

## THE GISSING JOURNAL

“More than most men am I dependent on sympathy to bring out the best that is in me.”  
 – George Gissing’s *Commonplace Book*.

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A Confession Unwisely Revealed  
 The Uneasy Relationship between Gissing  
 and John Northern Hilliard

Pierre Coustillas

Gissing is not known to have numbered many journalists among his friends and none of the few with whom he became acquainted personally ever claimed that he had been familiar with him. The reasons for this lack of intimate contact with men whose profession consists in writing for the million were numerous, and charting them requires no specific investigation. As a child whose father had dabbled in local politics and been involved in unedifying polemics that found echoes in the Wakefield press, the future novelist had doubtless realized that in all matters of public interest the line between honest opinion and scurrilous libel cannot always be drawn with a firm hand. What he saw of American journalism in 1876-77 did not invite greater respect for that class of men who fill the columns of newspapers. Indiscretion being a danger inherent in their work, he naturally shunned people who might have heard of his youthful misadventures and be tempted to worm themselves into his confidence with ulterior motives. As a novelist his estimation of the press remained ambiguous to the end—he viewed it as a source of information, accurate or otherwise, cut out articles he preserved for future use or sent to his correspondents

for their amusement or enlightenment, and, early in his career, sought in it for reactions to his own work. His curiosity in this last respect soon abated; realizing that the average review of his novels disturbed his mental peace by betraying fundamental incomprehension of his artistic aims, he ultimately asked his publishers to cease sending him press-cuttings.

It was not until the early 1890s, after his return to London, that he had some positive contacts with journalists. Of his fighting shy of them hitherto his correspondence offers

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characteristic examples: he would not let himself be interviewed by men who wished to publish articles on him and his work in the *London Figaro* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1887 and 1891 respectively,<sup>1</sup> and when William Blackwood offered to send copies of the January 1893 issue of his magazine containing "A Victim of Circumstances" to any journalist Gissing might know personally, the blunt reply he received was that his contributor was in the happy position for an author of having no such connections.<sup>2</sup> When keeping apart ceased in mid-1893 to be a rule to which he would allow no exception, he nonetheless remained on his guard. Thus he did not altogether approve of Henry Norman's friendly allusions to him in the *Daily Chronicle* and he quite rightly viewed William Robertson Nicoll as a tiresome busybody and inveterate retailer of small talk and scandal. Perhaps the only journalist he confessed he liked was Joseph Anderson, the brother of the famous American actress Mary Anderson, afterwards Mrs. De Navarro, who had a home in Broadway, the Worcestershire village so often referred to in the letters exchanged by members of the Gissing family. Anderson published a good article on him in the *Boston Evening Transcript* and he was tactful enough to let him see it before it was printed.<sup>3</sup>

## I

Things began under equally favourable auspices with John Northern Hilliard, a journalist living in Rochester, New York, who wrote for two local papers, the *Post-Express* and the *Union and Advertiser*, and commented on Gissing and his work on at least four occasions. The relations between the two men are not yet fully elucidated, and will perhaps never be unless two Gissing letters which are known to have been written eventually turn up, but enough information has now been collected for the broad lines of their relationship to be recorded. Born in 1872, Hilliard was still a very young man when he began to read Gissing's work. Lillian Gilkes, in her biography of Cora Crane published over thirty years ago, reports that Hilliard had been a boon companion of Stephen Crane's in the latter's early New York days.<sup>4</sup> Like Crane he made a living on journalism and wrote occasional stories – one of them, discovered accidentally in the *New York Commercial Advertiser* for 19 March 1896, has a title strongly reminiscent of Jack London, "The Tragedy of the Trail. A Story of North Dakota." He reviewed fiction for the Rochester papers, and it was in his capacity as critic that he read the first American edition of *Eve's Ransom* issued by Appleton in early April 1895. He was not a little surprised to find that

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the leading male character, Maurice Hilliard, was a namesake of his, and used this coincidence as an excuse to write to Gissing, enclosing a copy of his lengthy, genial but ill-written and rather vulgar eulogy of the book. Like the other pieces he wrote on Gissing, it is perhaps worth exhuming from the file of a newspaper that has lain undisturbed for nearly a hundred years.

"From Far and Near: A Review of 'Eve's Ransom,'  
the New Novel by Mr. George Gissing"

*The Union and Advertiser* (Rochester), 13 April 1895, Illustrated Section, p. 2

“Eve’s Ransom” is the name of the story. Mr. George Gissing is the author. The title is not what one would call a taking one; in fact, it is more repulsive than otherwise. There are titles that are very fetching, titles that attract, titles that absolutely command attention; and, on the other hand, there are titles that repel, that seem to rouse in the mind strange antipathies towards an innocent looking volume that rests with its fellows on the shelves. The strange sensations felt on seeing a book for the first time would be a fruitful subject of investigation. It would, no doubt, make a most interesting and instructive monograph. “Eve’s Ransom” would be classed, in the minds of most lovers of books, as a repellent one. It certainly has none of the taking qualities which should be endowed in the title of a good book. It suggests the common in literature, the artificial, bordering on stale sensationalism. But no greater mistake could be made in relation to “Eve’s Ransom,” by George Gissing. The book is but just from the press and it has not had sufficient time to become known, but when it does become read, when it has become thoroughly circulated, I will venture to prophecy that it will be known as one of the notable books of the year 1895. This praise may seem over-estimated, but, of course, time alone can affirm or deny the statement.

“Eve’s Ransom,” so far as being a story of sensationalism, as the title suggests, is, as a matter of fact, the calmest, quietest of stories. Perhaps a modicum of the charm of the volume lies in this very tranquility and in the thoroughly natural style of the author. Gissing is nothing if not a realist, only he is so different from the majority of the cult, inasmuch as he doesn’t write prefaces or reasons why his stories are cast in that mold. I presume that if anyone was to ask Mr. Gissing to what school of writing he belonged he would look in amazement at the interrogator. He does not know himself that he belongs to any special school, save the one great school of art. His art lies simply in the power to put on paper life as he sees it, the individual impressions aroused in the mind by incidents actually seen, or naturally suggested. It matters not how art does a thing, the essential principle is how well art does the thing it sets out to do. This principle should be the absolute law of every novelist, or writer of any description. If this law were faithfully observed there would be fewer books inflicted on the reading public; but what stories

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there were would be readable. George Gissing has thoroughly assimilated this basic principle of good writing. When “Denzil Quarrier” first appeared some years ago the individuality of the writer was stamped in every page. Since then Gissing has been adding steadily to his reputation, each successive story being the acme of finished technique, until now “Eve’s Ransom” comes to us, perfect in every detail, every line almost pregnant with intense interest, a story wonderfully simple and human, possessing qualities that will appeal to the most callous of novel readers. It has a subtle quality that is absolutely fascinating, it exercises a strange spell over the mind of the reader and holds him a slave until the last word is read. Even then the reader can not escape from the effects of the story. It will haunt the mind for many a day afterward. It is a book that points no moral, it upholds no theory, no philosophy, it is simply a story, so natural, so true to life, so absolutely faithful to that phase of humanity which it depicts that it can not fail to make a deep impression on the minds of all who read it.

It is a most difficult thing to review such a story as “Eve’s Ransom.” Its very subtleness eludes the critical pen. It defies a keen analysis. One can not define the sensation produced by the piping note of a blue bird in the early spring. Would we dissect the tremulous tones of a warbling vireo? Can we define the pleasure which we feel within us from the mere contact of our nostrils with the delicate perfume exuded from a wood-rose? Do we stop to consider the source of the violets’ breath? Can we analyze and systematize the pungent odors of the drinking earth in the spring-time? Do we study the advent of the leaves of the trees? Do we attempt to distinguish all the wonderful colors of a summer twilight? Can we explain the thrill of pleasure

when we walk through woody lanes at vesper-fall when the purple of twilight swoons upon the pasture-lands and the faint, far-off lowings of the cattle are borne to our tranced ears? Why then, try to vivisect the feelings that permeate us when reading such a masterly effort as Mr. George Gissing gives us in his latest book, "Eve's Ransom"?

There is but little plot to the story; it is one of those rare books in which the tide of humanity flows naturally before our eyes. The characters are flesh and blood personages who breathe like real human beings, who talk and act just like the people with whom we come in contact with every day of our life. All of us have known an Eve Madeley; such a woman has had great influence in many lives; and this is one of the secrets of the book, its absolute fidelity to human nature. She is a wonderful creation, as portrayed by the steady hand of Mr. Gissing. We meet her prototype constantly in all classes of society. The author does not attempt to gloss her character. On the contrary he develops many of her defects with almost cruel intensity and evident satisfaction. Eve Madeley is a young woman of the middle class, comely, and admirable, as far as morals are concerned. Possessed of an intense dread of poverty, she has ambitions of marrying money; and when chance throws a poor and struggling architect in her life she yields to his importunities and promises in rather a half-hearted way to marry him. The architect has come into the possession of a small sum, and this he spends to enable Eve to enjoy a breath of life outside the mean and narrow environment of her small life. He takes her to Paris, where

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they spend a few weeks, all, however, in a very proper manner, for Mr. Gissing does not countenance immorality. He is depicting the sincere, earnest love of a strong, high-minded man for a woman who is attractive, moral, yet who is his inferior. Eve's ideas of love are mercenary. Had her lover been rich she would no doubt have married him, although she possessed no affection otherwise than friendship for him. He, however, becomes more and more madly in love with her, but she, nevertheless, finally marries his most intimate friend, Robert Narramore, a wealthy bachelor. They do not meet again until several years have passed. As they walk together in Narramore's garden, Eve, now Mrs. Narramore, says: "Remember, if you care to, that all I am and have I owe to you. I was all but lost – all but a miserable captive for the rest of my life. You came and ransomed me. A less generous man would have spoiled his work at the last moment. But you were large-minded enough to support my weakness until I was safe." Take this concluding paragraph [sic] of the story as an example of fine English, quiet, simple, yet so expressive:

"A week later Hilliard went down into the country, to a quiet spot where he now and then refreshed his mind after toil in Birmingham. He slept at a cottage, and on the Sunday morning walked idly about the lanes.

"A white frost had suddenly hastened the slow decay of mellow autumn. Low on the landscape lay a soft mist, dense enough to conceal everything at twenty yards away, but suffused with golden sunlight; overhead shone the clear blue sky. Roadside trees and hedges, their rich tints softened by the medium through which they were discerned, threw shadows of exquisite faintness. A perfect quiet possessed the air, but from every branch, as though shaken by some invisible hand, dead foliage dropped to earth in a continuous shower; softly pattering from beech or maple, or with the heavier fall of ash-leaves, while at long intervals sounded the thud of apples tumbling from a crab tree. Thick-clustered berries arrayed the hawthorns, the briar was rich in scarlet fruit; everywhere the frost had left the adornment of its subtle artistry. Each leaf upon the hedge shone silver-outlined; spiders' webs, woven from stem to stem, glistened in the morning radiance; the grasses by the wayside stood stark in gleaming mail.

"And Maurice Hilliard, a free man in his own conceit, sang to himself a song of the joy of life."

Such is a brief synopsis of "Eve's Ransom." The ending is wholly unsatisfactory. We

would like to have had Eve marry Maurice; but after reflection such an ending appears wholly out of the question. There could be no other ending to the book, at least an ending that would have been the natural development of such a character as Eve. Gissing thoroughly understands his characters. He handles them with the hand of a master. In a few simple words he puts them before the reader, creations almost quivering with life. His characters all belong to the middle class, a field which few authors care to work, yet which is the most fruitful and original field for a writer to choose his characters and scenes. Gissing is far ahead of any writer of to-day who portrays similar life. Above all, he is a master of simple, unaffected English; he has command

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of a style that is peculiarly limpid and captivating. He is always moderate, careful and painstaking. In conclusion, I may say that no book of the past year has so impressed me as this new story of Mr. George Gissing, "Eve's Ransom." "Trilby" pleases for the time being, but it is not a story that one remembers for more than a brief time. "The Manxman" disgusts rather than pleases; but "Eve's Ransom" not only pleases, but it leaves an impression on the mind of the careful reader that can never be completely eradicated. There is only one conclusion to arrive at, and that is that Mr. George Gissing is a great writer, a man who tells a pure story fraught with human interest for the story's sake, no preaching, no cant, no creed, no doctrine, no philosophy, no social problem, a story from beginning to end and such a story that will place the author in the very front rank of the writers of English prose.

John Northern Hilliard.

