

Illustrations from the Wellcome Library

Attitudes to Political and Commercial Endorsement in the Business Papers of Silas Mainville Burroughs, with Particular Reference to Henry Morton Stanley

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“Mr Burroughs held very advanced views”¹

On “social and political questions,” said Henry Wellcome, “Mr Burroughs held very advanced views . . . supported by lavish contributions and with great expenditure of time”.² Wellcome was providing the editor of *Christian Commonwealth* with comments that would be incorporated—unattributed to Wellcome—in the journal’s obituary for his business partner, Silas Mainville Burroughs, who had died suddenly from double pneumonia in Monte Carlo, 6 February 1895.³ Wellcome’s dictated comments were less than fulsome. Viewed in the context of the last acrimonious years of their business partnership—a context still emerging from the vast Wellcome Foundation archive that is presently being catalogued⁴—his chosen turns of phrase were indirect and deflecting. Wellcome’s views on

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The Business Papers of S M Burroughs are included in the archive of The Wellcome Foundation Ltd. I am grateful to the Royal Geographical Society for allowing me to read and cite the Henry Wellcome and Henry Morton Stanley correspondence, which includes a letter from Burroughs to Stanley. The papers were donated to the Society in 1936 by The Wellcome Foundation.

¹ “Extract from a letter dictated to the Editor of the ‘Christian Commonwealth’” (in WF/E/02/02/20).

² *Ibid.* The Business Papers of S M Burroughs are referenced WF/E/02, comprising sixteen boxes and a large folder of certificates. A substantial portion of the papers are business report-letters to Henry Wellcome and to the company office, sent from various parts of the world as Burroughs travelled and endeavoured to establish new business markets. Other material concerns John Wyeth and Brother, the Kepler Malt Extract Company, Phoenix Mills (Dartford), and the Burroughs and Wellcome partnership (including the decline of the partners’ personal relationship and the litigation that ensued). The Personal Papers of S M Burroughs (PP/SMB), a separate and

complementary collection, has not yet been catalogued.

³ See WF/E/02/02/19 for a cutting of the published obituary (‘Death of Mr S M Burroughs’) from *Christian Commonwealth* [1895—no publication reference indicated]. Other obituaries amongst Burroughs’s business papers are: *The Pharmaceutical Era* (6 June 1895), pp. 720–1 (WF/E/02/02/17); ‘Death of Mr S M Burroughs’, *Chem. Drug.* (9 Feb. 1895), pp. 213–14, and, from the subsequent issue of the same journal (16 Feb. 1895, pp. 250, and 254–8), items on Burroughs’s funeral at Monte Carlo, the Memorial Service at Dartford Parish Church, a meeting at the Cannon Street Hotel to discuss a Burroughs memorial, and several anonymous anecdotal “character sketches” (all WF/E/02/02/16); also, ‘Death of Mr S M Burroughs’, *Brit. & Col. Drug.* (8 Feb. 1895), pp. 144–5 (WF/E/02/02/18). See, in addition, Julia Sheppard, ‘Burroughs, (Silas) Mainville (1846–1895)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, vol. 8, pp. 1013–14 (hereafter *ODNB*) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50641>], accessed 29 Aug. 2007].

⁴ The archive of the Wellcome Foundation is large and various (approximately 350 linear metres). One objective of the present two-year project is to complete its catalogue, continuing the work of a number of previous archivists. For the most recent overview of

“social and political questions” were not at all identical to those of his late partner. Unattributed, Wellcome’s solicited comments were sufficiently ambiguous to pass, in silent code, for anonymous praise amongst the many tributes in the obituary. Burroughs had been a popular and colourful figure in the pharmaceutical trade, and was remembered fondly. His obituarist wrote: “It is not too much to say that commercial England has lost one of its most notable and distinguished personalities . . . His was a life’s work executed in a few years by a versatility, an energy, and a vigorousness that were so striking as to savour of the extraordinary.”⁵ Although Wellcome refers to Burroughs’s energy and his generosity (he was “full of human kindness to his fellow men”), when it came to specific reference to his partner’s unwavering enthusiasm for the politics of the American socialist and campaigner for land reform, Henry George, the American’s name does not pass Wellcome’s lips, and his words assume a clipped cipher-like quality: for the phrase “advanced views” we may read “dangerous views”, for “lavish contributions” — “wasteful contributions”, and for “great expenditure of time” — “time not devoted to business”. The last charge, that of distraction, was one that each had levelled against the other on numerous occasions, in person, in correspondence, and via Burroughs Wellcome & Co intermediaries (in the main, through the reverberating board of Robert Clay Sudlow⁶) when direct communication ceased by the end of 1889.⁷ Mutual distrust had by then become entrenched. A public tussle in the High Court, in a spectacularly unsuccessful action brought by Burroughs to terminate their partnership, left Wellcome secure and Burroughs humiliated, if not defeated, and left no doubt within the pharmaceutical trade and the wider public community that, despite the prosperity of their business, Mr Burroughs and Mr Wellcome were a partnership in name and little else.⁸

Politics and commerce intersect at various points in Burroughs’s business papers. After touching on some of the innovative foundations that Burroughs contributed to the early success of Burroughs Wellcome & Co, I shall look more closely at Wellcome’s concerns about the impact of Burroughs’s “advanced” political views on the reputation of their firm: Wellcome wrote a letter to Burroughs on the subject, at some length, in March 1890. Secondly, a brief letter of later date (1894) amongst Burroughs’s correspondence, from

the collection as a whole, and its complex provenance, see Teresa Doherty and Adrian Steel, ‘Wellcome home to the Wellcome Foundation archive’, *Med. Hist.*, 2004, 48: 95–111. Another objective of the present project has been to increase accessibility to the archive through the development of the thematic micro-site *Wellcome’s World* (prepared by Ross MacFarlane) which draws together selected material about Wellcome’s life and work from across three on-line catalogues (Wellcome Library, Wellcome Archives and Manuscripts, and Wellcome Images): <http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/wellcomesworld>. The present paper draws from Burroughs’s business papers as well as, on occasion, other Series within the Wellcome Foundation archive that have been newly catalogued.

⁵ ‘Death of Mr S M Burroughs’, *Christian Commonwealth* (WF/E/02/02/19).

⁶ Robert Clay Sudlow (1846–1914), General Manager, first employed by Burroughs in 1879, before Wellcome arrived in England. Sudlow retired in 1905, after twenty-five years service.

⁷ Robert Rhodes James, *Henry Wellcome*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1994, p. 172.

⁸ In the Chancery Division of the High Court, before Mr Justice Kekewich, 24–25 June 1889. For ‘Answers by the Plaintiff’, ‘Answers by the Defendant’ and ‘Minutes of Judgement’, see WF/E/02/01/02/42. For printed extracts from admitted correspondence, see WF/E/02/01/02/35–41. See also, Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, note 7 above, pp. 141–94, and Roy Church and E M Tansey, *Burroughs Wellcome & Co: knowledge, trust, profit and the transformation of the British pharmaceutical industry, 1880–1940*, Lancaster, Crucible Books, 2007, pp. 118–19.

Henry Morton Stanley—journalist, explorer, and ubiquitous commercial endorser of the Burroughs Wellcome & Co medicine chest—provides another perspective from which to view the intersection of politics and commerce, one that opens discussion to the broader context of empire and colonial trade, within which the company grew and thrived. Stanley, who served, reluctantly, in his final active years as a Liberal-Unionist Member of Parliament for North Lambeth (1895–1900),⁹ was admired and supported by both business partners. In the letter to Burroughs from 1894, Stanley refers to the loan of a rather aptly named democratic wagon to assist with campaigning.¹⁰ The letter is of interest less for what it tells us of Stanley’s electoral campaigning (for which he had little enthusiasm) than for the light that is thrown upon Burroughs by the letter’s context amongst other items of correspondence in the archive.

