to be inserted higher. The pencil addition on the verso of fo.9 marked for insertion into the additional lines develops matters further in having Raye taking Edith’s hand under the impression that it is Anna’s. This actual physical contact adds to the turmoil of Edith’s emotions in the remainder of the story, making the attraction on her side not just a meeting of minds through the exchange of letters. Several further revisions (all in pencil) reinforce this. On the same leaf she was ‘greatly struck’ at first by ‘something’, which is deleted and replaced by a ‘winning quality of some sort’, which in turn gives way to the far more specific and powerful ‘the fascination of his touch’ (fo.9); and before she has read any letter from him an added sentence tells us ‘The thought that he was several years her junior produced a sigh.’ (fo.9) After she has observed him at the service in the Cathedral, we are told, ‘she wished she had married a London man’; to this is added as an afterthought (linked with the fo.9 additions): ‘who knew the subtleties of love-making as they were evidently known to him who had mistakenly caressed her hand’ (fo.11). Further on in the story we are told ‘From the first he had attracted her & with this glimpse as a generator . . .’; again a revision emphasizes the physical nature of the attraction and alludes particularly to the accidental touching of hands, so that the sentence now begins: ‘From the first he had attracted her by his looks & voice – above all by his tender touch, and with these as generators . . .’ (fo.19).

If this series of additions emphasizes the first physical meeting of Edith Harnham and Raye, there are instances of the physical side of the relationship between Raye and Anna being understated. On fo.12 the phrase ‘had caressed her’ is deleted in two different places to be replaced respectively by ‘& feeling a violent fancy for her’ and ‘had in brief, won her entirely’. On the same leaf the explicit statement ‘However, the thing was done’ is also deleted.

If the physical aspect is slightly played down, in this same part of the story the revisions serve to dehumanize the way that Raye regards Anna. Additions refer to her as ‘this summer fancy’ (fo.12) and ‘his new-found toy’ (fo.13), whilst twice the word ‘creature’ is substituted for another word (fos.12 and 13). This series of revisions is connected to the urban-rural one mentioned earlier, and such a superior,
chauvinistic attitude ill-prepares Raye for the surprise of the epistolary communication of souls.

The idea of Anna as a victim is, however, not dismissed with the letter-writing, as two revisions on fo.20 bear out. Her becoming pregnant is not merely an 'upshot' but a 'contretemps', and she is not 'so situated' but 'so overtaken'. The original words are neutral and suggest that it is only natural that Anna should find herself like this. The revisions carry the idea of there being forces against her and they are prevailing.

One minor change to the plot is that originally this was not to have been the first time that Edith Harnham had acted as amanuensis for Anna. When Anna receives the first letter, Edith offers to read it 'as I did your former ones' (fo.15), and Anna initially resists, saying 'But this is from somebody else' (fo.16). Edith's phrase is replaced by 'child, if necessary' and 'else' is deleted from Anna's utterance. These revisions accord with the comment that 'in other circumstances she might have suggested the cook as an amanuensis' (fo.17).

Another small detail is the addition of an extra witness to the marriage, 'a friend of Raye's'. This necessitates three small revisions on fo.27, the third being done by Hardy whilst in the act of writing and thus indicating that all three changes were probably made during the writing of fo.27.

A more important addition, however, is the final view of Raye and Anna at the very end of the story. Originally the story finished with Edith Harnham and her husband, but 'The End' is deleted at the foot of fo.31 and some eight lines appear as fo.32. This change (as too the rejection of the story's two other titles) moves the focus away from Edith Harnham, leaves us with the image of the ruined Raye, and perhaps for the first time evokes some sympathy for him, particularly as the final note in the manuscript is one of his fortitude rather than despair. He had finished by answering Anna 'in the voice of a hopeless man' (fo.32), but Hardy deleted the adverbial phrase. This slight shift of sympathy towards Raye was prepared for by an addition in the mouth of Edith Harnham on fo.31: "I have ruined him!" she kept repeating "I have ruined him", which is an echo of another addition on the previous leaf when she says to Raye 'But you are ruined!' This is itself an echo of Raye's own words on fo.29: 'You have deceived me - ruined me!' His response to the words from Edith's lips is a preparation for his stoical attitude at the end: "What matter!" he said shrugging his shoulders. "It serves me right." It should be noted, however, that Hardy changes the final note again in the magazine texts by having Raye answer Anna 'with dry resignation' ('with dreary resignation' in later printed texts).

The care and time taken by Hardy over these stories is evident within the manuscripts themselves, and in the case of 'On the Western Circuit' in the fact that he took such pains preparing alternative
versions according to the intended audience. This goes some way towards countering the idea that Hardy's short stories did not matter to him. Although he may understandably have seen them as lesser in importance than his novels and poems (including *The Dynasts*), there is clear evidence here that they did not merely serve to make extra income from sale to periodicals, but are products of the same creative process and genius as are the major works.