## II

Gissing did not record his opinion of the quality of this review. *Eve's Ransom* was in his own eyes one of his minor novels; it had been commissioned by C. K. Shorter, who had already published a number of his short stories, and although he had experimented in it a new technique, there is no evidence available that he held it in very high or very low esteem. It is reasonable to assume that, if he was not sorry to see the book praised in America, with possible financial consequences, the tone of the review jarred on his finer sensibilities. His courteous reply to Hilliard, dated 3 May 1895, the day after he received the review, reflected his positive response to the generous assessment of the critic and his mild annoyance at the unfortunate, if purely accidental, homonymy of protagonist and critic. "Happily," he concluded, "Maurice Hilliard is a very decent sort of fellow; you would not be altogether ashamed of him."

After a lapse of four months or so Hilliard had a fresh opportunity to review a Gissing novel when Appleton published *In the Year of Jubilee*, uniform with *Eve's Ransom* in his Town and Country Library. He was anxious to show, as he had hinted in April, that an earlier review, of *Denzil Quarrier*, issued by Macmillan in February 1892, had appeared in the *Union and Advertiser*, but efforts to trace it have been fruitless. Whether a copy of the following article on *In the Year of Jubilee* reached Gissing cannot be ascertained. Perhaps Hilliard chose to wait until a project he had in mind could be realized. At any rate the fact that the review was unsigned leaves one in no doubt as to its authorship; indeed the paragraphs of "Literary Notes" that follow are signed "J. N. Hilliard."

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"From Far and Near"

*The Union and Advertiser* (Rochester), 24 August 1895, Illustrated Section, p. 2

George Gissing, the eminent English author, has a new volume from the press. It is called

“In the Year of Jubilee.” Mr. Gissing is a wonderful realist and his novels of life among the middle classes of England are horribly clever. I use the word horribly advisedly because it explains his methods. His work is ugly, rough, his characters hideous, sordid, and commonplace – but thoroughly natural and never overdrawn. He is a realist of the most consistent type. Mr. Gissing has won considerable fame from his two previous novels, “Denzil Quarrier” and “Eve’s Ransom,” both of which have been reviewed at length in these columns.<sup>6</sup> A person once reading these books will never have the impression erased from his mind. They haunt one, they make one think – and this is what one hates to do. The principal figures in the story are a young girl named Nancy Lord, and her husband, Lionel Tarrant. They meet, and Lionel, without thought or care, and being unable to support her, knowing too, that the acknowledgement of her marriage before the age of 26 would keep her out of her father’s property, marries her. This headstrong self-indulgence, without cupidity or any other motive whatever except seizure of present pleasure is one of Mr. Gissing’s best representations. It is the keynote of the whole story. Hardly anybody follows up a motive, or has one to follow up.

But Mr. Gissing’s pet dogma is found revealed in the evolution of the marriage mistakes of Lionel and Nancy. The two blunder through everything dismal and dark and blurred. Lionel leaves the poor girl, in secret difficulties, to go verily to America and seek his fortune; in reality to escape from the weariness she causes him with her tears and reproaches.

Her spirit alone saved her, for she retorted in kind when he casually drifted back to her, after neglect and irresponsibility, and when he wished to see her, she would not answer his letters nor go to him.

They met by chance, and she was high and independent and refused to let him see the child. He, finding to his naive surprise, that Nancy is talked about and despised, then asserts himself and insists that she shall bear his name, and be proclaimed as his wife. She reluctantly yields, but will not let him come and live with her.

Gradually, however, a new love springs from the ashes of the old passionate and unstable flame, and they grow mutually fond, and, in time, ardent lovers. But this time it is Nancy who pleads, and Lionel who resists. You see quite as much of me as is good for you, he urges; and the book closes, with the impression that they live within hailing distance, and that they are devoted, but not so foolish as to risk weariness again. Mr. Gissing does not state how Nancy got through her long and dreary evenings, but Lionel was the kind to do as he pleased, so she was as well off without him in the house.

It is a peculiar and modern denouement, but one of interest. The expense of keeping up two establishments is sometimes a bar to separate lives on the parts of married persons, even if they wished it, as they usually do too late.

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Mr. Gissing’s point is well taken; married people do see too much of each other – at first. But, if they have to go through vicissitudes – disgrace, loneliness, poverty and anger for the woman – and easier things, but still unpleasant ones for the man – it would be quite as simple, and infinitely less damaging, to find it out by living together, like common mortals.

The wretched sham of some of the would-be ladies in the book – the three sisters, Ada, Beatrice and Fanny – viragos, slatterns and vulgar schemers – is exposed with something too much detail. The episode of Mrs. Damerel’s watching over her son, and saving him from the scheming girl Fanny, without his knowing who she is – is saved from being romantic by the lady’s sordid motive in the end of asking her son to provide for her. Everybody is far from noble, and very far from romantic. The book is a species of Esther Waters, a plane or two higher up; from the servants’ hall to the “back parlor” in Bloomsbury.

The unobtrusive character of Mary, once housemaid, then housekeeper, and afterward, by Nancy’s father’s request, friend and adviser on a footing with the family, is really fine. Lionel

took endless pleasure in studying Mary, because she was “the only uneducated person he had ever seen who was not vulgar and foolish.” Mary worked unceasingly, but quietly; she did her work faithfully and completely; she was a true friend to Nancy in all her trouble. “There is no husband in all the world worth as much as a friend like Mary,” said Nancy solemnly to Lionel. And Nancy was right. Mary’s was free and full service; without hope or recognition, pay or gratitude. The book is well worth reading, and must stand high in contemporaneous novel literature.

### III

If this review was possibly a shade less enthusiastic than the previous one, it was nevertheless highly appreciative and proved to be but another step on the way to an overall assessment of Gissing’s work or at least of that part of it to which a well-informed American critic could have access at the time. The new editions that appeared in quick succession in late 1895 and early 1896 must have caused Hilliard’s next project to shape up. Way and Williams, a Chicago firm, published *The Emancipated* in October, Lawrence & Bullen reissued *The Unclassed* in November and Fisher Unwin included *Sleeping Fires* in his Autonym Library in December, whereas *The Paying Guest* appeared on both sides of the Atlantic in January and February.

What exchange of correspondence between the two men took place just then is a matter for conjecture, although the existence of a new contact cannot be doubted. The article which Hilliard published in the *Union and Advertiser* clearly indicates that he wrote again to Gissing, stating that he planned to write a more ambitious piece (he may have sent his review of *In the*

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*Year of Jubilee* to make his plan sound more plausible) and requesting a portrait as well as some fragment of manuscript that he might reproduce in facsimile. He must also have asked for personal details, and been supplied with them. No trace of either letter is to be found in Gissing’s private papers and correspondence with his relatives and friends, but the result is clearly shown in the following text, which was accompanied by one of the two portraits of the writer taken on 2 September 1893, by a facsimile of the first manuscript page of Chapter IV of *New Grub Street* (“An Author and His Wife”) and a short story, “The Poet’s Portmanteau,” of which Shorter had sold the American rights to the *Union and Advertiser* (the story appeared on p. 5 of the paper proper).

“An Eminent English Writer:  
Mr. George Gissing and His Work”  
*The Union and Advertiser* (Rochester), 21 March 1896, Supplement, p. 3

Mr. George Gissing stands to-day among the representative novelists of England. By many critics he is even listed as the foremost of the writers of that country, ahead of such men as Meredith and Hardy. Since the appearance of his first book in 1880 Mr. Gissing has steadily improved, the recent novel “*The Emancipated*” marking him as a novelist of great power. This position has not been won by any royal means. It has been gained only by a dint of labor of the severest kind. Poverty, despair, and sorrow have been the Three Graces that have been his attendants. Hunger, too, has not scorned to play an important part in his life’s story. Ill-health has been his constant companion. With all these barriers between him and success Mr. Gissing has succeeded in making his way to the very poles that mark the eagerly sought for goal. Not only has England recognized his genius, but America as well. His recent books are having a large sale in this country and the critics are almost universal in their praise. A year ago George

Gissing's name was but little known on this side of the water. To-day he is recognized as among leading writers of English fiction. One reason, perhaps, why his books have not been more popular with the general reading public is that their keynote is pessimistic. His stories are real. His characters, invariably of the middle and lower class, are flesh and blood, men and women who work out their destinies, logically, ironically and inevitably. They are not mere puppets moving spasmodically across the pages, moved by strings in the author's hands. They exist, they breathe, they are sentient. The personality of the author never intrudes. His face never peers above the curtain of his work. Each character is a law unto himself or herself. Fate is the guiding hand, and Mr. Gissing only records. His art is consummate and some day one of his books will be recognized as a masterpiece. What that book will be the time is not ripe to prophecy. It might easily be selected from those to which Mr. Gissing has already signed his name. It might be

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“Demos;” or “New Grub Street;” or “The Emancipated.” But as each new novel from his vigorous pen seems stronger than the preceding one, it is safe to assert that he will yet write his most characteristic work.

George Gissing is by birth a Yorkshireman. The novelist first opened his eyes in the country village of Wakefield in the year 1857. This would make him only 39 years of age, just in the prime of life. Surely it is but reasonable to presume that his strongest work remains to be done. His father, a man of considerable education and many sterling qualities, was prominent in municipal affairs. He died in 1870. Young Gissing's education was that of the ordinary middle-class English boy. His schooling stopped short of the university. He commenced life as a tutor in a private academy, a manner of gaining his livelihood, but ill-suited to his then incipient literary tastes. His days were devoted to drilling the young idea into some uniformity of shape and purpose; his nights were spent in mental travail, aiming desperately at some more hopeful career. And while the oil burned low in the lamp he would write, possessed of vague ambitions of a career in the domain of letters.

Gissing's life has been commonplace enough and dreary. Only he himself can tell of the struggles, the misfortunes, the disappointments that beset his path. He had his adventures, but, as he says, they were too dreary to be recounted. In 1878 he found himself in London, where, but for a year spent in Devonshire, and a winter in Italy, he has fought his fight. The year[s] spent in the very bowels of London were years of toil, of poverty, of denial for the young author. Gissing had early given up the task of teaching, devoting all of his time and energies to literature. In 1891 when his “New Grub Street” appeared Gissing was almost at the end of his tether. According to the usual English custom the story appeared in three volumes; but it is now issued in one, as the old idea has become somewhat shattered across the pond. At the time of its appearance “New Grub Street” had a fair measure of success which has constantly grown. To-day the story stands as among the best that Mr. Gissing has done. Many critics rate it not only his best, but the best that has appeared in England in the past decade. The story has [not] been published in this country. It contains much of the author's London experience as a struggling author in Grub street. In fact he had to write it or starve. Long as the book is it was written within six weeks. Nights and days were spent at the desk in his little room in a flat near Regent's park. During this time he never spoke to a person, and, in order to keep himself alive, sold books off his shelves to second-hand dealers. The copyright of “New Grub Street” was sold outright for £150, and he ate once more.

Mr. Gissing's first book was issued in 1880, of course in three volumes. It was called “Workers in the Dawn.” It was a long and crude production, now unobtainable, save, perhaps, at Mudie's. It brought the author not a penny, but he considered himself lucky to get it published. The “Spectator” devoted a special article to it, praising it quite highly. If it performed no better office it was the means of making valuable acquaintances, a thing to be desired by all aspiring



writers.<sup>7</sup> In 1884 appeared "The Unclassed," in three volumes, of which a new and revised edition has just been brought out by Messrs. Lawrence and Bullen, with a preface by Mr.