The “lively team”¹¹

When Silas Mainville Burroughs first arrived in England in 1878, as the European agent of John Wyeth & Brother of Philadelphia, he brought with him substantial experience, gained with Wyeth, in the relatively new but increasingly popular pharmaceutical phenomenon of compressed medicines.¹² He also brought and introduced the American drug-trade practice known as *detailing*, an approach to building sales that was, at the time, novel to the English market. In detailing, sales were made directly to the medical profession. Doctors and hospitals were provided with free samples, and a ready means to order more.¹³ Courting the medical profession rather than the consumer had long been practised with considerable success by Wyeth, and by Burroughs in person as a detail-man in the employ of Wyeth. As a complementary action to this approach, Burroughs Wellcome & Co advertisements were placed only in medical and

⁹The impetus to standing for Parliament came from Stanley’s newly acquired wife, formerly Dorothy Tennant, who saw Parliament as a means to prevent Stanley from returning to Africa. See Frank McLynn, *Stanley: sorcerer’s apprentice*, London, Constable, 1991, pp. 372–75, and Tim Jeal, *Stanley: the impossible life of Africa’s greatest explorer*, London, Faber and Faber, 2007, pp. 423–6. For the local political context, see Alex Windscheffel, “‘In darkest Lambeth’: Henry Morton Stanley and the imperial politics of London unionism”, in Matthew Cragoe and Antony Taylor (eds), *London politics, 1760–1914*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 191–210.

¹⁰The aptness in the name, though striking, is coincidental to the political purpose proposed. *OED* (1989): “*U.S.* A light four-wheeled cart with several seats one behind the other, and usually drawn by two horses. ‘Originally called *democratic wagon* (Western and Middle U.S.)’. *Cent. Dict.*”

¹¹Burroughs to Wellcome (6 Jan. 1879), courting Wellcome as a business partner (in WF/E/02/01/02/31).

¹²Between 1870 and 1877, Burroughs combined study at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and employment with Wyeth. John Wyeth (and Henry Bower, another employee) had developed and patented, in 1872, an improved version of the rotary tablet press first invented by the Englishman William Brockedon in 1843. Burroughs knew at first hand, therefore, both the commercial potential for compressed medicines, and the practical aspects of their manufacture. His graduation essay (1877) was ‘The compression of medicinal powders’ (WF/E/02/02/01). See also, Church and Tansey, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, pp. 5–6, and Lise Wilkinson, ‘William Brockedon, F.R.S. (1787–1854)’, *Notes Rec. R. Soc. Lond.*, June 1971, 26(1): 65–72. For a note on the sale of Brockedon’s business to Newbery & Sons, thence to William Blagdon Richards, and finally to Burroughs Wellcome & Co (12 Aug. 1898), see the memorandum from A E Warden to Dr Fraser (9 Oct. 1942) in WF/L/06/104 (from a series of legal papers, also newly catalogued).

¹³Church and Tansey, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, pp. 62–6.

pharmaceutical publications.¹⁴ Many aspects of business style that came to typify the professional presence of Burroughs Wellcome & Co, and provide the basis for its initial success, were Burroughs-driven, deriving from practices that Burroughs had established in the operation of S M Burroughs & Co, which began trading in June 1878 from a small office in Southampton Street.¹⁵ In the popular press of the period, patent and other branded remedies and tonics were promoted directly to the public in a largely unregulated market. Although self-medication persisted well into the twentieth century—and although “trade with the general public was of greater importance than dealings with the medical profession for most nineteenth-century druggists”¹⁶—the trend in medical sales in which Burroughs Wellcome & Co quickly became a prime mover was away from bespoke nostrums, away from secret local recipes for liquid mixtures, and towards ready-made medicines manufactured as solid-dose tablets.¹⁷ The complex commercial context of the period has been characterized as broadly divided between the quackery of tradesmen and the professional pursuit of gentlemen, many of whom had as great a suspicion of the secrets of science as they had of recipes that were not the occult recipes they favoured themselves.¹⁸

The introduction of fresh ideas to traditional markets, and sympathy with an increasingly scientific approach to drug manufacture¹⁹—evident as much in the American pharmaceutical industry as in its continental European counterparts—provided a commercial advantage that the “lively team”²⁰ of two Americans were determined to exploit. In the early

¹⁴In a note dated 26 January 1883, posted to Burroughs Wellcome & Co from Christchurch, New Zealand, Burroughs identifies the *Lancet* as the most influential medical journal in which to advertise. He thinks it would “improve the looks of the paper if they would put a proper cover on it . . . the cover to be of colour paper smooth & tough”, and suggests that “it would pay us well to supply the cover or engage most of the space on it if they will make the addition”. See WF/E/02/01/01/50.

¹⁵Roy Church, ‘The British market for medicine in the late nineteenth century: the innovative impact of S M Burroughs & Co’, *Med. Hist.*, 2005, **49**: 281–98. There are two letter books of outgoing letters from S M Burroughs & Co (for the years 1878 and 1879) available on microfilm: WF/E/02/04.

¹⁶Hilary Marland, ‘The “Doctor’s Shop”: the rise of the chemist and druggist in nineteenth-century manufacturing districts’, in Louise Hill Curth (ed.), *From physick to pharmacology: five hundred years of British drug retailing*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006, pp. 79–104, p. 87.

¹⁷Stuart Anderson, ‘From “bespoke” to “off-the-peg”’: community pharmacists and the retailing of medicines in Great Britain 1900–1970’, in Curth (ed.), *op. cit.*, note 16 above, pp. 105–42, p. 106. The trademark Tabloid, coined by Henry Wellcome, was registered in 1884.

¹⁸E M Tansey, ‘The Wellcome Physiological Research Laboratories 1894–1904: the Home Office, pharmaceutical firms, and animal experiments’, *Med.*

Hist. 1989, **33**: 1–41, refers to “distrust, and even distaste, for an endeavour that was seen to belong more to the artisan class than to the gentlemanly profession that medicine had become” (p. 1). Thomas Richards, *The commodity culture of Victorian England: advertising and spectacle 1851–1914*, Stanford University Press, 1990, p. 181, argues that the line dividing useful drugs from patent remedies was “porous” and the consequent relationship between the medical profession and quacks had a reciprocal dynamic to the benefit of both, with less urgency for change coming from the medical profession than might be supposed.

¹⁹Although we may conveniently date the beginnings of scientific research at Burroughs Wellcome & Co with the opening of the Wellcome Physiological Research Laboratories (1894) and the Wellcome Chemical Research Laboratories (1896), Burroughs had earlier dreams of a laboratory, conceived more as a manufacturing facility than as a research resource: “I have been thinking that if our business is very prosperous we may find it desirable to start a laboratory in NY, for distilling the Hazeline and for making the Equivalent Fluid Extracts. My ambition goes even so high as to hope we may be able to buy or rent Squibbs Laboratory and buy his business.” Burroughs to Wellcome, 14 March 1883, from Launceston, Tasmania (WF/E/02/01/01/64).

²⁰Burroughs to Wellcome (6 Jan. 1879), courting Wellcome as a business partner (in WF/E/02/01/02/31).

years, Burroughs Wellcome & Co traded in a variety of goods that were patent medicines, cosmetic products, or dietetic foods,²¹ and they carefully managed the art of compliant labelling with a watchful eye to shifting interpretations of the Medicine Stamp Act by civil servants at Somerset House. It was a thin—and moving—commercial line to tread if Medicine Stamp Duty was to be avoided. Under the Medicine Stamp Act of 1812, which was applied with increasing vigour by Customs and Excise from the 1880s, duty was due on all medicine that “hath or claims to have any occult secret or art for the making or preparing the same”,²² a status more commonly determined by the words upon the label than by chemical analysis. An internal memorandum (28 November 1894) concerning Kepler Malt Extract records: “The Inland Revenue authorities have decided that this is not liable to stamp duty if it is a pure drug. It will therefore be necessary that we say on all labels and circulars ‘Kepler Pure Essence of Malt’”.²³

Between 1880 and 1884, Burroughs undertook an extensive period of commercial travelling to expand the firm’s customer-base globally, traversing Europe, Egypt, North Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, and America.²⁴ Beyond national boundaries, European markets operated protective trade practices, and such barriers to trade were a strong stimulus to discovering new and freer markets. Burroughs kept in constant touch with his company office, and with his partner, who was managing daily affairs from London, with a continuous stream of letters, most of which have survived. Burroughs talked to doctors and hospitals and wholesalers, left samples, hired local salesmen, proposed new product lines from little-known raw materials he came upon, and communicated his thoughts on effective selling.²⁵ If the tone of the letters can seem

²¹ Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, note 7 above, p. 91, provides a list of goods for sale at December 1881, and observes that they were “primarily cosmetic rather than curative” (p. 92). Church and Tansey, *op. cit.*, note 8 above, p. 48, note that “dietetic foods, notably Kepler goods and Beef & Iron Wine (later sold as Bivo), Fairchild’s digestive agents, and Hazeline and Lanoline products for toilet and cosmetic as well as medical use continued to figure among the products given prominence in the company’s price lists and publicity during the twentieth century”.

