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## **Letters concerning George Harris' A Philosophical Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of Man, 1873-1877**

Processed by Pat Walter.

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### **Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Letters concerning George Harris' *A Philosophical Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of Man* ,

**Date (inclusive):** 1873-1877

**Collection number:** 10

**Creator:** Harris, George 1809-1890

**Extent:** 1 v. (various pagings) ; 22 cm.

**Repository:** University of California, Los Angeles. Library. Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library History and Special Collections for the Sciences

Los Angeles, California 90095-1490

**Abstract:** George Harris (1809-1890) was a barister and judge with strong interests in anthropology and psychology. During 1874-1876, George Harris solicited comments and suggestions from many eminent philosophers, theologians and naturalists concerning the ideas and language of his planned treatise on the nature of man. This collection includes approximately 150 original manuscript letters sent him in reply by 31 correspondents, bound into one octavo-sized volume. In 1876 Harris' work was published in two volumes titled "A Philosophical Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of Man"; in it he quoted from over 100 of these letters.

**Physical location:** History and Special Collections for the Sciences, Biomedical Library, University of California, Los Angeles

**Language of Material:** Collection materials in English, French

### **Access**

Collection is available for use.

### **Preferred Citation**

[Identification of item], Letters concerning George Harris' *A Philosophical Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of Man* (Manuscript collection 10). Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library History and Special Collections for the Sciences, University of California, Los Angeles.

### **UCLA Catalog Record ID**

UCLA Catalog Record ID: [6107864](#)

### **Acquisition Information**

The volume bears a small sticker on the rear endpaper: "Ex Libris, C. K. Ogden". Charles Kay Ogden (1889-1957), British psychologist, linguist, and author of "Meaning of Meaning" among many other publications, amassed a vast personal library. After his death, ca. 100,000 of these volumes were bought by the Library of the University of California, Los Angeles.

### **Biography**

George Harris (1809-1890) was articled to his solicitor father at age 16. He subsequently became a partner in his father's firm in Rugby, but just before he reached the age of 30 he left for London to pursue a literary career. After some small success as journalist and editor, he decided to go back to the law and entered the Middle Temple. After ten not very lucrative years as a barrister he became a judge in county courts and finally the court of bankruptcy at Manchester, from which he retired in 1868.

During all his years in the law, Harris continued writing and publishing: e.g., "Life of Lord Chancellor Hardwicke", "Memoir of Lord Brougham", "The Theory of the Arts", and his proposal "The Manuscript Treasures of this Country, and the Best Means of Rendering them Available". He was a member of the Anthropological Society of London, and one of the founders of the Psychological Society.

In 1876 Harris published "A Philosophical Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of Man", the work which elicited the letters described in this collection. To quote from the "Dictionary of National Biography": it was "a work on which he had been engaged intermittently for forty-three years. While many of his theories were novel, his general treatment of the subject reverted to the principles and terminology of the medieval schoolmen, and he completely ignored the methods and conclusions of contemporary scientific psychology".

### **Scope and Content**

The collection consists of 152 holograph letters, according to the numbering which has been added at some time. This numbering is somewhat erratic, however; an early cataloging record specifies "158 pieces". The letters have been folded and are bound into a handsome octavo-sized volume, preceded by a publisher's advertisement for the two-volume edition of "A Philosophical Treatise on the Nature and Constitution of Man," by George Harris. London: George Bell and Sons, 1876. The 18 pages of printed introductory matter consist of: Contents; Extracts; Opinions of the Press. A short paragraph after

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"Contents" states "Eminent authorities...have been in correspondence with, and have been consulted by the author...". This statement is followed by 24 names listed as "...among the gentlemen who have so kindly aided the undertaking."

Following the printed introductory pages is a two-page handwritten list headed "Letters from", giving the correspondent's name and the letter number or numbers coming from that person. All letters are dated 1873 through 1877 (most from 1874-1875). Letter no.1, from Charles Darwin, was probably missing from the volume at the time it was bound.

The finding aid is organized by series, each series naming one of the correspondents. The form of the names mostly follows the Library of Congress name file. The titles attached to each name are those used by Harris in the "Treatise..." and the identifying notes are mostly taken from the "Dictionary of National Biography".