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Gissing, in which he contrasts public opinion in fiction of eleven years ago with what it is to-day. In 1886 Mr. Gissing became connected with the publishing firm of Smith, Elder & Co. They published "Demos," anonymously. It had some success. Harpers brought it out in this country, in their Franklin Square Library. Subsequent English editions have borne the author's name. By many Mr. Gissing is chiefly known as the author of this book. It is a strong study of Socialism and is counted among the writer's best efforts. In the same year appeared "Isabel Clarendon" in two volumes. It had no success and has never been reprinted. In 1887 "Thyrza" was given to the world in three volumes; but it has since appeared between two covers. The following year "A Life's Morning" was published, after having run through "Cornhill." "The Nether World" appeared in 1889 in three volumes. This is one of his strongest stories, dealing with the lowest forms of London life, with which Mr. Gissing is only too familiar. Many English reviews assert that it is his best book; but on this point there is a variance of opinion. "The Emancipated" was published in 1890, in three volumes. A new edition appeared in 1894 in one volume. During the past winter Way and Williams of Chicago brought out the book. The scene of the story is laid in Italy and is the favorite of the author, as the only happy days of his life were spent in that land. The two winters of 1889 and '90 Mr. Gissing spent in Italy and Greece. Being able to speak Italian in rough fashion he lived entirely among the natives, and he laughs at the people who talk about the expensiveness of continental traveling. "The Emancipated," in the opinion of the writer, is the best bid for fame that Mr. Gissing has yet made. Another of the author's favorite books is "Born in Exile," which appeared in 1892, but which met with little success. The story deals with the conflict between religion and agnosticism, and possibly for this reason it was not popular. No American edition has been issued. "Denzil Quarrier" was the next book to present his name to the public. It was brought out by the young firm of Lawrence & Bullen, who have since published all of his "solid" books. Mr. Gissing says that they are both excellent fellows and his good friends. Macmillan brought the book out in America. In 1893 things were looking brighter for the writer, and he wrote several short stories for the English magazines, a labor which though strenuous proved lucrative. The same year saw "The Odd Women," which was published in this country by D. Appleton & Co. "The Year of Jubilee" [sic] was issued in 1894, and "Eve's Ransom" in 1895, both of which were reviewed in this paper at the time. The American editions were published by Appleton & Co. The same firm has just issued this week Gissing's last story, "Sleeping Fires." It bids fair to bring the author before a larger audience than ever before, being a curious and unusual study of life.

George Gissing lives at Epsom, on the Worple road, twelve miles from London. He has a tiny house and the merest workshop of a study. It always amuses him to see pictures of the abodes of well-known authors, many of them sumptuous in their fittings. He has always lived in true Bohemian fashion, having no income other than that derived from the sale of his books, and up to now their sales have been ridiculously small. By dint of magazine work he has just begun

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to earn more than a bare sustenance. He thinks that the pessimistic trend of his books have prevented their being widely read. He can no longer live in London, his health being precarious, though he spends many days in the metropolis searching for characters and incidents for his stories. At Epsom he has the fresh air and the splendid downs to walk over. His life is one of seclusion. He has no part in ordinary social existence, and he does not desire it. His nerves are easily untuned and he requires quiet. "I like to be left alone to do my work as best I can," he

said in a recent letter. "I spend a day now and then at the British Museum, and, of course, I ramble about the great town in search of material for books and stories. Just now I am getting together the foundation stones of a new novel which I expect to finish this year. I want badly to get away from England for a holiday, but shall not be able to just yet."

It matters not how art does a thing; the essential principle is how well art does the given task. George Gissing is an artist in words. He has mastered the art of good writing. His stories all possess a quality that is strangely fascinating. They are difficult to analyze. They have but little plot, the author depending upon his characters to move through the pages as they would in life. His books are natural, they are at times gloomy and pessimistic, but they are serious, earnest and written for a purpose. Among the great writers that mark the close of the nineteenth century Mr. George Gissing must be counted among those who have written for all time.

John N. Hilliard

#### IV

Hilliard sent Gissing a copy of his article shortly after publication. The novelist's great-grandson, Xavier Pétremand, is in possession of a portion of it inscribed to "Mr. George Gissing = From his Friend and Admirer = John Northern Hilliard." This certainly awaited the recipient on his return from Wales and Wakefield on 23 April 1896, in the "heap of letters" mentioned in the diary. The letter of thanks he wrote on 3 May 1896, exactly one year after his acknowledgement of the review of *Eve's Ransom*, still has to be located, but it is not likely to have been the most interesting of the three that Hilliard received from him. While Gissing was bound to feel some gratitude for the highly appreciative view taken of his work and for the realistic picture of his past struggles faithfully reflected in those of Reardon and Biffen, he must again have been embarrassed by Hilliard's low-brow and shallow approach to his subject. It is obvious that the American journalist, short of having read all Gissing's books, was writing around a list of titles either supplied by the author or transcribed from the English Catalogue and the American Catalogue. Gissing winced at superlatives when applied to him. One cannot imagine that he was pleased by the caption under his portrait: "George Gissing, who bids fair to

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become England's greatest novelist." His correspondence with Clara Collet shows that he deprecated excessive praise of his achievement.<sup>8</sup>

Thus could have ended the personal relationship between the novelist and his critic, had not the latter found a fresh opportunity to turn to account the three letters he had received from Gissing, possibly too confessional not to prompt a young journalist to spin one more article out of them. The opportunity came in early 1898 when Stokes, the New York publisher, at long last published *The Whirlpool*, nearly one year after the English edition. The novel was prominently reviewed in the American press, and the *Book Buyer*, which must have received an advance copy, published a substantial appreciation of it by the then popular novelist Hamlin Garland. It was accompanied by one of the portraits of Gissing that Russell and Sons had taken on 16 January 1895, and followed by a biographical article on "The Author of The Whirlpool" from no other pen than John Northern Hilliard's. Like the other pieces reprinted above, it must be given a new lease of life, so as to afford present-day readers a possibility of reconstructing a portion of the missing correspondence between the two men.

"The Author of 'The Whirlpool'"  
*The Book Buyer*, February 1898, pp.40-42

Only during the past year or two has the name of George Gissing become generally known

on this side of the water, though he has been popular in England for nearly half a decade. It is a peculiar popularity. Interest in his work has grown in proportion as his work grows less delightful. He is an extreme pessimist. His novels are devoted to the sordidest of themes, yet his power is such that it has given him downright eminence in the field of tragic fiction.

Gissing has struggled for success. The public is not responsive at once to a spell that lays more pain than pleasure upon the imagination. His last books have been more pitiless even than his earlier ventures in fiction, but their austere power has left a lasting impression upon the public.

Gissing's life story is as dreary and merciless as some of the incidents in his stories. He is a Yorkshireman, having been born in Wakefield thirty-nine years ago. His father was a man of learning and sound business sense, and held many important county offices. He died in 1870, leaving young Gissing, but thirteen years old, alone in the world. He received the ordinary education of the middle-class English boy, stopping short of the university. He early evinced an aptitude for the languages, mastering Greek, Latin, Spanish, German, and Italian; the last three he speaks and writes fluently.<sup>9</sup> He spent a year among the peasants of Italy, and he smiles at the suggestion of Continental travelling being expensive. He is a student of early and modern Italian literature.

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He commenced life as a teacher in a private school; but, being endowed with a plethora of nerves and a paucity of patience, he made but little success. He kept at it, however, for two years, when, in desperation, he gave up the struggle and "packed his grip" for London, with a few guineas in pocket. It was the old instance of the frying-pan and the fire over again. He aimed at some more hopeful career than teaching, and resolved to take up literature.

His life in London was a long, heart-grinding fight against poverty. For more than two years he did not know from what quarter the next meal was coming. He could not support himself by literature alone, and was compelled at times to act as a private tutor. He destroyed quantities of manuscript in the strenuous struggle for style. Disappointments were many; but he felt that he had the proper material in him, could he but give expression to it. Living in the cheapest quarter of London, his outlook on life was one of gloom. His own life and that about him furnished endless themes for stories.

His first novel, "Workers in the Dawn," appeared in 1880, of course in the inevitable three volumes. It was a long and crude production, now unobtainable save at Mudie's. I do not think even he possesses a copy. Many publishers have offered to reprint it, a proposition to which he will not listen. It was reviewed favorably in the *Academy*, and was the means of making him valuable friends.

Mr. Gissing's second venture in the field of fiction was in 1884, when "The Unclassed" appeared, which has proved a success both in England and America. In 1886 began his connection with Smith, Elder and Co., and in the same year they published anonymously "Demos," which met with a flattering reception, though it netted the author little pecuniary reward. A paper-covered edition was issued in this country, but had a small sale, as it dealt mainly with English socialism. There are many persons in England to-day who know George Gissing solely as the author of this book. It was used even as a text-book among the milder socialistic societies of the Morris type. Subsequent editions bear his name. Contemporaneous with "Demos" was "Isabel Clarendon," which had no sale, and has never been reprinted. "Thyrza" was given to the world in 1887, and the following year saw "A Life's Morning," which ran serially through *Cornhill*. "The Nether World" was published in 1889, and met with considerable success. It deals with the lowest forms of London life, and Mr. Gissing considers it his best book. The money derived from its sale enabled him to give up tutoring, and devote all his time to "The Emancipated," which was published in 1890. Italy is the background of this

story, which is a favorite of the author, as, by his own confession, the only happy days of his life were spent under those sunny skies. That one year was enchantment.

In 1891, while at work on "New Grub Street," his finances became exhausted. He spurted, so to speak, and finished the book in six weeks, working ten hours a day, speaking to no one, and keeping himself alive by selling books off his shelves to secondhand dealers. "I sold the copyright for £150, and ate, once more," he has since told me. The book was well received, and still enjoys a steady sale. There is no American edition. I have the author's own word that it is the unembellished story of his life as a struggling writer in London. "Born in Exile" appeared in

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1892. It deals with the conflict between religion and agnosticism, a subject in which he takes great interest. In this year he allied himself to the young publishing firm of Lawrence & Bullen, who have published "Denzil Quarrier," "The Odd Women," "In the Year of Jubilee," "Eve's Ransom," and "Sleeping Fires." All of these books have been highly successful, and have a good sale in this country. "The Paying Guest," Gissing's shortest novel, was published about a year ago in America, but it had no success. In the new book, "The Whirlpool," Mr. Gissing has made a study as deep and comprehensive as in "The Unclassed," and the work is likely to make a profound impression upon thoughtful readers.

London furnishes Mr. Gissing with material, but the novelist himself lives at Epsom, twelve miles from the metropolis whose heart he has probed so relentlessly. He lives in a small house, and his workshop is the tiniest room imaginable, plainly furnished, with few books. "It amuses me," he has said, "whenever I see illustrated in a magazine the studies of well-known authors – many of them my friends. Unto that I shall never attain. I shall die as I have lived – a Bohemian."

His life is one of seclusion. He has no part in ordinary social affairs. He does not desire it. In precarious health, he is a hard worker, and turns out a tremendous amount of "copy" each year. Once a week he goes to London, where he rambles about the lower districts in search of characters and incidents. His sole amusement is an occasional visit to the British Museum. At present he is hard at work on a new novel of London life, of life among the middle classes, the life he knows so well, which he portrays so graphically, but without the faintest touch of the poetic imagination, without which no book can live. He is also working on some sketches for the magazines, and – he confesses it reluctantly – he is trying his hand at biography. Mr. Gissing ought to succeed in this form of literary work; for he has positive genius for marshalling facts and seizing the vital and essential. But he looks upon such work as mere recreation. His heart is in his novels and strives seriously and with a purpose. He believes implicitly that his bitter, unpalatable message will bear sweet fruit in the regeneration of the lower classes of society. He does not preach reform, he suggests no remedy, but he paints in raw pigments a picture of pain and patience and a selfish, sordid, coward world that complains and cries and shirks its burdens. To his credit be it said that he never complained of his own task, self-imposed, nor questioned the reward, more concerned with his work that it be honest than with another man's estimate of it.

"I have only one rule to work by," he said one day, after a conversation on the methods of literary production. "It is simply to write of what I know best. This principle is vital, the life of literature. If my stories are pessimistic, it is only because my life is such. My environments were sordid, the people were sordid, and my work is but a reflection of it all. Sadness? My books are full of it. The world is full of it. Show me the masterpieces of art, literature, or music, and I shall show you creations palpitating with sadness. Ah, the toil for the 'weib und kind,' how it fashions men's lives! Mine has been but the common lot. No use saying much about it. I find my little

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happiness in the fields in summer, and am content when I think of the toiling millions, twelve miles away, who never see a blue sky, or feel the earth yield beneath their feet.”