²² ‘Extract from the Chemist & Druggist’s Diary, 1902’ (typescript, in WF/L/03/06). See also, from the same file, ‘Editorial Comments’, *Chem. Drug.* (7 Dec. 1901), p. 920: “It is not sufficiently appreciated in the trade that the Board of Inland Revenue’s powers under the [Medicine Stamp] Acts are more extensive than have ever been enforced, and the changes which have taken place in the Solicitors’ Department in Somerset House since the retirement of Sir William Melvill, have introduced new minds to the task of revenue extraction, so that many of the old decisions have either been forgotten or set aside, and many interpretations are now made without respect, or little respect, to precedent.”

²³ In WF/L/03/07. But such labelling proved insufficient, and the subsequent use of inverted commas around “Kepler’s” was further provocation

to taxation: “Now that ‘Kepler’s’ is placed in inverted commas a proprietary character is given to the word, and the defence that it is the name of a process and not a man is neutralised, because if it is the name of a proprietary process that is quite enough for S[omerset] H[ouse]. I therefore suggest that we cease to say to the public that it is an ‘aid to digestion’. Digestion if normal requires no aid, and it appears to me mere sophistry to claim that the use of the extract in indigestion is not to be inferred.” (Memorandum from Edgar Linstead to J Collett Smith, 11 Dec. 1901, in WF/L/03/07). See as well (also in WF/L/03/07) a memorandum of 1 Feb. 1902: “Mr Linstead says that increased vigilance has been shown for many weeks by the Somerset House Authorities . . . There appears to be no doubt that the recommendation of a trade marked medicinal preparation accompanied by a caution to ‘avoid imitations’ . . . renders the preparation liable to duty whether it is recommended for the prevention, cure, or relief of disease, or not. As this warning against imitations is of such prime importance to us, we presume you desire us to continue its use until the firm is pulled up.”

²⁴ For an overview of Burroughs’s travels, see John Davies, ‘Burroughs into Europe’, *Wellcome World*, July/Aug. 1992, pp. 10–12.

²⁵ On sales, see the undated note (probably written in 1882) ‘Instructions to Travellers’ (WF/E/02/01/01/27).

at times “didactic and repetitive”,²⁶ Wellcome for his part was not always as responsive as Burroughs expected. Burroughs was the senior partner, in experience, in years and in capital (the last a difference that lay unresolved at the heart of partnership disputes to come).²⁷ From Wellcome’s perspective, however, as the partner responsible for the management of daily business at home, it quickly came to seem that Burroughs had too many ideas, and did not always give sufficient consideration to the challenges of implementation and integration that they presented.²⁸ The early letters also provide the first glimpses of the fracturing of their relationship, as Wellcome sought to increase his capital share, according to their Articles of Partnership, and Burroughs sought to defer. Physical separation and a marked difference in personal temperament added to the strains. The rapid-fire spray of ideas, suggestions, orders, and advice that characterizes the letters touched upon all aspects of the company’s affairs in a sweeping, and sometimes impulsive, manner that did not accord well with Wellcome’s more measured approach to conducting business. To give one example of this fracturing, which led to a level of mistrust and unilateral decision taking, here is Burroughs writing to Wellcome, from Minneapolis (10 November 1883), charging him with commercial indifference to a eucalyptus-based product (“Eucalyptia”) he wished to introduce: “I am not much surprised that you paid apparently no attention to my numerous letters from Australia regarding this article until six months afterward when you venture to remark that ‘it may be worthy of consideration’. Your indifference was my reason for registering Eucalyptia as a trade mark in this country in my own name.”²⁹

An enduring innovation was the Burroughs & Wellcome medicine chest. Associated with Henry Wellcome, as the surviving partner, and, indeed, elaborated and promulgated by him long after Burroughs’s death, the general idea seems to have arisen during the course of a conversation between Burroughs and a Dr Valentine at a mission in Agra, when Burroughs was canvassing India. Medicine chests were, of course, not a new idea and have an ancient lineage, but what was proposed by Burroughs was less a weighty fixed store than a convenient and portable promotional tool. “These cases”, wrote Burroughs, “& the books I have mentioned would I believe be the means of introducing our goods more acceptably[,] rapidly & profitably to the medical profession & public, and at the same time with less expense to ourselves than any other means. Every chemist would be willing to keep one of each

²⁶ Church and Tansey, op. cit., note 8 above, p. 65.

²⁷ Rhodes James, op. cit., note 7 above, p. 86: “The agreed Deed of Partnership [1880] fixed the capital of the firm at £2,000, of which Burroughs held £1,200 and Wellcome £800. In fact, Wellcome could only contribute £400 in cash and had to borrow £550 from Burroughs, at interest of ten per cent per annum”. Church and Tansey, op. cit., note 8 above, p. 110: “The 1880 deed of partnership had envisaged equality [in capital] by September 1884, a year before the partnership deed was due for renewal”.

²⁸ “Burroughs threw off multitudes of red-hot ideas. Wellcome, brimming over with energy and

originality himself, had sometimes to work out Burroughs’ as well as his own ideas before they could be given to the world as definite artistic entities.” Obituary for Burroughs in *The Pharmaceutical Era*, 6 June 1895, p. 721 (WF/E/02/02/17).

²⁹ WF/E/02/01/01/91. See also, a letter from Melbourne, 4 June 1883: “Could we not bring [eucalyptus oil] out as Eucalyptin or Eucalyptine as being the active volatile principle or Essential oil of Eucalyptus and superior to the ordinary gummy oils of Eucalyptus[?]” (WF/E/02/01/01/79), and a subsequent letter from Medina, New York, 13 Oct. 1883 (WF/E/02/01/01/89).

sort of case on his counter together with copies of the books for sale. Such a case in [the] hands of each doctor & chemist . . . would spread our goods over the world in a hurry greatly to our credit & profit.”³⁰ As with the strategic decision to develop sales through detailing, Burroughs seems to have been less an originator of new ideas than one who was able to identify an opportunity, and elaborate and act upon it swiftly. In typically generous style, Burroughs promptly declared that the profits from any subsequent sales to the mission should be returned to it.³¹ Along with the Tabloid brand and the Unicorn trade-mark, the Burroughs and Wellcome medicine chest, in its various models, quickly became established as emblematic of the company. Over time, the marketing of the Burroughs and Wellcome chest came to be associated closely with Henry Stanley, who famously took nine of them with him on his troubled mission to rescue Emin Pasha (1887–90). The association with Stanley, and the ambassadorial role the chests served (see Figure 1), provides a further and deeply embedded instance of the intersection of politics and commerce that merits further comment.