The collection is organized into the following series:

- Series 1. Barclay, Hugh, 1799-1884, Mr. Sheriff
- Series 2. Beddoe, John, 1826-1911, Dr.
- Series 3. Blake, Charles Carter, 1840-1897, Dr.
- Series 4. Bloxam, John Rouse, 1807-1891, Rev. Dr.
- Series 5. Bogoushevsky, Nicolas Casimir de, Baron
- Series 6. Bray, Charles, 1811-1884, Mr.
- Series 7. Chaplain of Hanwell Lunatic Asylum (William Grey?)
- Series 8. Chapman, John, 1821-1894, Dr.
- Series 9. Clarke, Hyde, 1815-1895, Dr.
- Series 10. Coleridge, Derwent, 1800-1883, Rev.
- Series 10. Galton, Francis, Sir, 1822-1911
- Series 11. Cox, Edward William, 1809-1880, Mr. Serjeant
- Series 12. Darwin, Charles, 1809-1882, Mr.
- Series 13. Galton, Francis, 1822-1911, Sir
- Series 14. Gladstone, W. E. (William Ewart), 1809-1898, Rt. Hon.
- Series 15. Huxley, Thomas Henry, 1825-1895, Prof.
- Series 16. Lubbock, John, 1834-1913, Sir
- Series 17. Maudsley, Henry, 1835-1918, Dr.
- Series 18. Newman, John Henry, 1801-1890, Rev. Dr.
- Series 19. Plumtre, Charles John, 1818-1887, Prof.
- Series 20. Quatrefages, A. de (Armand), 1810-1892, Prof.
- Series 21. Richardson, Benjamin Ward, Sir, 1828-1896, Dr.
- Series 22. Rogers, Charles (1825-1890), Rev.
- Series 23. Sainte Croix, Le Roy de
- Series 24. Seager, Charles (possibly 1808-1878), Prof.
- Series 25. Smee, Alfred, 1818-1877, Mr.
- Series 26. Sopwith, Thomas, 1803-1879, Mr.
- Series 27. Tagore, Ganendro Mohun, 1826 - 1890, Mr.
- Series 28. Vaughan, Charles John, 1816-1897, Rev. Dr.
- Series 29. Wake, C. Staniland (Charles Staniland), 1835-1910, Mr.
- Series 30. Wallace, Alfred Russel, 1823-1913, Mr.
- Series 31. Wood, J. G. (John George), 1827-1889, Rev.

### **Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

### **Subjects**

Darwin, Charles Robert, 1809-1882  
Harris, George, 1809-1890.  
English letters--19th century  
Philosophical anthropology

**Letter #143 1876**

**Note**

judge, sheriff-substitute of Dunblane and Perthshire, author of legal works

Series 2. **Beddoe, John, 1826-1911, Dr.**

**Letter #52 1875**

**Note**

physician and anthropologist, author

Series 3. **Blake, Charles Carter, 1840-1897, Dr.**

**Letters #134, 134a, 135-138 1873-1875**

**Scope and Content Note**

the first page of letter #138 seems to be missing

**Note**

Lecturer on Comparative Anatomy and Zoology, Westminster Hospital

Series 4. **Bloxam, John Rouse, 1807-1891, Rev. Dr.**

**Letters #35-37, 42 1875-1876**

**Scope and Content Note**

in letters #35-37 Rev. Bloxam serves as an intermediary between Cardinal Newman and Mr. Harris; letter #42 is more directly personal, thanking Mr. Harris for the gift of his 2-vol. "Treatise on Man"

**Note**

Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, Doctor of Divinity

Series 5. **Bogoushevsky, Nicolas Casimir de, Baron**

**Letters #146-152 1877-1878**

**Scope and Content Note**

letters in English, written from Pskof, Russia

**Note**

Russian landholder

Series 6. **Bray, Charles, 1811-1884, Mr.**

**Letters #144-145 1876**

**Note**

a freethinker and social reformer interested in phrenology, mesmerism and spiritualism

Series 7. **Chaplain of Hanwell Lunatic Asylum (William Grey?)**

**Letter #139 1874**

**Note**

the letter's signature is hard to decipher - it might be William Grey; Harris quotes from the letter in his treatise but identifies the source only as "The chaplain of one of our largest lunatic asylums..."; in the handwritten contents list bound into the letters volume, the writer is listed as "the Chaplain of Hanwell Lunatic Asylum"

Series 8. **Chapman, John, 1821-1894, Dr.**

**Letter #92-93 1874**

**Scope and Content Note**

there is only one letter, which had two numbers assigned to it

**Note**

physician and publisher, known for "editorship of the leading intellectual journal of the period, "The Westminster Review", his medical activities, and championing of radical causes"

Series 9. **Clarke, Hyde, 1815-1895, Dr.**

**Letter #133 undated**

**Scope and Content Note**

the letter has no salutation or date, so the first page might be missing

**Note**

engineer, philologist, author, member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science