John Northern Hilliard

Evidently Hilliard wrote this fourth piece with a copy of the third on his desk, by the side of the letter he had received from Gissing in early 1896. He had read no new book by him in the intervening years, forgot to update his age, substituted an allusion to the *Academy* for one to the *Spectator*, making thereby a double mistake, as the *Academy* review of *Workers in the Dawn* was by no means favourable and it was certainly not instrumental in “making him valuable friends.” Other fresh errors were introduced, notably the alleged publication of *Sleeping Fires* by Lawrence & Bullen. *The Whirlpool*, just issued by the Frederick A. Stokes Company, he had certainly not yet read. When Hilliard referred to a novel he had not read, his ignorance was transparent. However, this fourth article has a signal advantage over its predecessor. If Hilliard’s enthusiasm for Gissing’s work had somewhat declined and his judgments had little more critical value than formerly, he was now less inclined to paraphrase the biographical information he had been imparted, and quoted at greater length from the letter of early 1896. While the most part of its contents can safely be guessed from the two biographical surveys, the quotations they contain enable one to reconstruct a portion of the letter.<sup>10</sup>

## V

Gissing apparently never read this article but he noted in his diary how he came to know of it while staying in Rome. On 26 February his acquaintance Mrs. Lambart – the Lambarts were friends of Justin MacCarthy and his daughter, who introduced Gissing to them – showed him a cutting from the gossip column of the *Westminster Gazette* for 17 February. The paragraphs concerned referred to the article in the *Book Buyer*, and Gissing immediately expressed his displeasure in his diary: “Insistence on my days of poverty, and a whole passage of puling (in first person) alleged to be written by me. An infamous forgery.”<sup>11</sup> Next day he sent a postcard to his friend Herbert Heaton Sturmer, asking him to enquire about the article in the *Book Buyer*. Whether Sturmer could see the American periodical in London is uncertain, but he found other echoes from it, in the *Academy* for 5 March, which he promptly posted to Gissing. The piece, entitled “Mr. George Gissing at Home,” reached him three days later. Very substantial portions

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of Hilliard’s piece were reprinted with or without quotation marks, covering over half a quarto page.

Gissing’s letter of protest to the editor of the *Academy*, Charles Lewis Hind, who was to write on him on various occasions after his death, shows that he clearly identified the offender, whose name had been kept quiet by English commentators, and he cleverly concentrated on the points about which he stood in no fear of being contradicted. The “new novel of London Life” was *The Whirlpool* on which he was working when Hilliard had asked him for biographical information in early 1896; he had written *The Town Traveller*, another novel of London life, in the summer of 1897, but was admittedly not engaged on any fictional work in March 1898. Hilliard’s reference to biographical writing could also be summarily rejected – he had been misled by some paragraphs in the English press about *Charles Dickens, a Critical Study*, which had indeed been mistakenly described as a biographical work. The rejection of the final paragraph in both the *Book Buyer* and the *Academy* doubtless posed Gissing a moral problem, as he must have recognized his own style, but Hilliard’s lying mention of a confession made “one day, after a conversation on the methods of literary production,” gave him a magnificent

opportunity for repudiating a statement imprudently made in a private letter that now proved a cause for embarrassment.

“Mr. George Gissing at Home”  
*The Academy*, 19 March 1898, p. 334

Sir, – In the *Academy* of March 5 appeared an article headed “Mr. George Gissing at Home,” consisting for the most part of quotations from an article on the same subject in “the American *Bookbuyer*.” Will you permit me to say that the tone adopted by this American writer is not a little offensive to me, that many of his so-called facts are not facts at all, and that he puts into my mouth words that I never uttered, and never could have uttered.

The *Bookbuyer* article is evidently based upon certain autobiographical brevities supplied by me, two years or more ago, to an American journalist. Where the supplementary details came from (unless they are purely imaginary) I know not. I am not so happy as to have “mastered” five languages, and never led anyone to suppose that I had. I never “spent a year among the peasants of Italy.” I produce anything but “a tremendous amount of copy each year.” I am not working “on a new novel of London life”; and I never “tried my hand at biography.” Worse than all this is the long passage you quote in conclusion, a sort of general confession, which the American writer says that I made “one day, after a conversation on the methods of literary

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production.” Every line of this is distasteful to me, and in no conversation, at any time of my life, did I so express myself. It is monstrous that one should be made to pule about one’s “little happiness,” about “toiling millions who never see the blue sky,” about “toil for *Weib und Kind*,” and so on. – I am, &c.,

George Gissing.

Rome: March 8.

At that things remained in Gissing’s lifetime. Whether Hilliard chanced upon the novelist’s public rejection of his piece cannot be determined. If he did, he chose to keep silent. He was guilty of indelicacy on at least two accounts: he had published verbatim a markedly personal portion of a private letter without permission, he had falsified the circumstances of the confession, and he had not taken the trouble to bring up to date the botched up reshuffling of his article in the Rochester *Union and Advertiser*.

The whole affair, although in different ways, was chastening to both men. Yet, to Gissing, it had a positive side to which he was not quite blind. After noting in his diary that he had repudiated the *Book Buyer* article, he added with unfeigned satisfaction: “My reputation seems to stir a little at last.” Indeed it had stirred more than a little since the mid-1890s.

## VI

The story of the uneasy, depersonalized development of the relationship between Gissing and his Rochester critic must end on what was for Gissing a posthumous note. Oddly Hilliard’s last article seems to have been widely read in England when it appeared, perhaps mainly in the form of echoes like those that became known to Gissing himself in Rome, but more likely as echoes of echoes, since journalists are voracious readers of one another’s articles. The dozens of obituaries that appeared in the last three days of 1903 and the early weeks of 1904 contained a number of anecdotes on the writer’s literary methods, love of travel and struggles with poverty, and the most frequently repeated were by far those inspired by the *Book Buyer* article, relayed by the *Westminster Gazette*, which as early as 29 December 1903 once more set afloat some of

Hilliard's remarks. Other sources, reliable or unreliable, were tapped, prominent among them the anecdote about Gissing and Morley Roberts having both thought in 1896 of calling their new novel *The Whirlpool*, and that about Gissing's knowledge of French being so remarkable

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that he translated his own novel, *New Grub Street*.<sup>12</sup> But, for the journalist, metropolitan or provincial, English or Australian, in quest of literary gossip around New Year's Day in 1904, the story – quite genuine – of Gissing selling his books while writing his novel of literary life and eating once more when Smith, Elder bought the copyright for £150, was quite simply irresistible.<sup>13</sup> Had he been in a position to do so, doubtless Gissing would have relished this manifold repetition of a bitter truth.

One question still awaits a reply – did Hilliard echo his own articles in the *Union and Advertiser* and the *Post-Express* when he heard of Gissing's death? The answer, if positive, might be interesting in more ways than one.

<sup>1</sup>See his letters to his brother Algernon of 3 March 1887 and to Frederick Dolman of 2 April 1891, in Volumes III and IV of the *Collected Letters of George Gissing*.

<sup>2</sup>Letter of 28 December 1892, to appear in Vol. V of the *Collected Letters*.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph Anderson, "George Gissing as He Is," *Boston Evening Transcript*, 13 June 1896, p. 24. Reprinted under the title "George Gissing: The Novelist of the Masses," in *Current Literature*, August 1896, p. 98. For Gissing's revision of the article, see his diary for 21 May and 2 June 1896.

<sup>4</sup>*Cora Crane: A Biography of Mrs. Stephen Crane* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 211.

<sup>5</sup>Letter in the University of Rochester. It will be published in Vol. V of the *Collected Letters of George Gissing*.

<sup>6</sup>Gissing had published two novels between those mentioned by Hilliard, *Born in Exile* (1892), which A. P. Watt had been unable to place in America, and *The Odd Women* (1893), issued like *Denzil Quarrier* in Macmillan's Dollar Novels.

<sup>7</sup>The *Spectator* published a long review of *Workers in the Dawn*, not a special article ("Workers in the Dawn," 25 September 1880, pp. 1226-27). The valuable acquaintances Gissing made at the time were of course Frederic Harrison and John Morley.

<sup>8</sup>Some tendentious or inaccurate factual statements may also have mitigated Gissing's pleasure. The allusion to his Mediterranean journeys could be read as implying that he had visited Greece twice. Lawrence & Bullen had published a one-volume edition of *The Emancipated* in 1893, not in 1894, and Macmillan, not Appleton, had brought out the American edition of *The Odd Women*.

<sup>9</sup>Gissing did not begin to learn Spanish until some four years later, but he had a good knowledge of French.

<sup>10</sup>This reconstruction will be offered in Vol. V of the *Collected Letters*.

<sup>11</sup>Diary entry for 26 February 1898, and "Here, There, and Everywhere," *Westminster Gazette*, 17 February 1898, p. 10. The quotations, some thirty lines long, mainly concerned Gissing's early struggles, the anecdote about *New Grub Street*, which he sold outright for £150, his having had to part with a portion of his library while writing the novel, etc. Doubtless briefer

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echoes could be traced in the English press. See for instance, "Literature, Art, Music," *Glasgow Evening News*, 17 February 1898, p. 2, and "Book Notes," *Clarion*, 26 February 1898, p. 66.

<sup>12</sup>The *Manchester Evening Chronicle* ("Here and There," 31 December 1903, p. 3)

combined the two kinds of anecdotes under two sub-titles, “George Gissing and Morley Roberts,” and “Did His Own Translations.”

<sup>13</sup>A typical paragraph was that in the *Worcestershire Chronicle* (“Mr. George Gissing,” 2 January 1904, p. 7): “The late Mr. Gissing has himself told of some of his early struggles. When he was at work on his ‘New Grub Street’ his finances became exhausted. He finished the book, however, in six weeks, working ten hours a day, speaking to no one, and keeping himself alive by selling books off his shelves to secondhand dealers. ‘I sold the copyright for £150 and ate once more,’ he afterwards wrote.” Other examples, chosen at random, will be found in the *Yorkshire Post* (“Obituary: Mr. George Gissing,” 30 December 1903, p. 6), the *Liverpool Daily Post* (“Death of Mr. George Gissing,” 30 December 1903, p. 7), the *Literary World* (“Obituary,” 1 January 1904, p. 15) and the *Wakefield and West Riding Herald* (“Readers and Writers,” 9 January 1904, p. 8).

Thanks are due to Ros Stinton for her assistance in tracing some of these obituaries, and to Paul Mattheisen for locating Hilliard’s review of *In the Year of Jubilee*.

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### *The Odd Women on the Stage*

Pierre Coustillas

Gissing and the theatre is a subject that no one has yet ventured to approach, but whoever feels tempted to tackle it in this or the next century will have on his desk material for a final chapter. We knew what Gissing thought of the late Victorian stage, we knew a certain letter from him to the *Daily News*, we knew why he did not write plays though he did try on at least two occasions, we knew that he was prompted to compose a novel of theatre life, “Clement Dorricott,” which he probably destroyed, but we did not know until last November what a dramatization of one of his novels might be like on the stage. We could only try to imagine from various documents and memories—the printed dramatization of *New Grub Street* by Richard Morris, perhaps the script of the film that was made from *Demos* in the early 1920s, perhaps also recollections of a radio play inspired by *New Grub Street* and readings of the *Ryecroft Papers*.

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Now we have visual memories. Michael Meyer’s adaptation was on at the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester, a town of such great significance in Gissing’s life, from 19 November to 12 December. The small group of Gissingites who attended the evening performance on 21 November – they came from Wakefield, Bradford, Lancaster, Lille, Geneva and Milan – now have programmes and other relics which they treasure, with portraits of the ten actors who impersonated Gissing’s characters. A success from all points of view the play certainly was, and will doubtless remain when it is revived on some London or other major provincial stage. A novel and a play being two different things, Michael Meyer has not stuck blindly to Gissing’s text. Partly because he thinks that Gissing tended to kill his main characters off rather perfunctorily, as in *Demos*, *New Grub Street*, *Born in Exile* and *The Whirlpool*, partly because he sees the novel as really in praise of odd women, he has altered the ending, but not to an extent that can entail negative reactions. Monica does not die; she and Widdowson separate because he cannot contemplate resuming life in common – he would hate both mother and child. All the other elements of the ending have been allowed to stand. The action is limited to ten characters, six of them women: the three Madden sisters, Mary Barfoot and her friend Rhoda Nunn, Bella Royston (briefly, as in the novel); Widdowson, Barfoot, Bevis (baptized Harry) and



a manservant called Alfred, who walks up and down stiffly in Widdowson's home. So a good many picturesque background figures who populate the scene in the novel have been left out – wisely, one imagines. Still characters like Mrs. Luke Widdowson could have played a useful role and helped to define Monica, who is more of a new woman in the play than in the novel. A number of scenes will remain very vivid in the minds of spectators, notably the very first one where we discover Monica sitting on a bench, pretending to read *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and being awkwardly approached by Widdowson, and the Widdowsons' at home, where Virginia's partiality for what Gissing called strong waters is comically revealed.