“[Y]ou are rash enough to hazard your own business interests by mixing up politics with business”³²

On 22 March 1890, Wellcome wrote Burroughs a long letter with strong sentiments. By no means the first expression of Wellcome’s views on the subject to his partner, the letter was prompted by an accumulation of frustration and anger at Burroughs’s persistent public association of their firm with the political views of the American socialist Henry George. It had not been a particularly good day for Henry Wellcome, who had already written one long letter to Burroughs, reporting on two outstanding matters at the Dartford works at Phoenix Mills that had required urgent attention before, as Wellcome pointedly remarked, Burroughs’s “sudden departure” for a “pleasure trip”.³³ As previously noted, by the end of the 1889, the two partners limited their communication to the written medium and to third party messages. Burroughs’s failure to sever his partnership with Wellcome had left them joined in isolation, but had not stemmed the conflict. Much to Wellcome’s dismay, Henry George had been invited by Burroughs to speak at the official opening of Phoenix Mills (on 6 July 1889), less than two weeks after the partnership dissolution hearing in the High Court.³⁴ The misjudged confidence with which Burroughs had approached the hearing, and the fact that the invitation to George must have been made some considerable time previously, suggest that the grand opening had been foreseen in Burroughs’s eyes as a celebration of his independence from Wellcome. Under the circumstances, Burroughs was

³⁰ WF/E/02/01/01/38. See also WF/E/02/01/01/54, an undated note giving detailed suggestions for the construction of wooden sample boxes.

³¹ From Dunedin, Burroughs to Wellcome, 26 Feb. 1883 (WF/E/02/01/01/60).

³² Wellcome to Burroughs, 22 March 1890 (WF/E/02/01/01/102, sheet 12).

³³ The two outstanding matters were fire insurance for the drying room, and the

dismissal of a member of staff at Dartford (WF/E/02/01/01/101).

³⁴ For an account of events, see Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, note 7 above, pp. 168–70. Acting independently, Burroughs had bought Phoenix Mills and was leasing the property to Burroughs Wellcome & Co (the ownership gives further context to Burroughs’s conduct). For the lease, see WF/E/02/01/02/17.



Figure 1: “Relic ‘Tabloid’ Medicine Cases – Africa”. Burroughs Wellcome & Co, *The romance of exploration and emergency first-aid from Stanley to Byrd*, New York City, [1934], facing p. 19. (Wellcome Library, London.)

obliged to confirm to Wellcome—who must have found the confirmation rather implausible—that George would not introduce politics into his address. The day began well, with summer sunshine, two thousand guests, a brass band and refreshments for all. In the afternoon, Henry George spoke in moderate and general terms, referring lightly to “a good business carried on by good men in a good way and in a good place” and to the

eight-hour day that was to be introduced at Dartford.³⁵ In the evening, however, Burroughs hosted in association with local Liberal and Radical groups a popular political meeting that fell within the itinerary of “The Henry George Campaign” then touring England. More than double the number of people attended in the evening than had in the afternoon. George spoke once again, this time rousing, on the very themes of property denunciation and single taxation that Wellcome had most feared, suggesting that punitive American tariffs—George was an advocate of free trade—had caused the new premises to be opened in Dartford rather than New York. “There was afterwards a grand display of fireworks in the grounds, one of the principal features being a colossal fire portrait of Mr George, surrounded by the motto, ‘The Land for the People’.”³⁶ During the months that followed, the relationship between the two partners deteriorated still further. The eventful opening was widely reported in the press, in terms that were not at all to Wellcome’s liking. To make matters still worse, Burroughs had, at the company’s expense of time, money and reputation, distributed copies of George’s speech to its customers, an action to which many took exception.

Thus, Wellcome took up his pen to write to Burroughs for a second time on 22 March 1890.³⁷ He argued his case at length across fifteen sheets of “Burroughs, Wellcome & Co” headed paper,³⁸ the repeated heading underscoring subliminally all that was, in Wellcome’s judgement, at stake. After expressing relief that Burroughs had abandoned ideas of litigation against a valuation for taxation purposes of Phoenix Mills—here, as elsewhere in the papers, Burroughs seemed to enjoy the sport of taunting his partner—Wellcome’s disarming opening gambit was to express his “great admiration for Mr George’s honesty of purpose and fidelity to his causes”. In contrast to other (unspecified) reformers who were “unscrupulous adventurers” and “blood thirsty vampires”, George “sticks to his banner through thick and thin”.³⁹ Then followed a shrewdly reasoned surprise attack on the presumption that, of the two partners, Burroughs was the more politically progressive. Wellcome referred to Burroughs’s public stance towards the political radical Charles Bradlaugh (who, as an atheist elected Member of Parliament for Northampton, had refused to take the oath of allegiance and championed the right to affirm).⁴⁰ “I am”, wrote Wellcome, “an ardent admirer of the grand abilities of Chas Bradlaugh—whom you petitioned to exclude from Parliament.”⁴¹ The actions of those who opposed Bradlaugh’s request to affirm were, wrote Wellcome, guilty of “narrow-minded cowardice” and were

³⁵ Reported in *The Democrat* (1 Aug. 1889), p. 855 (WF/E/02/02/05). Burroughs had been the prime mover in introducing the eight-hour day. The report, ‘The Henry George Campaign’ (pp. 853–8) refers to several political meetings, of which ‘At Dartford’ is one.

³⁶ *Ibid.* Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, note 7 above, between pp. 76 and 77, reproduces a contemporary engraving of the firework display, showing “Welcome to Henry George” emblazoned across the sky. Engraving originally published in *The Pictorial World*, 11 July 1889.

³⁷ WF/E/02/01/01/102.

³⁸ As may be seen from Figures 2 and 3, the name of the firm originally included a comma, “removed at

some point after Burroughs’ death”. Doherty and Steel, *op. cit.*, note 4 above, note 3, p. 95. By convention, the comma has not been used elsewhere in the present article.

³⁹ WF/E/02/01/01/102 (sheet 3).

⁴⁰ The most detailed account is Walter L Arnstein, *The Bradlaugh case: atheism, sex, and politics among the late Victorians*, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1965.

⁴¹ WF/E/02/01/01/102 (sheet 4). For a summary list of petitions during the period 1880–1883, against and in favour of an Affirmation Bill, see Arnstein, *op. cit.*, note 40 above, p. 183.

comparable to the actions “exhibited by the Pagans against early Christians”.⁴² Having spent some pages in demonstrating his personal tolerance of all shades of “honestly held” political and religious opinion, Wellcome finally arrived at his key point: “We are as partners engaged in a manufacturing business which depends for its success upon the favourable consideration and support of men of all shades of political and religious belief—perhaps by far the greater number and certainly not the least important—hold views not only diametrically opposed to yours but they, for the most part (whether right or wrong) regard your expressed views as mischevious [*sic*] and injurious” (Figures 2 and 3).⁴³ Burroughs’s undertaking not to introduce politics into the Dartford opening—“you had most sacredly pledged”,⁴⁴ complained Wellcome—amounted to hollow words, and the circulation of reports of George’s speech had “called down upon our firm the severe condemnation of many of our valued business supporters”.⁴⁵

In the years that followed, Burroughs persisted in using the firm’s resources to promote the political ideas of Henry George, often directing actions as he travelled abroad. On 25 February 1893, Burroughs wrote from Chicago to Joseph Collett Smith, a senior administrative figure in the firm, asking about “the distribution” of “the single tax papers” in Dartford.⁴⁶ On 9 August of the same year, Burroughs sent a postcard to Collett Smith and assistant manager William Kirby concerning the distribution of political pamphlets.⁴⁷ However, on 20 November 1894, Charles John Hare, FRCP, wrote to the firm to say: “I doubt very much—&, personally, I feel very strongly on the matter—whether it is right & fair for a firm which owes so much to the medical profession to mix up ultra political opinions of the most dangerous character—such as the advocacy of ‘the increase of taxation upon Land Value until the whole annual value of Land is taken in taxation for public purposes’ with their advertisements of Lanoline, Extracts & Tabloids.”⁴⁸

“Mr Joseph Chamberlain has taught the nation to think Imperially—Burroughs Wellcome & Co work Imperially”⁴⁹

Although Burroughs and Wellcome came to agree on very little, they shared an expansive commercial vision that extended, physically, from London along the busy

⁴² WF/E/02/01/01/102 (sheets 5–6). “Burroughs was a staunch Presbyterian, regularly attending lunchtime services at the City Temple. . . .” (Sheppard, *op. cit.*, note 3 above, p. 1014).