Series 10. **Coleridge, Derwent, 1800-1883, Rev.**

**Letter #109 1875**

**Note**

Rector of Hanwell and Prebendary of St. Paul

Series 11. **Cox, Edward William, 1809-1880, Mr. Serjeant**

**Letters #75-79 1872-1875**

**Note**

Serjeant-at-law, President of the Psychological Society

Series 12. **Darwin, Charles, 1809-1882, Mr.**

**Letters #1-4 1874-1875**

**Scope and Content Note**

letter #1 is listed in the handwritten contents list but seems to have been missing at the time the volume was bound: a folded blank sheet is included in its stead

**Note**

naturalist, geologist, and originator of the theory of natural selection

Series 13. **Galton, Francis, 1822-1911, Sir**

**Letters #42a, 43-47 1874-1876**

**Note**

biostatistician, human geneticist, eugenicist and author

Series 14. **Gladstone, W. E. (William Ewart), 1809-1898, Rt. Hon.**

**Letters #33-34 1875-1876**

**Note**

British prime minister and author

Series 15. **Huxley, Thomas Henry, 1825-1895, Prof.**

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**Letters #8-10 1874-1875**

**Note**

biologist and science educationist

Series 16. **Lubbock, John, 1834-1913, Sir**

**Letters #5-7 1875**

**Note**

English banker, politician, naturalist and archaeologist

Series 17. **Maudsley, Henry, 1835-1918, Dr.**

**Letters #67-72 1874-1876**

**Note**

medical psychologist and author

Series 18. **Newman, John Henry, 1801-1890, Rev. Dr.**

**Letters #38-41 1875-1876**

**Scope and Content Note**

letter #38 is addressed to John Bloxam; the others are addressed to Harris

**Note**

Anglican theologian who converted to Catholicism and was named a cardinal; author

Series 19. **Plumptre, Charles John, 1818-1887, Prof.**

**Letters #94-107 1874-1876**

**Scope and Content Note**

the numbers have been assigned to the letters somewhat erratically

**Note**

barrister and writer, edited two volumes of "The County Courts' Chronicle (1860-61)" with George Harris

Series 20. **Quatrefages, A. de (Armand), 1810-1892, Prof.**

**Letters #64-66 1874-1876**

**Scope and Content Note**

letters in French, sent from Paris

**Note**

Jean Louis Armand de Quatrefages de Bréau, physician, professor of natural history, member of the French Academy of Sciences

Series 21. **Richardson, Benjamin Ward, Sir, 1828-1896, Dr.**

**Letters #11-32, 32a, 32b, 32c 1873-1875**

**Scope and Content Note**

includes some paragraphs of Harris' original printed proofs, with annotations

**Note**

British physician, physiologist, sanitarian and writer on medical history

Series 22. **Rogers, Charles (1825-1890), Rev.**

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**Letter #142 1876**

**Note**

Church of Scotland minister and historian

Series 23. **Sainte Croix, Le Roy de**

**Letters #114-121 undated-1877**

**Scope and Content Note**

in French, sent from London

**Note**

in his volumes, Harris refers to this correspondent as Le Roy; in the handwritten contents list bound with the letters he is referred to as Dr. de Sainte Croix (Paris); the signature is L. R. de Sainte Croix; there are records of an author by that name with the appropriate years of 1834-1882, whose books concern French history

Series 24. **Seager, Charles (possibly 1808-1878), Prof.**

**Letters #140-141 1874-1875**

**Note**

orientalist, graduate of Magdalen College, converted to Catholicism, taught at Catholic University College, Kensington

Series 25. **Smee, Alfred, 1818-1877, Mr.**

**Letters #48-51 1875**

**Note**

chemist and surgeon, MCRS

Series 26. **Sopwith, Thomas, 1803-1879, Mr.**

**Letters #53-63 1874-1875**

**Note**

surveyor and civil engineer, fellow of the Royal Society

Series 27. **Tagore, Ganendro Mohun, 1826 - 1890, Mr.**

**Letters #122-132 1874-1875**

**Note**

first Asian to be called to the English bar, 1862, professor of Hindu Law, University College, London

Series 28. **Vaughan, Charles John, 1816-1897, Rev. Dr.**

**Letter #108 1874**

**Note**

headmaster of Harrow School, Master of the Temple, headmaster and dean of Llandaff

Series 29. **Wake, C. Staniland (Charles Staniland), 1835-1910, Mr.**

**Letters #80-91 1874-1875**

**Note**

anthropologist, author

Series 30. **Wallace, Alfred Russel, 1823-1913, Mr.**

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**Letters #73-74 1874**

**Note**

naturalist and evolutionary theorist

Series 31. **Wood, J. G. (John George), 1827-1889, Rev.**

**Letters #110-113 1874-1876**

**Note**

natural historian and microscopist