Anyone with a programme in hand open at the middle pages will be reminded of aspects of the play that were praiseworthy, from the artistic direction by Braham Murray to the costume designing by Johanna Bryant, and the sound designing by Catherine Devenish. The cast was as follows in order of appearance: Lucy Scott (Monica Madden), Sean Arnold (Edmund Widdowson), Sorcha Cusack (Mary Barfoot), Michelle Chadwick (Bella Royston), Lorraine Ashbourne (Rhoda Nunn), Susan Tordoff (Alice Madden), Tilly Tremayne (Virginia Madden),

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Paul Higgins (Everard Barfoot), Alan Pattison (Alfred), and John Skitt (Harry Bevis). The play was well attended during the whole of the three weeks. At least 15,000 people are reported to have seen it. The after-show discussion which took place on 8 December, Braham Murray tells us, confirmed that the audience was very favourable to the production. Over a hundred people were present. The cast had to reply to general questions, Michael Meyer and the artistic producer to questions about production technique, and the historically sound remark was made that the women's views in respect of women's rights were much more conservative than those of men – a remark that would have embarrassed Beatrice Webb in later life. A Cheshire correspondent tells us that one particular evening over 150 people, in three coaches, from the Wilmslow Guild went to see *The Odd Women*, and all those he had met since liked it. That the sale of the novel has been affected by the production of the play is not to be doubted – the Virago edition has again been reprinted, as were the Norton and New American editions not long ago. An edition of Michael Meyer's version would be welcome.

#### GILLIAN TINDALL VISITS THE ODD WOMEN OF MANCHESTER

The disastrous marriage between Edmund Widdowson and Monica Madden has always seemed to me one of Gissing's most sophisticated and successful portrayals of the pain human beings may inflict on each other in the name of "living happily ever after." I was therefore very pleased, sitting in the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester last December for *The Odd Women*, to find that Michael Meyer's adaptation of the novel opens at the key point where the ill-fated couple encounter first each other in a public park. The irony of the situation is quickly established. Nervous, almost-a-lady Monica finds she is striking up an acquaintance with a strange man in a way no lady is supposed to, yet is drawn to him precisely because he appears so gentlemanly and correct, so different from the shopmen she meets at work. Widdowson is in fact more deeply isolated and insecure than she is, but for this very reason will soon reveal himself to be a stickler for marital conventions and myths of a particularly stultifying kind. The foundations of a wretchedly ill-considered union are therefore being laid down from the very first exchanges between the couple, and in this production Sean Arnold and Lucy Scott brought off the sense of endemic hope and unease in fine style. Arnold in particular, with his awkward body language, his visible collar-stud, his datedly mid-Victorian mutton-chop whiskers, and his

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subsequently revealed alternations between pathos and morbid suspicion, is all that an admirer

of the novel could want.

I wish I could say the same for the rest of the play. It is notoriously difficult to adapt the gradual evolutions, multiple scenes and authorial reflections of a long novel to the limitations of the stage, but I feel Michael Meyer has not so much failed to solve all the problems (who could?) as failed to confront them. Rhoda Nunn the New Woman is not an entirely successfully conceptualised character in the novel, for all she is so important: great care, and a degree of rethinking, would be needed to present her credibly and attractively in the flesh. Yet this dramatisation proceeds as if it were enough to re-write her thoughts into direct speech and, in place of intellectual debate, to substitute strident feminist diatribes delivered in a way unthinkable for the well-bred, well-educated woman of the 1890s whom Rhoda is supposed to be. At moments the sense of period and class is so amiss that we have Rhoda attempting to discuss with Barfoot whether male contraceptives impede pleasure, and raising abortion as a possible solution to Monica's inopportune pregnancy. In the face of such anachronisms it seems almost irrelevant to complain of more minor verbal gaffes, such as the use of phrases like "the school will fold" or "make a pass," though these grate too. Presenting *The Odd Women* with relevance to the present day may seem a laudable endeavour – a curious little gloss along the top edge of the programme evokes social milestones, real or supposed, such as Nancy Astor becoming the first woman MP in 1919 and "Working papers in progress looking at Rape in Marriage" (1990). But the novel's real strength, as a social document as well as a literary one, is its acute observation of a particular era, and to try to turn it into a tract for our time, far from enhancing its meaning, debases and weakens it.

This is a great pity, because the theatrical structure that Meyer has quarried out of the novel is quite taut and convincing, and I can even forgive him the happy ending in the interests of dramatic unity. At the Royal Exchange, with the exception of the unfortunate Lorraine Ashbourne who had to struggle with the right-on late twentieth century Rhoda, the casting was appropriate, though Paul Higgins' Barfoot should perhaps have been a little more of the footloose, upper class charmer. The action was inevitably episodic, but at its best moments the play captured the authentic whiff of Gissing-graveyard-humour; particularly enjoyable was the grisly At Home in the Widdowson nest at Herne Hill where no one knew quite how to talk to

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anyone else and Virginia Madden (Tilly Tremayne in fine form) got genteely drunk. It is a measure of the essentially worthwhile nature of dramatic adaptation that I and my companion left the theatre speculating on how the novel might, in the right hands, be made into an illuminating film. Would the Merchant-Ivory consortium, who have been so successful with Forster and Henry James, like to try their hand at it?

Gillian Tindall

There have been a number of reviews and other signs of interest in the play. The *Times* announced it on 14 November, featuring Sorcha Cusack, and *Manchester Metro News* had an interview of Lorraine Ashbourne, with a portrait, on 20 November. The following extracts are offered for the record (reviews in the *Independent* and on Radio 3 still have to be traced):

*Manchester Evening News* (Alan Hulme, 20 November, with photograph of Widdowson in a gripping scene with Monica): "Pity about act two, which degenerates into a Barbara Cartland-style melodramatic slush of insanely jealous husband, romantic assignations atop a Lake District rolling rock, an unfortunately pregnant wife and an unfaithful painter who bakes exceedingly good scones. A pity because for most of act one, beguiling performances and a stylish production (director Braham Murray) largely overcame my reservations about this theatre once more falling back on a standard practice of an adaptation from an old model. [...]"

Murray has cast from strength right down the line, and his swift and imaginative production also features between-scenes interludes from a piano/cello duo. Designer Johanna Bryant provides plenty of heavy frocks and solid furniture in the always impressive house style.”

*Sunday Times* (John Peter, 22 November): “I wondered how this play would work, but I need not have worried. It is based on an underrated novel by George Gissing (1893), about the freedom of women and its price. It is psychological novel, social documentary and feminist tract; and Gissing’s almost obsessional desire to inform, to back up his human arguments with precise information about rents and wages, lends his story a sense of essential justice. Statistics go hand in hand with compassion. But what makes the book really gripping is Gissing’s robust psychological accuracy; and Michael Meyer’s dramatisation maintains a subtle but firm balance between fact and feelings.

Two tales are told. Monica (Lucy Scott), innocent, poor, clear-minded and serious, marries a prosperous man twice her age, which is a high price to pay for security. Sean Arnold is excellent as the husband; a portrait of the ramrod tyranny of immature and insecure middle-age. The aptly named Rhoda Nunn, a passionate feminist, refuses marriage even to a free-thinking libertarian, and that is a dogmatic, high price to pay for pride and freedom. I think Lorraine Ashbourne makes her too shrill: poor insufferable Rhoda is more fiercely controlled. Meyer is

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as scrupulously fair to his characters as Gissing; and in short, sharp scenes still conveys most of the novel’s Victorian complexity. Braham Murray’s production is tense, lucid and even handed. Altogether, this is a must.”

*The Times* (Jeremy Kingston, 23 November, with photograph of Mary Barfoot): “Ignorant of Gissing’s work, I was surprised by the humour in his writing; and after Meyer’s exposition scenes – which are rather obviously an adaptation, or else a tribute to Ibsen – a scene between Monica and her unwed sisters turns the mood on a single line. The play lives as a play in its own right; Meyer shapes the scenes for dramatic effect and to tease and satisfy the longing to know what happens next. [...] The play provides a picture of social discontent and war between the sexes. It is a picture that we know best, in its English form at least, from the plays of Shaw, where it is tainted by his sexual silliness. Gissing is level-headed and his lighter touches do not trivialise the conflict, but enlarge understanding of the characters.”

*Guardian* (Robin Thornber, 24 November): “They are an admirable breed, these Shavian new women, requiring enormous strength to brazen out their ‘oddity’ in the face of entrenched male dominance, and there’s a whole school of them here – literally. The rock on which the play is built is the indomitable flint of Lorraine Ashbourne’s performance – another display of power, passion and precision from this astonishing actress – as Rhoda Nunn who, with Sorcha Cusack’s Mary Barfoot, runs a college where young ladies learn to handle the new-fangled typewriting machines as a means to economic independence of men. The alternative is carefully spelled out as Monica Madden (in another first-rate performance from Lucy Scott) picks up a father-figure (Sean Arnold) on a park bench and marries his wealth, position and cold rigidity only to escape into a doomed Mills and Boon fling with a painter. The difficulty of forming a ‘free union’ of equals in such a world is demonstrated in Rhoda’s reluctant relationship – hardly more than a moment – with the admiring Everard Barfoot (Paul Higgins). And its sadder results are seen in the pathetic pair of spinster sisters, beautifully played by Susan Tordoff and Tilly Tremayne.”

*Manchester Metro News* (Claire Stephenson, 27 November, with photograph of Monica and Widdowson): “The articulate dialogue gave all the actors plenty of scope for dry comedy

and dignified drama. But the play left a bitter taste in the mouth as it seemed to suggest no man is good enough and women are better off without them.”

*Observer* (29 November): “*Trilby* the novel appeared in 1893, as did George Gissing’s *The Odd Women* which George Orwell counted one of the best of all novels in English and which Michael Meyer has adapted for the Royal Exchange in Manchester. Whereas du Maurier languishes in third-rate Zolaesque romanticism, Gissing plunges directly into the New Woman question. [...] Meyer and his director, Braham Murray, have kept Monica alive (instead of dying

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in childbirth) so that an effective curtain finds five ‘odd women’ (including Monica’s spinster sisters) investing their hopes in the new female mite. The performances, notably those of Lorraine Ashbourne as Rhoda and Paul Higgins as the paradoxically limp Everard, are fierce and resourceful.”

*Times Literary Supplement* (Grevel Lindop, 4 December): “In the first half, Braham Murray’s production looks and feels exactly as it should – we are fascinated by the tensions generated by the terrifyingly inhibited manners, the stilted conversations sweating under the weight of anxiety about class and sexual roles, as under the murderous stiffness of heavy tweed suits and tight bodices.

Unfortunately, the excitement generated by the opening scenes is gradually dissipated. Gissing was no feminist, and the strength of his novel lies in its sympathetic but wryly realistic portrayal of psychological responses to a problem to which he saw no clear solution. Meyer’s version – carefully billed as ‘after the novel’ – shifts it in the direction of explicit feminism, and repeatedly shatters the period atmosphere by introducing wholly unbelievable conversations about condom, abortion and Eastern mysticism. These generate a few easy laughs, but the concentrated focus on the sheer discomfort of the characters in their historical moment (something Gissing was acutely aware of) is lost.” After a few remarks about Bevis and Barfoot, Lindop goes on: “The rest of the cast deliver fine performances; Sean Arnold’s Widdowson is a chilling presentation of stuffy conformism sliding into jealousy and paranoia; Sorcha Cusack gives us a warm and intelligent Mary Barfoot, nicely perplexed by her over-zealous partner, Rhoda Nunn (played with brittle vigour by Lorraine Ashbourne).

Michael Meyer has demonstrated the dramatic potential of Gissing’s novel, but (surprisingly, for the acclaimed translator of Ibsen) has oversimplified it, forcing Gissing’s dry tragicomedy of emotions into a play about social issues, contrived with too many sidelong glances at the 1990s.”

*Wilmslow Messenger* (4 December): “The play’s biggest plus is its bold, believable characterization – these pretty frocks have real women inside them. By far the most fascinating character is Rhoda Nunn. She can best be described as an emotional Fort Knox, ruthlessly spurning poor Everard’s relentless affections. Rhoda pledges to stay manless and independent at all costs, and you can’t help feeling sorry for her bearded suitor, played by the likeable Paul Higgins. Lorraine Ashbourne gives a strong performance as Rhoda—an inspired piece of casting by director Braham Murray. Top class performances come from Lucy Scott and Sean Arnold as the unhappily married Monica and Edmund Widdowson. Arnold is exceptional as the neurotic, possessive Edmund, and Susan Tordoff and Tilly Tremayne are a hilarious double act as the mousy Madden sisters. A costume drama with substance. What a refreshing change.”

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*Financial Times* (Anthony Curtis, 11 December): “It would be hard to think of anyone better qualified than Michael Meyer, the translator of Ibsen, to bring it to the stage. Gissing had indeed read Ibsen in German and much admired him, sharing his view of the plight of many contemporary women but not, alas, his sense of dramatic economy. Meyer has to be content with a loose episodic narrative broken up into short scenes, with the stage-crew working over-time hauling sofas and sideboards on and off.