⁴³ WF/E/02/01/01/102 (sheets 9–10).

⁴⁴ WF/E/02/01/01/102 (sheet 12).

⁴⁵ WF/E/02/01/01/102 (sheet 13).

⁴⁶ In WF/E/02/01/01/113.

⁴⁷ Postcard written aboard the SS *Britannia*, in WF/E/02/01/01/116.

⁴⁸ WF/E/02/01/02/19. See WF/E/02/01/02/20 for draft text and some page-proofs for introductory pages (including Burroughs Wellcome & Co advertisements) to accompany a pamphlet reprinting

of ‘Protection or Free Trade’ by Henry George, on behalf of the Electoral Committee for the Taxation of Land Values (5 Palace Chambers, New Bridge Street, Westminster). The objective of the Electoral Committee was “to aid in the return to Parliament, County Councils and other Administrative Bodies, of Candidates pledged to strenuously advocate, before and after Election, the appropriation of Ground Values for public purposes, and to urge this object as a matter of justice and of expediency”.

⁴⁹ Burroughs Wellcome & Co, *Souvenir of the First Universal Races Congress London 1911* [1911], p. 29.

Thames seaway to new colonial markets.⁵⁰ London was the strategic capital of a British empire of trading opportunities that attracted both partners to its commercial promise. It is therefore unsurprising that both were ardent supporters of Henry Stanley, whose African explorations were self-represented as continuous in spirit and purpose with the yoking of Christianity and commerce that had characterized Livingstone's earlier missions.⁵¹ Burroughs did not know Henry Stanley as well as Wellcome knew him. Stanley and Wellcome shared a number of friends in common, notably May Sheldon, who first introduced Wellcome to Stanley in 1884, following Stanley's return from the Congo.⁵² Although Burroughs appears not to have known Stanley in anything more than a professional capacity, his papers include a single and brief letter from him, dated 10 February 1894 (Figure 4).⁵³ The letter, which had been forwarded to Burroughs in Tangier, begins by thanking Burroughs for what seems likely to have been an open offer of medicine chests for future expeditions to Africa. "I will bear your kind promise in mind," wrote Stanley, "though I don't think I shall call on you often—as I do not meet with many gentlemen on their way to Africa." The somewhat elliptical reference to not meeting "with many gentlemen on their way to Africa" (which we may surmise as the echo to a phrase in a prior letter from Burroughs) is arresting, in that it seems to combine the apparent light humour of a white-haired explorer, whose days of youthful exploration are done, with a much darker and pointed resonance. Stanley's reputation had suffered considerably with the publication of the accounts of other members of the expedition to rescue Emin Pasha, and the press had hotly debated both Stanley's leadership and the purpose of the mission. In particular, events surrounding the fate of the "rear column" and the *gentlemen* officers responsible for it, whose actions—of a piece, but not identical, with the horrors that Conrad's novella *Heart of darkness* would adumbrate in 1899⁵⁴—had been far from gentle towards the Africans in their charge.⁵⁵ Moving on briskly, Stanley's letter to Burroughs then mentions a forthcoming political meeting in Lambeth at which he and Mrs Stanley will speak: "Concerning the 'Democratic' waggon. I think you had better hurry up with it for the Election may be on us at any day." On the back of the letter (Figure 5), Burroughs wrote an internal note to Sudlow and Kirby recording his

⁵⁰For a brooding and sombre river Thames, subversive of empire and exploration, see the opening paragraphs of Joseph Conrad, *Heart of darkness* (first published 1899), ed. Robert Hampson, London, Penguin Books, 1995, pp. 15–18.

⁵¹Two related articles discuss the origins of this fusion that provided the intellectual engine to British exploration and missionary work: Andrew Porter, 'Commerce and Christianity: the rise and fall of a nineteenth-century missionary slogan', *The Historical Journal*, 1985, 28: 597–621, and Brian Stanley, "'Commerce and Christianity': providence theory, the missionary movement, and the imperialism of free trade, 1842–1860', *The Historical Journal*, 1983, 26: 71–94.

⁵²Jeal, op. cit., note 9 above, p. 299. Also, Rhodes James, op. cit., note 7 above, p. 134, and, for a prior

meeting, when Wellcome was an unknown young pharmaceutical clerk at McKesson & Robbins in New York, p. 70.

⁵³In WF/E/02/01/01/118.

⁵⁴Stanley's expeditions provide one model, but not the only model, for a narrative that deliberately avoids correlation with specific events. See Robert Hampson, 'Introduction', Conrad, op. cit., note 50 above, pp. xx–xxi. Jeal, op. cit., note 9 above, p. 452, suggests: "It was Conrad's reading of [Edward J] Glave's articles, especially his description of Captain Rom, that seems to have inspired him to create the evil Kurtz."

⁵⁵McLynn, pp. 343–56, and Jeal, pp. 407–14, both cited in note 9 above.

9a

I am prompted to make this suggestion
by the unfortunate tone of your
letter.

Now you know I have always
maintained that every individual
has a perfect right to hold whatever
political or religious views his conscience
and wisdom dictates, but I have as
steadfastly insisted that no individual
should offensively force his views upon
others against the dictates of their
conscience, and judgment - matters
political and religious ^{should be} based
upon individual belief and every
individual should be a free agent.

We are as partners engaged in
a manufacturing business which
depends for its success upon the
favourable consideration and support
of men of all shades of political

Figure 2: "We are as partners engaged in a manufacturing business which depends for its success ...". Wellcome to Burroughs, 22 March, 1890 (page 9). (WF/E/02/01/01/102, Wellcome Library, London.)

and religious beliefs - perhaps by far
the greater number ~~and~~ and certainly
not the least important - hold views
^{not only} diametrically opposed to yours but
they, for the most part (whether right or
wrong) regard your expressed views as
~~being~~ mischievous and injurious - If it
is the object of our business to
propagate some specialism, or
creed then we should by all means
^{zealously} identify our business with that ism,
or creed - but as if you will admit
our business is not conducted for
such purpose, but rather with
the view of earning daily bread
for ourselves and our employees
why should we not conduct it
on the proper business principles
recognized throughout the world; -
one of the most essential features

Figure 3: "... & perhaps by far the greater number and certainly not the least important hold views not only diametrically opposed to yours ...". Wellcome to Burroughs, 22 March 1890 (page 10). (WF/E/02/01/01/102, Wellcome Library, London.)

X Sm. sent to W.B.

2, RICHMOND TERRACE,
WHITEHALL, S.W.

Feb 10th 1894

Dear Mr. Burroughs

You are surely
65 questions, it will bear your
kind promise in mind though I
don't think I shall call on
you often - as I do not meet
with many gentlemen on their
way to Africa. There is nothing
however. On Monday the 15th
we have a political meeting
at the Lambeth Bazaar - K.J.

have made a speech, Mr B
Stanley will also make one.

X Concerning the 'Democratic'
Wagon. I think you had better
bury up with it for the Election
may be on us at any day.

With best regards from
me. to you all. Love
Yours faithfully
Henry Winstanley

Wm. Burroughs
K. K. K.

ORDER NO

REQ 5 MAR 94

ANSW

11.5.94
Posted 24
Tanger 2.94

Figure 4: "Concerning the 'Democratic' wagon. I think you had better hurry up with it for the Election may be on us at any day." Stanley to Burroughs, 10 February 1894. (In WF/E/02/01/01/118, Wellcome Library, London.)

File
S. M. Burroughs

5 MAR 1894

Dear Sir. I desire to
be of service to Mr Stanley in his
contest as I feel that he ought to be
in Parliament & that his services
to the Country will be of the utmost value
He is thoroughly honest & conscientious
& therefore when well informed will be
sure to vote right.
I hope that the wagon will arrive
in time. When it comes please ask
Messrs White to lend us a team or ask
Lavington. We must not pay anything
for any services of horses harness or
anything else or thank would be un-
desired. Better correspond with Stanley
Electric agent but don't hire anything
whatever is supplied must be free of charge
Perhaps Mr Hart would lend his team
& drive it or Stanley's agent would find
a good driver who knows the locality which
would be still better. I believe Stanley would
have been elected last time if that horses
I bought in Newmarket had not met with
an accident. Stanley will give you names of men
for whom we want enough carriage or parties lost by bonds
who will give you every information

Mr Stanley's election day is on 12th March. I should like to have a check
of the Council's name as well as of the name of the agent of the day before the election.

Figure 5: "I desire to be of service to Mr Stanley in his contest as I feel that he ought to be in Parliament & that his services to the country will be of the utmost value." Burroughs to Sudlow and Kirby (Burroughs Wellcome & Co), received 5 March 1894. Note written on verso Stanley to Burroughs, 10 February 1894. (In WF/E/02/01/01/118, Wellcome Library, London.)

desire “to be of service to Mr Stanley”, whose “services to the country will be of utmost value”. The service that Burroughs offers is the free provision of a “waggon” and the procurement of a team of horses—“perhaps Mr Hertz would lend his team & drive it”, Burroughs muses, “or Stanley’s agent would find a good driver who knows the locality”. On 9 March, T Hertz (of Herz & Collingwood) wrote to Burroughs: “very pleased if I can be of any use on this occasion personally with my horses”.⁵⁶

The “utmost value” that Stanley would be to the legislative body he was about to join proved to be less than its promise, although Burroughs would not live to witness Stanley’s temperamental unsuiteness to Parliamentary work.⁵⁷ Whilst Burroughs, like Wellcome, was drawn to supporting Stanley’s candidacy by the policy of free trade that Stanley had always endorsed—underwritten by a providential Christian morality that appealed to both partners—in other respects, his reactionary sentiments were far from the Christian socialism that had so incensed Wellcome, but inspired Burroughs, in the shape of Henry George.⁵⁸ Indeed, in Stanley’s previous and narrowly unsuccessful campaign to win North Lambeth (in 1892, when he lost by 130 votes),⁵⁹ he had argued vehemently *against* an eight-hour day, and was reported to have said that “if he had worked only eight hours a day, he would never have got ahead of the Germans in Africa and added 200,000 square miles of land to British territory”.⁶⁰ Parliament was not dissolved until June 1895. Gladstone’s brief Liberal government clung to power precariously, dependent for survival upon the co-operation of divided Irish Nationalists. Although Gladstone managed to pass a Home Rule Bill through the Commons by a slim majority of thirty-four, it was thrown out by the Lords. Burroughs appears to have gone ahead anyway and hired the wagon, to judge from a postcard that he sent to Snow Hill from Calais, dated 21 March 1894: “Mr Stanley will not be requiring the Democrat Wagon till Election time.” With a characteristic shift to practicality, suffused with a paternalistic nod towards the welfare of his staff, Burroughs adds: “I am willing it should be used for Saturday excursions by Employees at Snow Hill or Dartford or if it is suitable it may be used to carry bottles & other light goods to & from the station in Dartford.”⁶¹

In the Burroughs Wellcome & Co price list for April 1895, immediately following Burroughs’s death, several pages are devoted to the company’s range of medicine chests, and its junior sibling, the medicine case, in all their variant forms. Burroughs’s prediction that the chest would “spread our goods all over the world” had come to quick fruition. Numerous line illustrations are nestled in the endorsement of surviving explorers, particularly Stanley. Pride of place at the head of the list is given to a surviving chest—a visibly

⁵⁶ In WF/E/02/01/01/118.

⁵⁷ Jeal, *op. cit.*, note 9 above, p. 425, paragraph beginning “For someone of Stanley’s temperament . . .”.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Henry George, ‘Thy kingdom come’, an address delivered on 28 April 1889 in the City Hall, Glasgow, available at: <http://www.grundskyld.dk/1-Kingdom.html> (accessed 22 Aug. 2007).

⁵⁹ Jeal, *op. cit.*, note 9 above, p. 425. See also, Frank Hird, *H M Stanley, the authoritative life*,

London, Stanley Paul & Co, 1935, p. 296:

“[Stanley] was howled down at his first big meeting; the platform was stormed and as he and his wife drove away the door of their brougham was wrenched from its hinges”.

⁶⁰ Reported in McLynn, *op. cit.*, note 9 above, p. 373.

⁶¹ In WF/E/02/01/01/118.

battered but intact relic—"carried by H M Stanley through darkest Africa, and brought back after three years' journey with remaining contents unimpaired". Whilst it is understood that it was not Stanley himself but his African porters who had "carried" his chests "through darkest Africa", nevertheless the burden is deliberately personalized. The price list for 1895 also provides an apt passage of product-endorsement taken from a public lecture Stanley gave in January 1894: "When I think of the dreadful mortality of Captain Tuckey's Expedition of 1816, in the Niger Expedition of 1841, at Sierre Leone, and on the Gold Coast, of the sufferings of Burton and Speke, and of my own first two Expeditions, I was amazed to find that much of the mortality and sickness was due to the crude way medicines were supplied to travellers. The very recollection causes me to shudder. Now, however, every traveller conveys his medicines in the form of elegant 'Tabloids'."⁶² In the contrast made between the *crudity* of previous medical supply and the *elegance* of the Tabloid form, the rough trade of exploration is tidied and trimmed and hidden, like the brutal march of African colonization itself, for Tabloids "make exploration easier, safer, and more effective".⁶³ Stanley's *In darkest Africa* (1890) included references to numerous western commodities,⁶⁴ amongst them a purple passage of endorsement of Burroughs Wellcome & Co.⁶⁵ Appearing with reassuring regularity at the farthest reaches of civilization, giving service on the battlefield, and at the frontiers of disease, we may liken the various *sightings* of Burroughs Wellcome & Co medicine chests as early examples of what is referred to today, in marketing terms, as product-placement.⁶⁶ More than the sum of their parts, Burroughs Wellcome & Co chests came to be presented to the public, as the years went by, in increasingly romantic terms. Each chest stood, in its presentation, as a symbolic

⁶² Burroughs Wellcome & Co illustrated Price List (April 1895), p. 12. There is a copy in newly catalogued papers relating to the Dompé Case (in WF/L/06/024).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Stanley "pays heavy tribute to commodities by opening the floodgates of his narrative to them, summoning each article by its brand name and turning every laundry list into a product endorsement". Richards, *op. cit.*, note 18 above, p. 129. Richards' analysis derives from Karl Marx, especially 'The fetishism of the commodity and its secret', *Das kapital* (1867), Ch. 1, Section 4.

⁶⁵ In the haste of composition, Stanley mis-named the company and used a circumlocution for "Tabloid": "Messrs. Burroughs & Wellcome, of Snowhill Buildings, London, the well-known chemists, furnished gratis nine beautiful chests replete with every medicament necessary to combat the endemic diseases peculiar to Africa. Every drug was in tablets mixed with quick solvents, every compartment was well stocked with essentials for the doctor and surgeon. Nothing was omitted, and we all owe a deep debt of gratitude to these gentlemen, not only for the intrinsic value of the chests and excellent medicines, but also for the personal selection of the best that London could furnish, and the supervision of the

packing, by which means we were enabled to transport them to Yambuya without damage". Henry M Stanley, *In darkest Africa, or the quest, rescue, and retreat of Emin Governor of Equatoria*, 2 vols, London, S Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1890 (limited ed.), vol. 1, p. 38. Burroughs Wellcome & Co was, however, far from being the exclusive recipient of Stanley's favour, who also endorsed, for example, the United Kingdom Tea Company, Congo Soap, and Bovril—for reproduced advertisements, see Richards, *op. cit.*, note 18 above, pp. 137, 139, and 143. See also, a second source of endorsement of Burroughs Wellcome & Co in two volumes by the Emin Expedition medical officer Thomas Heazle Parke, *My personal experiences in equatorial Africa: as medical officer of the Emin Pasha relief expedition* (London, 1891), and *Guide to health in Africa: with notes on the country and its inhabitants* (London, 1893), the latter commencing with three pages of advertisements for Tabloid medicine chests.