But once this gradual build-up is accepted, the piece – in Braham Murray’s production in the round – has considerable fascination. [...] Lorraine Ashbourne has too simplistically negative a view of her complex role for these scenes to work with maximum effectiveness. Lucy Scott is more successful in developing Monica’s potential and there is good work by Susan Tordoff and Tilly Tremayne as her spinster sisters. The whole production should gain the Gissing cult some more converts.”

*The Times Higher Education Supplement* (Tim Yates, 11 December): “Braham Murray’s well paced production tells the complex tale in a series of short, fast moving tableaux using the Royal Exchange’s round space as art gallery, drawing room and even park. The first act has an elegiac quality reinforced by the inter-scene cello and piano music of Chris Monks with its hints of the sadnesses and driving forces of Fauré and Ravel. [...] Sean Arnold (Widdowson) and Lorraine Ashbourne (Rhoda) are effective throughout. There are lovely cameos from Susan Tordoff and Tilly Tremayne as the hungry sisters.”

For their kind assistance, especially with regard to press-cuttings, warm thanks are due to Francesco Badolato, Alan Clodd, John Halperin, Mrs. Hodson, David Riley, Gillian Tindall, Sydney Wheeler and last but not least Michael Meyer himself.

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Geerten Meijsing, a Dutch Gissing Enthusiast

Bouwe Postmus  
University of Amsterdam

When the Dutch publishers, Arbeiderspers, in 1989 brought out in their prestigious series of biographical works, *Privé-Domein*, a new<sup>1</sup> translation of Gissing’s *Private Papers* (*George Gissing: De Intieme Geschriften van Henry Ryecroft*),<sup>2</sup> the name of its translator was quite familiar to those readers who are trying to keep up with the latest developments in the field of Dutch prose fiction. Geerten Meijsing (b. 1950) is one of Holland’s most productive and intriguing young writers. His early work, characterized by a slightly precious style and the

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conscious adoption of a romantic decadent’s pose, was published under the pseudonym of Joyce & Co and his fondness for mystification was later confirmed by the adoption of another pseudonym for his novel *Een Meisjesleven* (*A Girl’s Life*, 1981), which he published under the (female) name of Eefje Wijnberg.

After winning the prestigious *AKO* prize for fiction (roughly equivalent to the English *Booker Prize*) in 1988 for his novel *Veranderlijk en Wisselvallig* (*Changeable and Fickle*), his name was recently on everybody’s lips again after the publication of his roman à clef, *De Grachtengordel*<sup>3</sup> (*The Ring of Canals*, 1992). In *De Grachtengordel* he gives a penetrating and satirical sketch of the literary scene in Amsterdam, with its in-crowd of publishers, publishers’ readers, aspiring and established authors, and the whiff of scandal surrounding its publication

has contributed not a little to Meijssing's name becoming a household word in Dutch contemporary writing. His frequently professed identification with Gissing in this novel about the world of pushy authors jockeying for position takes the form of two Gissing quotations he has prefixed to it: "A Trade of the Damned" and "The Art of Fiction has this great ethical importance that it enables one to tell the truth about human beings in a way which is impossible in actual life" (Gissing's *Commonplace Book*). From them one thing emerges clearly – Meijssing will be taking the measure of literary Amsterdam with a yardstick borrowed from Gissing. Two particular instances of Meijssing's more incidental allusions in *De Grachtengordel* to Gissing's oeuvre must suffice. There is the inversion of the well-known story (*Private Papers*, Spring XII) of Rycroft's acquisition of a first edition of Gibbon, which it takes him two long journeys to carry home: "In the last few days he had begun to sort out his books; he had almost broken his back in carrying the heavy, complete edition of his precious Gibbon to the second-hand bookshop at the Leliegracht; twice up and down and half a day wasted for a few quid."<sup>4</sup> And then there is the more straightforward (but sadly mistaken!) reference in which the protagonist compares himself to "Will Warburton, who voluntarily gave up his brilliant university career when a distant cousin of his started a grocer's shop in the university town."<sup>5</sup> Surely, Meijssing was thinking of Godwin Peak's uncle setting up Peak's Dining and Refreshment Rooms in Kingsmill in *Born in Exile*.

The extent to which Meijssing recognizes his own values and experiences in Gissing's may be gauged from the blurb of his translation of *The Private Papers*: "I have come to identify myself so much with this unhappy man, I understand him so well in all of his fatal decisions and

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enthusiastic impulses, that I shall continue to be engrossed in the details of his biography."

More specifically Meijssing acknowledged his debt to Gissing in an interview for the Dutch weekly magazine *HP/De Tijd*.<sup>6</sup> After commenting on the relative scarcity of books in Meijssing's Italian home, the interviewer writes: "The few books that are to be found on his shelves Meijssing lovingly calls his books of consolation, like the works of the late nineteenth-century English author George Gissing. He hands me a novel by Gissing: 'This is *New Grub Street*, the book I had in mind when I was writing *De Grachtengordel*. Gissing writes about similar literary feuds and he describes the duality between fame and money on the one hand and drudgery and art on the other.'"

Meijssing first revealed himself as a Gissing apologist and enthusiast in a contribution to the Dutch literary monthly *Maatstaf* in October 1988.<sup>7</sup> The issue was especially concerned with the theory and practice of the autobiographical genre, and it contained articles on the autobiographies of Franz Grillparzer and Alma Mahler, Paul Léautaud and John Cowper Powys, Oswald Spengler and Benjamin Robert Haydon, Goethe, Gibbon and Gissing. Meijssing's article for the greater part consists of a selection from and translation of Gissing's *Diary*.<sup>8</sup> To Meijssing Gissing's life is exemplary – of all the misery, struggles and disappointments of a writer's existence, of the regret about a way of life turned away from social conventions, of the clash between physical desire and the lofty image of the noble love for an intellectual woman – exemplary too, in a positive sense: of his perseverance and endurance, his great erudition and wide-ranging interests, his restless movements, and above all his keen sense of perception and his cynical phrasing. Meijssing characterizes the *Diary* as consisting largely of factual, a-literary entries about the weather, the various complaints that Gissing the hypochondriac suffered from, the progress of his work, the food he ate or rather how it did or did not agree with him, his visitors, the letters he received and the books he read. Meijssing is struck by the fact that Gissing rarely failed to mention the price of anything and usually complained that it was too high.

He is disappointed in his hopes of finding details about Gissing's sexual life and concludes sadly that we are still forced to speculate about the precise nature of Gissing's relationships with

Mrs. Williams, Miss Curtis, Edith Sichel and Connie Ash. He comments on the discrepancy between the passionate love letters to Gabrielle Fleury and the minimal reflection of the affair in

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the *Diary*. Also he makes a stylistic comparison between Gissing's diary entries on his journeys to Italy and Greece and his travel-book *By the Ionian Sea*, and argues that the stylistic terseness of the *Diary* contrasts strikingly with the emotional intensity found in, e.g., the final sentence of *By the Ionian Sea*. Perhaps we should not be surprised that Meijnsing, a (born?) Dutch exile in Italy, regards the accounts of Gissing's travels in Greece and Italy as "the unquestioned pinnacles of his *Diary*."

Towards the end of the *HP/De Tijd* interview Meijnsing formulates what amounts to a literary manifesto: "With me literature comes first. Should anyone call me to account, I need not feel ashamed at any rate of my artistic conscience. Loyalty to friends or to art, whoever cannot keep these apart, confuses two different sets of values. You may say tell your friends straight to their face, but that is not the way it works for a writer. He must look at the world without scruples and use anything, however miserable, as material for his art. It is a dreadful observation, but ultimately I put the pact with art over the pact with my friends. I may end up in utter loneliness, completely abandoned by wife and friends ... that will be the price I may have to pay. In any case nobody could accuse me of indolence." How those sentiments remind one of Gissing's as expressed in a letter to Algernon: "When I am able to summon any enthusiasm at all, it is only for Art. – How I laughed the other day on recalling your amazement at my theories of Art for Art's sake! Well, I cannot get beyond it. Human life has little interest to me – on the whole – save as material for artistic presentation. I can get savage over social iniquities, but even then my rage at once takes the direction of planning revenge in artistic work."<sup>9</sup>

Despite a provocative (only half facetious?) definition of authorship, which may reveal more of his own than of Gissing's views on the subject – quite alien as it is to Gissing's world – ("Don't forget that a genuine writer would never use public transport"), one feels that the Dutch should be grateful to Meijnsing for proving himself the ideal Gissing reader and mediator of Gissing's ideals and values that have been unfashionable for too long.

<sup>1</sup>The first Dutch translation appeared in 1920: *Uit de Nagelaten Papieren van Henry Ryecroft*, translated by A. Gorter-De Waard (Arnhem: Van Loghum, Slaterus & Visser, 1920).

<sup>2</sup>*George Gissing: De Intieme Geschriften van Henry Ryecroft*, vertaald en van een nawoord voorzien door Geerten Meijnsing (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1989).

<sup>3</sup>Geerten Meijnsing, *De Grachtengordel* (Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 1992).

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<sup>4</sup>*De Grachtengordel*; p. 126.

<sup>5</sup>*De Grachtengordel*, p. 65.

<sup>6</sup>Ad Fransen, "Onder de Gordel," *HP/De Tijd*, 21 August 1992, pp. 38-43.

<sup>7</sup>Geerten Meijnsing, "De Dagboeken van George Gissing," *Maatstaf*, September-October 1988, pp. 129-41.

<sup>8</sup>*London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1978).

<sup>9</sup>Letter of 12 June 1884, *The Collected Letters of George Gissing*, vol. II, 1881-1885, edited by Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young and Pierre Coustillas (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1991), pp. 223-24.

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## Book Reviews

Robert L. Selig (ed.), *George Gissing: Lost Stories from America. Five Signed Stories Never Before Reprinted, a Sixth Signed Story and Seven Recent Attributions*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992. iii + 185 pp. \$59.95. ISBN 0-7734-9485-5.

Little by little the mysteries in which Gissing's American year was shrouded are being cleared up. The novelist himself roused his readers' curiosity a hundred years ago when, in his masterpiece *New Grub Street* (1891), he lent Whelpdale some foreign adventures that somehow did not seem purely imaginary. Then in his fictionalized biography of Gissing, *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* (1912), Morley Roberts supplied a few basic facts about his friend's early career in Boston and Chicago, facts which were partly intended as clues for possible use by transatlantic researchers. Gissing enthusiasts of the interwar period could therefore start a serious inquiry into the nature and extent of his literary work for the Chicago newspapers, and their efforts culminated with the publication of eleven short stories in *Sins of the Fathers* (1924) and *Brownie* (1931). Time passed and it was left to Professor Selig to launch a more systematic investigation, the fruits of which he has now collected.

The book is most welcome for several reasons. Although Robert Selig's discoveries in the last twelve years were reported in various journals and could be consulted separately, they had become too numerous and scattered for easy consultation and had, it was felt by specialists, to be collected in a book which would be a companion volume to *Sins of the Fathers* and *Brownie*.

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This is one of the services performed by *Lost Stories from America*. Gissing's life in Chicago also had to be reconstructed in greater detail than in some recent semi-biographical, semi-critical studies of Gissing and his fascinating work. This too the present volume does, and the clever reconstruction covers some areas that even the most optimistic scholars dared not hope might be explored with profit. In particular Gissing's relationship with Samuel Medill, the managing editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, have been investigated with much flair and patience, and the account now available makes vivid reading. Professor Selig also throws much light on Gissing's dealings with the editors of the other Chicago papers to which he contributed, managing the while to whet our appetite for the lost and probably irrecoverable stories printed by that mountebank of the Chicago media in the 1870s, James M. Hill, alias Carl Pretzel.