⁶⁶ For visual examples of placement, see the colonial advertisements reproduced in 'Selling darkest Africa', Richards, *op. cit.*, note 18 above, pp. 119–67. In particular, Stanley and Emin Pasha sipping tea (p. 139).

commodity signifying the advance of civilization in an imperialist cultural narrative of quasi-evolutionary progress. Such a narrative had ceased being told as a credible intellectual story long before amateur collector Henry Wellcome finished stocking its episodes in the form of the unfinished, and unfinishable, Historical Medical Museum.⁶⁷ The medicine chest's structural resemblance to an ark, or a casket, in which objects of power are kept—in this instance, healing wonders—would not have escaped Wellcome's iconographic attention, which embellished promotional literature with an array of symbolism garnered from across classical and Egyptian mythologies. In a promotional volume published by Burroughs Wellcome & Co (USA) Inc in 1934, with the indicative title *The romance of exploration and emergency first-aid from Stanley to Byrd*, the ambassadorial claim is made that “The medicine chest goes hand in hand with the advance of civilization. The conquest of disease and the battle against ignorance and superstition are fought along the same frontiers.”⁶⁸

Stanley's lecture reference to “elegant ‘Tabloids’” was published in the *Lancet* as a single paragraph in the section headed ‘Notes, Comments and Answers to Correspondents’.⁶⁹ In Tangier,⁷⁰ Burroughs received a cutting. He immediately sent a postcard (15 February 1894) to Snow Hill, requesting that Stanley's remarks be sent at once to all other medical journals in England, adding: “I think it would also be a good thing to get an Electro of the top right hand corner of page 313 . . . and send it as a cutting (to look just like a cutting from the *Lancet*) to every newspaper in Gt Britain Europe Asia Africa Australasia & South America.”⁷¹ The string of recipient continents that Burroughs lists, without pause or comma, recapitulates his earlier travels to establish new markets across the world and lay the commercial foundation to Burroughs Wellcome & Co as an international enterprise.

⁶⁷ Ghislaine M Skinner, ‘Sir Henry Wellcome's museum for the science of history’, *Med. Hist.*, 1986, 30: 383–418, locates Henry Wellcome's museum ambitions within a late-nineteenth-century evolutionist context and its associated comparative methodology. “Inconceivable before the 1860s and unconvincing to some even by the time of the museum's opening in 1926” (p. 384). Skinner argues that Wellcome's amateur status, and his isolation from the professional museum community, was fundamental to the kind of museum he created.

⁶⁸ Burroughs Wellcome & Co, *The romance of exploration and emergency first-aid from Stanley to Byrd*, New York City, [1934], p. 29. Published to coincide with the Chicago Century of Progress Exhibition, at which Burroughs Wellcome & Co exhibited amongst other “relic” items one of the chests used by Stanley in the Congo. For photographic displays of various relic cases associated with travel, polar exploration and warfare, see pp. 32, 80 and 94. The denotation of surviving chests as “relics” is consonant with the language of the “comparative method” (Skinner, op. cit., note 67 above, pp. 391, 394). Jude Hill, ‘Globe-trotting medicine chests:

tracing geographies of collecting and pharmaceuticals’, *Soc. Cult. Geog.*, 2006, 7: 365–84, discusses how, in the context of missionary work and the collection of items for Wellcome's Historical Medical Museum, the company's “chests and their contents played a crucial role in practices and scenes of collecting and exchange” (p. 367). See also, in this regard, Skinner, op. cit., p. 401 on “amateur collecting”.

⁶⁹ *Lancet* (3 Feb. 1894), p. 313, under the heading ‘Mr H M Stanley on pharmacy’.

⁷⁰ Burroughs visited Tangier on several occasions, and published in the previous year ‘An enlightened policy in Morocco’, *Chem. Drug.* (28 Jan. 1893), pp. 105–7 (WF/E/02/02/33).

⁷¹ In WF/E/02/01/01/118, which also includes a copy of the cutting-like “electro” which Burroughs requested be made. There is a small textual difference between the two: the text in the *Lancet* has the fuller phrase “in the form of elegant tabloids coated with sugar”, whereas the “electro” prints the (sugar-free) phrase “in the form of elegant tabloids”.

“[I]n the emergencies of combat”⁷²

Burroughs and Wellcome did not clash over the support for Henry Stanley that Burroughs Wellcome & Co gave publicly, and each partner gave personally. This was not because business and politics were not mixed (to refer again to Wellcome’s response to the matter of Henry George) but because in this instance endorsement was entirely consonant with the company’s view of the world and its position within it. As we have seen, with advertisements for Tabloid chests, the endorsement was reciprocal. Wellcome’s letter of 22 March 1890, included the passing observation that he did not think “foreigners should interfere with the domestic politics of a country unless the people of that country are incapable of managing their own affairs”,⁷³ a remark that was intended to buttress Wellcome’s argument against Burroughs’s political involvement in local and national politics. Applied in the context of the imperial advance of empire, however—in the context of interference writ large—the remark is striking. In 1928, when Wellcome gave evidence to the Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries, he suggested that one practical purpose of a research museum was the “efficient practical training” of colonial administrators in “the habits, customs, superstitions, beliefs, fears and prejudices of the *subject native races*”.⁷⁴ When Wellcome stood up to defend Stanley at a noisy and emotionally charged meeting of the Aborigines’ Protection Society (1890) against the accusation that the majority of the porters in the Emin Pasha expedition had been slaves,⁷⁵ he was, in effect, defending a shared reputation. And when damning criticism of Stanley’s expedition appeared in the press, Wellcome responded. He wrote to Stanley that he was “fortunate enough to have friends in each of the English and American Press Agencies who would do a good turn”.⁷⁶ The Stanley and Wellcome correspondence at the Royal Geographical Society includes a single brief letter from Burroughs to Stanley, written on receipt of Stanley’s *In darkest Africa*. In contrast to Wellcome’s letters to Stanley, which are more assured in tone and content, the letter from Burroughs (28 June 1890) is reverential and submissive: “From the first time I saw you you have inspired in me the utmost devotion that one man can have for another, as I recognize in you one set to do well as God guides and will bless you.” Burroughs then maintains the polite pretence of being surprised by Stanley’s endorsement of the medicine chests: “You were very kind to have taken the undeserved trouble to mention our humble efforts to be of service in preparing the medicines needful for the Expedition. I never took a greater interest or pleasure in anything than in those efforts to be of service to you whom I believe to be a devoted servant of God and true friend of man.” Service is

⁷² Wellcome to Stanley, 25 Feb. 1890. Royal Geographical Society (HMS/3/2). See p. 128 below for context.

⁷³ WF/E/02/01/01/102 (sheet 8).

⁷⁴ Henry Wellcome, ‘Minutes of Evidence’, *Royal Commission on National Museums and Galleries: “Oral evidence, memoranda and appendices to the*

final report”, London, HMSO, 1929, p. 103, italics added. For Wellcome’s evidence in typescript (1928), see WA/HSW/OR/L/2.

⁷⁵ McLynn, *op. cit.*, note 9 above, pp. 344–5.

⁷⁶ Wellcome to Stanley, 31 Jan. 1890. In file HMS/3/2, archive of the Royal Geographical Society.

mentioned repeatedly, to Stanley and to God. After congratulating Stanley on his marriage, Burroughs places himself “ever & ever at your command” before declaring in valediction (as if his relative status had not been sufficiently apparent) that he is Stanley’s “obedient servant”.⁷⁷ Burroughs’s words are in accord with a Victorian biographical view of history, derived from Carlyle, as the telling of the lives of great men (“one set to do well”, Burroughs calls Stanley), here set within a providential Christian ethic (“as God guides”). The repetitive and eternity-signifying phrase “ever and ever” is an unconscious but unmistakable echo of the Lord’s Prayer.