In his commentaries on the twelve short stories reprinted – five of them signed, seven attributed to Gissing for very sound reasons – the editor is mainly concerned with three things: offering an intrinsic assessment of these early narratives which cannot claim to be much more than a highly gifted apprentice's work, establishing a link between them and the mature work, and supplying evidence, in the case of the unsigned stories, that they may be quite safely regarded as Gissing's. Some striking parallels have been drawn, notably between "An Artist's Child" (of which the revised version printed in *Tinsleys' Magazine* for January 1878 is most usefully made available) and *New Grub Street*, as well as between "An English Coast-Picture" and *By the Ionian Sea*. Other Gissing scholars will probably have further rapprochements to suggest, but the soundness of those offered is not likely to be called in question, so that *Lost Stories from America* must be regarded as a valuable addition to the Gissing corpus and, like *George Gissing: Essays and Fiction*, a first edition in its own right. No serious student of his work can afford to overlook either the new texts it contains nor the biographical and critical analysis of the man and his work in his heroic Chicago period. Much more remains to be said about Gissing in America, and it is gratifying to hear that both his much-quoted notebook



bought in Chicago and the poems he wrote in 1876 and 1877 are to be published in the near future. However, the potential editors of Gissing's work still have plenty of tasks neatly cut out for them. – Pierre Coustillas

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George Gissing, *The Nether World*, edited with an introduction by Stephen Gill. Oxford University Press, 1992. xxxiv + 404 pp. ISBN 0-19-281769-8.

This new edition of *The Nether World*, prepared by a scholar who is new to Gissing studies, is welcome in several respects. The novel, which had been available from Dent from 1973 to 1986, had again gone out of print recently, and it is gratifying to have on one's shelves and to see in bookshops this attractively produced edition, well printed and moderately priced, with an admirably chosen front cover illustration, a substantial introduction, a note on the text, a select bibliography, a chronology of the writer's life and explanatory notes. It is also satisfactory to discover that the editor has turned to good account, if somewhat vicariously, a document of crucial importance, the so-called scrap-book, used by Gissing during the whole of his career, which recently found its way to the Lilly Library. Nevertheless those readers who are familiar with the whole of Gissing scholarship during the last thirty years will regret that some opportunities have been missed and a number of inexplicable errors introduced.

The most admirable part of Stephen Gill's work is his introduction, even though it reveals in places a timid approach to Gissing's determination to do away with the narrative conventions of the time (the expected equation between marriage and bliss, editorially endorsed, reads like an application to literary criticism of the Micklethwaite philosophy). First, it is true that *The Nether World*, as P. J. Keating showed two decades ago, makes full sense as a major example of condition-of-England novel of the second generation. Gissing himself would have spurned this approach, but Stephen Gill might have conciliated him when he convincingly demonstrates that in this novel Gissing put the Dickens conventions upside down, refused consolations, like Christianity, which are no consolations, and rejected romantic love, preferring to look to Schopenhauer, whose influence on this particular narrative is palpable. The detailed comment on *The Nether World* as a sociological document partly based on the findings of historians, and later to be used respectfully by historians of another generation, the analysis of lower-class Clerkenwell as a prison from which no character can escape and where money or the lack of it reigns supreme are also excellent. "The plot," Stephen Gill observes, "systematically and discomfitingly denies its [Dickensian] parentage. Michael Snowdon is not Mr. Brownlow nor Mr. Boffin. He is not even Magwitch, for Magwitch's money does eventually do some good,

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though not in the way he had intended. Snowdon's money oppresses Jane, who is too passive to resist the old man's demands that she should dedicate her life to his philanthropic scheme. Instead of enabling the union of the two figures who are clearly meant for each other – Jane and Sidney – it separates them. And at the dénouement, through the merest accident of timing, the fortune passes to the one person who should not inherit it, the idle schemer Joseph Snowdon. [...] Jane ends the novel working once again to pay the rent on her single room."

The notes to the text will also be appreciated, especially by younger readers who apparently must be told that there were twelve pennies in a shilling, and that a sovereign was a one-pound coin in pre-decimal currency. There it is, in the last twelve pages, that Gissing's sources, as recorded in his scrap-book, have been usefully introduced, among other information of a linguistic and sociological nature. The relevance of the *Commonplace Book* and of an article by P. F. Kroppholler in the present journal (April 1986) has been overlooked, with the

consequence that over two dozen literary and biblical echoes are unidentified.

A number of errors should be corrected in the second impression. In the biographical note, the title of the novel published in 1894 is unduly modernized and a misprint (deploys), on p. xxi, demands the printer's attention. On p. xxiv the editor fell into one of the innumerable traps set by the inaccurate bibliography he used. The first one-volume edition of *The Nether World* (dated 1890) was actually issued in December 1889. The edition published in August 1890 was the third printing or the second impression of the second edition. The chronology contains mistakes and ambiguous statements. Some readers who are new to Gissing will imagine that the short stories mentioned for 1877 were written in London, after his return from America. The £300 he received in 1879 did not come from his father's estate; Volume I of the *Collected Letters* makes this clear. Frederic Harrison's first name carries the all-too-common misprint. *The Unclassed* was published in June 1884, not in December. To say that 1886 was the year of the writer's first visit to Europe implies more than a short trip to Paris. As for Alfred Gissing, he was born on 20 January 1896, not on 25 January 1895, just as Renan was born in 1823, not in 1832. All these slips lead one to wonder whether the publishers might not have done some profitable checking, a procedure which would also have been advisable for the only other Gissing title in the World's Classics, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, which – incidentally – is listed in none of the

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post-1986 World Classics Lists bound in volumes of the series that we have consulted, not even in the present volume.

More Gissing reprints are needed, indeed all his books should be kept permanently in print, but is it enough to have a well-printed volume with a stimulating introduction and very useful explanatory notes, requisites which are met in the book under review? A firm like Oxford University Press is expected to answer this question negatively. The rest of the editorial apparatus also matters.— Pierre Coustillas

George Gissing: *The Nether World*, translated by Saburo and Harumi Kuramochi. Tokyo: Sairyūsha Ltd, 1992. 515 pp. Yen 3,800.

As readers of the July 1992 number of this journal will have noticed, a Japanese translation of *The Nether World* was published in April last year; a welcome and meaningful addition to the Gissing translations of recent years.

The translators are Saburo and Harumi Kuramochi, professors of English at the Tokyo Gakugei University and the Kyoritu Women's University, respectively. The couple published their translation of *The Odd Women* in 1988, so *The Nether World* is their second translation of a novel by Gissing.

Now, as a teacher who teaches a course in translation to Japanese university students, I read any Japanese translation with eagle eyes, looking greedily for any errors, misreadings of texts, funny mistakes, incomprehensible sentences or awkward expressions, which I might refer to when discussing translation problems with students. Usually it is an easy and fairly fruitful task (alas!) because of the abundance of poor translations. To my great regret, in a way, yet to my far greater delight as a Japanese Gissingite, I must confess that the Kuramochis' translation of *The Nether World* is precise, concise, and brilliant. Gissing would be delighted to know that, unlike his fellow novelist Thomas Hardy, who has often suffered at the hands of his Japanese translators, such gifted translators have succeeded in providing his novel with as seamless a translation as is possible in Japanese. For a translation cannot be truly seamless unless some part of the original text has been slightly modified, reluctantly dismissed, or covertly manipulated according to the cultural, linguistic and social imperatives of readers of the text in translation.

The Kuramochis seem to have made every effort in order to render this late Victorian

English novel as palatable to present-day Japanese readers (and as accommodating, I suspect, to

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Japanese publishers) as possible. A plain style and short sentences are aimed at, enabling readers to read smoothly and with speed. In such a sentence as “These things Sidney knew *with a certainty only less than that wherewith he judged his own sensations*,” the italicized part is replaced by a short Japanese phrase meaning “just in the way he knew his own sensations.” A long sentence like “After making search about Islington one rainy evening, he found himself at the end of Hanover Street, and was drawn to the familiar house; not, however, to visit the Snowdons, but to redeem a promise recently made to Bessie Byass, who declared herself vastly indignant at the neglect with which he treated her” is divided into five short sentences.

Another feature is the use of Japanese current female speech in translating the dialogues and conversations of female characters. Traditionally, in Japanese, female speech and male speech have been distinct from each other, the former being marked by politeness and femininity which varies from person to person according to background, class, education, or character. Nowadays when this gender difference in speech is disappearing, and boys and girls tend to speak a rather uni-sex language, traditional feminine speech would certainly sound unnatural and stilted to Japanese readers, especially the younger ones.

Let me take, for example, Jane Snowdon’s way of speaking. In the original text, the author rendered her speech in the conventional way the speech of more or less virtuous heroines was treated in the Victorian novel – too standard and polite for someone of her working-class background. However, when it is translated in the way a Japanese girl would speak now, as is done in this translation, we cannot but feel a little ill at ease, because we have been too much used, I suspect, to the above mentioned convention. We have also become used to the way traditional Japanese female speech has been adapted to reflect each individual female character, with its rich variety and many nuances. A young reader’s response may be different from mine, but to me at least, it sounds as if Jane Snowdon, Clara Hewett, and Clem Peckover all speak in much the same way; they speak rather bluntly, with but little politeness and femininity. It is true that Clem’s language is rendered much more coarse and violent; still, it seems to me that their personalities – Jane’s timidity, Clara’s complexity, Clem’s brutality – do not seem to stand out so markedly as in the original text.

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As I have said, this does not suggest any weakness on the part of the translators; we are involved in eternal problems of translation here. However, we should not be unnerved in the face of difficulties, but think of the immense profit of popularizing Gissing among Japanese readers. For not only is any Gissing work interesting in itself, but it is a treasure house of all sorts of information about the culture and society of his time.— Fumio Hojoh, Tokyo Woman’s Christian University

[Professors Saburo and Harumi Kuramochi kindly reported on 1 November that four reviews of their translation had been published to date. The longest and most substantial one, by Shigeru Koike, appeared in *Tosho Shimbun*, a prestigious literary journal, on 13 June 1992. He welcomed the publication as timely and significant now that most Japanese have forgotten the true meaning of poverty and can eat their fill in an era of unprecedented economic prosperity. The book will give its readers an opportunity to discover an aspect of Gissing’s work that has been largely ignored in Japan. Indeed with the exception of an abridged paperback edition of *A Life’s Morning* issued in 1961 by Apollon-sha, no pre-1891 title had apparently been reprinted in English or translated into Japanese so far. – An unsigned review appeared in *Yomiuri*

*Shimbun*, a quality paper with a large circulation, on 16 June, in which the reviewer declared that *The Nether World* offers such a vivid picture of poverty and misery in nineteenth-century London as can only make sense to those who have had firsthand experience of them, a sentiment shared by the anonymous reviewer in the evening edition of *Sankei Shimbun*, another quality paper, who welcomed the translation because the book gives its readers a chance of looking back upon “the poorest class in nineteenth-century London, with its flattering hopes and profound despair” (11 May 1992). – Lastly Tsukasa Kobayashi observed in *Shinano Mainichi Shimbun*, a local paper, on 23 August 1992, that “although many Japanese have some knowledge of the prosperous England that was the workshop of the world, they are hardly aware of the sufferings endured by the working people who contributed to make their country prosperous.” Gissing’s novel offers a more enlightening picture than the writings of Jack London and Friedrich Engels. “It is translated into readable Japanese.”]

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### Too Little Latin

Bouwe Postmus  
University of Amsterdam

Few Gissingites would quarrel with Pierre Coustillas’ final verdict on the Ryburn Publishing edition of *New Grub Street*, with an introduction and notes by John Halperin.<sup>1</sup> It is indeed “beautifully printed” and “a major bibliographical landmark,” but of the presumed superiority of its annotations one is less certain. Especially regrettable are the instances that seem to indicate that the editor, John Halperin, has as “little Latin and less Greek” as Shakespeare.

In his note to page 99 the chapter heading *Invita Minerva* is mistakenly explained (?) as if the Latin read *In vita Minerva*, and incorrectly translated as “in the life of Minerva.” Not only does the editor thus display his sad ignorance of the genitive case of Minerva, he also shows a disturbing inability to relate Gissing’s intended meaning of the chapter heading to the rest of the chapter. If only the editor had turned to, say, the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*,<sup>2</sup> which glosses the phrase under the lemma of *Minerva* as: in spite of Minerva (tr. L. *invita Minerva*): contrary to one’s natural bent. Another indispensable handbook, *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*,<sup>3</sup> specifies the source of the phrase – it is from Horace’s *Ars Poetica*, i, 385 – and translates it as: against the will of Minerva, i.e., uninspired. Surely the chapter heading refers to Reardon’s pathetic and plodding efforts at composition at a time when his “outwearied imagination” is entirely lacking in inspiration.

In the note to page 116 Halperin, in an attempt to clarify the metrical term *with an anacrusis*, states that “Ionic, in this context, refers to a dialect of ancient Greece.” It does not. Again, any good dictionary would have served the editor’s needs. The *SOD*<sup>4</sup> defines “Ionic” as follows: *Gr. and Lat. Pros.* Name of a foot consisting of two long syllables followed by two short (“ionic *a majore*”), or two short followed by two long (“ionic *a minore*”).

In view of Gissing’s great knowledge and love of the classics I do not think these critical remarks could be shrugged off as mere pedantry. One simply owes it to Gissing to do full justice to his classical allusions. Morley Roberts was gladly prepared to do just that and in *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*<sup>5</sup> he has given us this unforgettable vignette of Gissing’s contagious enthusiasm about Greek metrics:

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“But whenever we met... we always recited Greek to each other, and then entered into a discussion of the metrical value of the choruses – in which branch of learning I showed proper humility, for in prosody he [Maitland/Gissing] was remarkably learned. As for me, I knew nothing of it beyond what he told me... But it was not easy to resist [his] enthusiasm... and I succumbed to it so greatly that at last I was really interested in what appealed so to him... We talked of rhythm, and of Arsis or Ictus. Pyrrhics we spoke of, and trochees and spondees were familiar on our lips. Especially did he declare that he had a passion for anapaests, and when it came to actual metres, Choriambics and Galliambics were an infinite joy to him... What he knew about comic tetrameter was at my service, and in a short time I knew, as I imagined, almost all that he did about Minor Ionic, Sapphic, and Alcaic verse.”

Whether Halperin’s translation of *merum sal* on p. 60 as “pure salt” is really superior to Bergonzi’s<sup>6</sup> more explicit: “pure salt, or *true wit*” (my italics) is at least open to question. Also, why did Halperin omit a reference to Matthew Arnold’s *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), a book that is known to have fascinated Gissing, in which the term Philistines is used (and popularized) in the very sense that Halperin gives in his note to page 63? And why not refer the reader in an explanatory note on Tibullus (p. 48) to Gissing’s *Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*<sup>7</sup> for a revealing passage on the poet? Would not the explanatory value of the note to page 310: “*in secula seculorum*. Forever, perpetually” have been greatly enhanced by pointing out its usual context, viz. the order for the burial of the dead in the Roman missal? Again, the wording of Bergonzi’s explanation of the Latin phrase strikes me as more adequate.

However grateful one feels for this splendid new edition of one of Gissing’s truly great novels, there is a distinct sense of disappointment about the quality of the annotations.

<sup>1</sup>Halifax: Ryburn Publishing, 1992.

<sup>2</sup>*The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, third edition, revised and edited by C. T. Onions (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 1254, “Minerva.”

<sup>3</sup>*Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, new and revised edition by Ivor H. Evans (London: Guild Publishing, 1985), p. 740.

<sup>4</sup>*SOD*, p. 1043, “Ionic.”

<sup>5</sup>Edited by Morchard Bishop (London: The Richards Press, 1958), pp. 71-72.

<sup>6</sup>*New Grub Street*, edited and introduced by Bernard Bergonzi (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd, 1968), p. 554.

<sup>7</sup>Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982, pp. 37-38.

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#### Notes and News

With regret we announce the death of Miss Mavis Edmonds (1904-1992), the granddaughter of Gissing’s “aunt Lizzie.” She was a kind, generous correspondent, who gladly shared her reminiscences of the Bedford family and was in a privileged position to throw light on some genealogical matters when the Bedford family tree was still under construction. We are also sorry to hear of the death, at Fukuoka last September, of Professor Yukio Otsuka, a faithful correspondent for many years. He was over eighty. A professor of Comparative Literature, he

was the author, editor or translator of many books, one of his last volumes being a translation of Maxence Van der Meersch's first novel, *La Maison dans la dune* (1932), a contraband story set in the north of France. He will be remembered by Gissing scholars as the author of a truly original book on the *Ryecroft Papers*.

We publish in this number a short article on the Ryburn edition of *New Grub Street* by Dr. Postmus. A letter from Wulfhard Stahl on the same subject and pointing to the same editorial errors must be acknowledged. It is to be hoped that John Halperin and the publishers will have an opportunity to make the two or three corrections required in a new edition.

Jacob Korg reports: "In the *New York Review of Books* for 22 October 1992, Robert Craft reviewed a new translation by Tina Nunnally of *Niels Lyhne*, the novel by the nineteenth-century Danish author, Jens Peter Jacobsen (Fjord Press, 1992).

Our readers will recall that Gissing read this novel in a German translation sent to him by Bertz, and responded to it enthusiastically. It concerns the spiritual conflicts of a professed atheist, and undoubtedly had some influence on Gissing's conception of *Born in Exile*.

Craft reviews Jacobsen's career and sketches his other works. Jacobsen was originally a student of biology and translated both the *Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man* into Danish. He was also a poet, and some of his poems have been set to music by Arnold Schoenberg, Carl Nielsen and Frederick Delius. (This aspect of the subject may have led Craft, whose speciality is music criticism, especially the work of Stravinsky, to write this review.)

Craft shows that Jacobsen's work had a wide influence, and mentions Freud, Hesse, Thomas Mann, James Joyce and Ibsen among those who responded to it. (Ibsen's *Miss Julie* is

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based on Jacobsen's novel, *Marie Grubbe*.) Unfortunately, however, he does not mention Gissing, who must have been among the first English readers to see *Niels Lyhne*, if not the very first."

The spring catalogue of Ohio University Press announces the publication of Vol. IV of Gissing's *Collected Letters* in March 1993. It will cover the years 1889-91, leaving the author when he was looking forward to the publication of *Denzil Quarrier* and *Born in Exile*. Vol. V, which will extend to late June 1895 is ready for the printers. Publication is expected either late in 1993 or early in 1994. Other forthcoming volumes are a new edition of *Born in Exile*, edited by David Grylls, of a selection of Gissing short stories, *The Day of Silence and Other Stories*, edited by Pierre Coustillas (both in Dent's Everyman's Library), and of *New Grub Street* (Oxford University Press, World's Classics). Meanwhile, the Norton edition of *The Odd Women*, an attractive paperback with a pictorial black and white front cover and an introduction by Marcia R. Fox, has reached its tenth impression. Selling at \$4.95 in the U.S.A., £3.50 in Great Britain and \$7.95 in Canada, it is the most moderately priced edition of the book in print. In her excellent introduction, Ms Fox first puts the problem of the odd woman in perspective, then sketches the broad lines of Gissing's life in the light of his complex and contradictory feminism and lastly discusses the novel itself. "In *The Odd Women*," she writes, the abstractions of the Woman Question come to life. The soul of this novel can be found in the consistently interesting discussions of the characters about a whole range of feminist issues: the need for professional training among women, the impact of feminist freedom upon the institution of marriage, and the new 'soul' of the free modern woman. These discussions serve as a kind of intellectual chorus for the action."

Audio Book Contractors Inc. (P.O. Box 40115, Washington, D. C. 20016-0115) still have

*The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* in their Classic Books on Cassettes for 1993. The text is read by Grover Gardner, an actor, director and narrator who has recorded over 200 books for various commercial companies and the Library of Congress "Talking Books" programme. Thirty-day rental: \$9.00. Purchase: \$26.95. Audio Book Contractors will record books on contract.

Douglas Hallam, the Chairman of the Gissing Trust, has been giving several lectures on Gissing before various Yorkshire societies. Anthony Petyt, the Hon. Secretary, reports that he

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has identified the Reverend Mackarness mentioned by Margaret Gissing in her letters to her relatives from Guernsey in September 1889. C. C. Mackarness, M.A., was vicar of St. Martin's-on-the-Hill, Scarborough. His name appears in Bulmer's Directory of North Yorkshire for 1890. The church Margaret had in mind occupied a prominent position in Albion Road, South Cliff; it had been consecrated by the Archbishop of York in 1863.

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#### Recent Publications

##### Volumes

George Gissing, *The Odd Women*, London: Virago Press, 1992. [xvi] + 336 pages. Introduction by Margaret Walters. Pictorial paperback. ISBN 0-86068-140-8. £5.99. This is the sixth impression. The cover design has been slightly altered.

George Gissing, *The Odd Women*, New York: New American Library, [1992]. xvi + 388 pages. Introduction by Elaine Showalter. Pictorial paperback. ISBN 0-452-010 14-4. \$5.95. This is the fifth impression.

George Gissing, *By the Ionian Sea*, Privately printed by Alan Anderson, 43 Mayburn Avenue, Loanhead, Midlothian EU20 9EY. For details see our October 1992 number, p. 36.

##### Articles, reviews, etc.

Regenia Gagnier, *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain 1832-1920*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. Contains a number of references to Gissing, to *The Nether World* in particular.

V. S. Pritchett, *The Complete Essays*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1991. This fat volume (1319 pp.) contains no major revelation. The two well-known essays on Gissing ("Poor Gissing" and "Grub Street") are duly reprinted, pp. 527-32 and 615-19. Allusions to him will be found in articles on Arthur Morrison, Meredith, E. M. Forster, Corvo and Orwell.

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Patrick Brantlinger, "Nations and Novels: Disraeli, George Eliot, and Orientalism," *Victorian Studies*, Spring 1992, pp. 255-75. *Demos* is briefly mentioned on p. 257.

Anon., "It's letter perfect..." *Wakefield Express Plus*, 24 July 1992, p. 1. On Volume III of the

*Collected Letters*. In the Gallery Section was another piece, "Third volume appears of Grub Street man's letters," partly devoted to the Ryburn edition of *New Grub Street*.

Ad Fransen, "Onder de Gordel," *HP/De Tijd* (Amsterdam), 21 August 1992, pp. 38-43. An interview of Geerten Meijnsing, with a passage on Gissing, and portraits of Meijnsing on the inside front cover and on pp. 38-39. See Bouwe Postmus's article in the present number.

Anon., "Victorian classic is republished in two formats; Wakefield novelist's work re-edited," *Wakefield Express Plus*, 18 September 1992, pp. 1 and 44. On the Ryburn edition of *New Grub Street*, with a photograph of Lucia Crothall, of Ryburn Publishing, and Douglas Hallam.

Francesco Badolato, "La democrazia vista da George Gissing," *Il Corriere di Roma*, 23 September 1992, pp. 3-4.

R[oger] A[sselineau], "Chronique: Du côté de Gissing," *Etudes Anglaises*, July-September 1992, pp. 372-73. On the Bertz-Whitman correspondence published in the present journal.

Anon., "Writer being ignored say historians," *Wakefield Express*, 11 December 1992, p. 5. Gissing does not appear in the Wakefield Visitors' Guide published by the local authorities.

Martha Vogeler, "Book Reviews: Gissing Letters II," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 35 (1992), no. 4, pp. 476-80.

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#### Tailpiece

Few readers of Gissing's works are likely to know of a little book, *Weeping-Cross and other Rimes*, by A. H. Bullen (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1921). It contains an excellent portrait of Gissing's friend and publisher which will be reproduced in Volume IV of Gissing's *Collected Letters*, and a seven-page introductory note by M. T. D.

"One of the dearest of his unfulfilled dreams," wrote M. T. D., "was to see Greece, and he had often spoken with George Gissing of the journey they would one day make there together. But poverty held him tied at home, and all his voyaging was done on winter nights by his own fire-side, when he would devour books of travel with the lusty appetite of a schoolboy. He never wholly lost the boy's sense of wonder and love of adventure, and no matter the country – China or Peru, Central America, the South Sea Islands, or the Great African forests – the very name alone would draw him, as with a spell. But yet it was England that he loved, with just such a passion as the Elizabethans loved her. English fields, English hedgerows, English woods and sleepy streams made up his heaven of out-of-doors, and I doubt if any other setting would have suited him one half so well.

All his hopes and dreams were disappointed, save one – to lie at last in a country churchyard far from towns and men. Luddington is a tiny village, and its churchyard, within sound of the lapping waters of the Avon, a very home of peace. To-day, for some of us: 'Luddington guards dearer dust / Than Omar's shrine.'"

The eight lines of "Weeping-Cross," says M. T. D., "tell the story of its author's life far better than any biography, however lovingly or carefully compiled." Would not Gissing have liked his friend's poem?



### Weeping-Cross

With bold heart, high-aspiring aim,  
Forth fared he in the morning gray,  
To storm the Citadel of Fame  
And win a crown of fadeless bay:  
Ungarlanded, at day's decline,  
Ruefully weighing gain with loss,  
When neither moon nor star did shine,  
Homeward he stole by Weeping-Cross.

*11th November, 1917*

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### Information for Contributors

*The Gissing Journal* publishes essays and notes on Gissing and his circle. Contributions may deal with biographical, critical, bibliographical and topographical subjects. They should be addressed to the editor, Pierre Coustillas, 10 rue Gay-Lussac, 59110 La Madeleine, France.

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