Burroughs’s letter to Stanley is not at all typical in style or tone. A decision taken at the time by Burroughs concerning the marketing of the Livingstone Chest exhibits further deference, this time expressed in a tone of voice more recognizable, direct and commanding: “I think that the Raw Hide Medicine Chest should in future be so described and no longer called the Livingstone Chest . . . My special reason for this is that the Dartford Hospital was named after Livingstone at my request. Therefore the name should not be used in our business.”⁷⁸ The Livingstone Chest does not appear in the price list for 1885.⁷⁹ Built from a fund that Burroughs initiated with a cheque for £1,000,⁸⁰ Dartford’s Livingstone Hospital, on East Hill, is still in use today. The founding and naming of the hospital seemed to draw a line for Burroughs, marking where, in this privileged instance—the privilege of the great man of history—commercial endorsement ends and memorial begins. The foundation stone was laid by Stanley on 4 April 1894, giving local recognition to historical continuity between Stanley and Livingstone, a continuity vicariously shared by Burroughs Wellcome & Co. On 8 May 1894, Collett Smith wrote to Burroughs, requesting instructions for the distribution of 200 copies of the *Swanley Times and Dartford Chronicle* carrying a report of the laying of the memorial stone. Burroughs lists a number of addresses, with an instruction that “Mr Stanley’s speech should be marked in each paper”.⁸¹ Although the context and message detail have changed from the distribution of political literature, the urge to broadcast, to circulate through company machinery, endures like an instinctive reflex muscle of reputation.

Burroughs’s Will records that he gave his signed copy of Stanley’s *In darkest Africa* to his son, Stanley. Amongst various sums (divided into 24ths) given to missions, charities, to Henry George, and other friends, he gave one twenty-fourth to

⁷⁷ Burroughs to Stanley, 28 June 1890. HM/3/3, Royal Geographical Society.

⁷⁸ Burroughs to Burroughs Wellcome & Co, 6 May 1894, from Anvers [Antwerp] (in WF/E/02/01/01/119).

⁷⁹ The only raw hide chest listed for sale is the [Thomas] “Stevens Raw Hide Medicine Chest”. Burroughs Wellcome & Co illustrated Price List (April 1895), p. 14 (in WF/L/06/024). See inside back cover for the endorsement of “Mr Thos. Stevens, the well known journalist who circled the globe on a

Bicycle, more recently made the great horseback ride through Russia, and who was the first to greet Stanley as he approached the east coast of Africa on his return to civilisation”.

⁸⁰ See WF/E/02/02/08 for letter (19 Dec. 1892), to A[ibert] Searl (Works Manager, Dartford), and receipt (6 Jan. 1893) for £1,000, “being donation to Hospital Fund (a/c SMB)”. See also WF/E/02/02/24 for newspaper cuttings from *West Kent Advertiser* (1892–93).

⁸¹ In WF/E/02/01/01/119.

the employees of Burroughs Wellcome & Co, “who may be such at the time of my death”.⁸² One of them, Albert E Warden, was to remain with the firm for fifty years, rising to the level of the Wellcome Foundation Secretariat, responsible for the company’s trade mark and intellectual property matters. Shortly before his retirement, in 1942, Warden wrote a brief reminiscence which sketches with affection many details from the last two years of Burroughs’s life, when Warden was a newly appointed young man. His recollections include attending the laying of the memorial stone at Livingstone Hospital—many Burroughs Wellcome & Co staff were present to witness the historical moment—and a trip to hear Stanley speak: “It was in 1893 or 1894 that S.M.B. arranged to take about six or eight of us fellows to the Canterbury Music Hall one Saturday . . . We went in ‘growlers’ from Holborn Viaduct and after the lecture we were introduced to the Lecturer[,] Mr Burroughs exclaiming ‘Mr Stanley, I want to introduce to you some of my friends.’” Afterwards, Burroughs and his staff ate “chops and steak” at Waterloo Station.⁸³ As we have seen from Stanley’s endorsement paragraph published in the *Lancet*, and promptly circulated everywhere, the lecture would have included an endorsement for the company.

Reputation lies at the heart of these entangled strands of commercial and political endorsement. Wellcome continued in his support of Stanley, attentive throughout his final illness. He was an unsuccessful advocate for Stanley’s burial at Westminster Abbey alongside Livingstone (Stanley’s tarnished reputation seems to have been the obstacle), and he was a pall-bearer at his funeral (1904).⁸⁴ On Stanley’s return from the Pasha expedition (1890), he gave Wellcome his rifle. Wellcome received it as a relic from the very heroic frontier—at once, literal and symbolic—celebrated in promotional literature for the company’s medicine chests, where civilization and savagery meet: “I shall feel very proud to possess the rifle which you have carried throughout this last great journey. Nothing could be more precious as a souvenir, it being so intimately associated with you in the emergencies of combat, and I hope in some measure it served to preserve your life.”⁸⁵ It is ironic that Stanley’s rifle, newly returned from this frontier where “ignorance and superstition” have been fought, should become implicitly fetishised by Wellcome as an object of superstitious power. Wellcome hosted a testimonial banquet (30 May 1890) for Stanley—a far cry from chops and steak on Waterloo Station—“in recognition of [Stanley’s] heroic achievements in the cause of humanity, science and civilization”. The centre-piece of the occasion was the presentation of the (unfinished) Stanley Testimonial Shield, elaborately designed by Wellcome. Two feet

⁸² ‘Last Will and Testament of Silas M Burroughs’ (WF/E/02/02/09).

⁸³ A E Warden, ‘Silas Mainville Burroughs b. 24th December 1846[,] died 6th February 1895’, WF/E/02/02/32.

⁸⁴ As Stanley had been a pall-bearer at Livingstone’s funeral, in Westminster Abbey on 18 April 1874. Felix Driver, ‘Stanley, Sir Henry Morton

(1841–1904)’, *ODNB*, vol. 52, pp. 214–20, on p. 216; [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36247>, accessed 29 Aug. 2007].

⁸⁵ Wellcome to Stanley, 25 Feb. 1890. HMS/3/2, Royal Geographical Society.

tall in silver, and weighing “several hundred ounces”, on its face several tableaux of historically elevated incidents from Stanley’s African expeditions, surrounding an outline of Africa with “Mr Stanley’s various journey’s inlaid with gold”.⁸⁶ The tableaux include certain “emergencies of combat”—to recall Wellcome’s turn of phrase—in which Stanley’s rifle is seen in action, and a Burroughs Wellcome & Co chest is carried like treasure.

⁸⁶ ‘Souvenir of dinner to Sir H.M. Stanley, G.C.B.’ Bound programme for a banquet at the Portman Rooms, London, 30 May 1890. Copy held by the Wellcome Library. The design of the Shield is the subject of a number of letters and papers held at the Royal Geographical Society. A photograph of the Shield appears in the programme (see Wellcome Images M0008527). The photograph, however, lacks clarity because, as Wellcome explains in his programme notes, it was taken of “a hasty water-colour sketch of the unfinished shield, and several of the important details are omitted or incorrect. Every prominent figure on the shield is a special study, and

represents a personality or a type. Every accessory has special significance.” See also, Hill, *op. cit.*, note 68 above, p. 381, note 9: “[Wellcome’s] instructions to the manufacturers for the ‘Stanley and Emin scene’ alone ran to four pages of typescript. This tableau featured a Tabloid Medicine Chest, carried by one of Surgeon Parke’s gun-bearers.” The Shield was still unfinished when Wellcome wrote (18 Oct. 1899) to Elkington & Co Ltd about its completion—see Henry Wellcome Letter Book 5, p. 150 (WF/E/01/01/05). For Wellcome’s detailed description, see Letter Book 2, pp. 256–60 (WF/E/01/01/02).