

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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People Gissing Knew: Dr. Jane Walker

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Only a few of the letters Gissing wrote during his month-and-a-half stay at the East Anglian Sanatorium in Nayland, Suffolk in 1901 mention his physician there, Dr. Jane Walker. Nor have Gissing scholars paid much attention to her or her institution. Yet she is worthy of study apart from her connection with Gissing, and her life and career cannot fail to interest his readers.

Gissing was referred to Dr. Walker by his boyhood friend, Henry Hick, who was practicing medicine in New Romney, Kent, and had been consulted by Gissing in previous years.¹ Gissing may have heard of Dr. Walker even before then because she was well-known in Yorkshire as one of the first women in the county to become a physician. Her family home was in Dewsbury, where her father, a wealthy blanket manufacturer, had been mayor. It was just west of Wakefield,

where Gissing and Hick grew up. In London she had an office in Harley Street.² Dr. Walker was not the first woman physician known to Gissing. In Boston, during his youthful American exile, he had attended the literary salon of a Dr. Zakrzewska, and when she came to London in 1895 he had taken time from his writing (always a sacrifice for him) to show her parts of the city.³ In *Our Friend the Charlatan*, published the month before his admission to the East Anglian Sanatorium, Gissing has the strong-minded Lady Ogram declare that she'd "like to see as many women doctors as men" – though she adds, true to her acerbic character, that "Doctoring is mostly humbug, and if women were attended by women there'd be a good deal less of that."⁴ There was nothing to suggest humbug in Dr. Walker's demeanor or background. Forty-one years old when Gissing met her, she was short and stocky, with a rather round face, ruddy complexion, dark hair and eyes, and heavy eyebrows. Her energy and forceful personality were evident.

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According to the rules of her institution, Dr. Jane, as she was generally called, had to examine every new patient.⁵ If Gissing first saw her at 122 Harley Street, where she also maintained a residence, he might have glimpsed some of the paintings she had collected and would bequeath to the Manchester Art Gallery.⁶ More likely their first encounter was at Nayland, where she ruled with a firm hand.⁷ There he would no doubt have heard something of her background.

Born on 24 October 1859, Jane Harriett Walker decided in her youth to become a physician, though at the time no English university would grant a medical degree to a woman. Undeterred, she studied at the London School of Medicine for Women, and in Dublin and Edinburgh, before taking her medical Degree in Brussels in 1890 and spending time at the University of Vienna.⁸ As a young physician she worked in several hospitals for children in London, and in the 1890s published *A Handbook for Mothers* and two volumes on health care of children and women.⁹ She was one of the all-woman medical staff at the New Hospital for Women (in 1918 named for its founder, Dr. Elizabeth Garrett Anderson) on Euston Road. In her own institution in Suffolk, Dr. Walker would employ mostly women physicians, and speak out strongly against those who doubted women's fitness for the profession.¹⁰

Her own career took a sharp turn in 1892 as the result of a month-long visit to a tuberculosis sanatorium founded by Otto Walther at Nordrach in the Black Forest. The Nordrach method she observed there put patients in the open air for resting and sleeping, instead of confining them to stuffy rooms, as was still the custom in England. A rich diet, with plentiful milk, was part of the treatment. On her return to England, Dr. Walker opened a modest center on these lines in Downham Market, Norfolk, the first of its kind in England.¹¹ In 1899 she published her "encouraging" results, and with backing from relatives and friends, formed a limited liability company to finance a larger facility, the East Anglian Sanatorium, on some 400 acres in Nayland, Suffolk.¹²

The spot chosen for the first building was on the slope of a hill with an extensive view of the serene Stour Valley, painted by Gainsborough and Constable. For Gissing the location was propitious: his beloved father had spent his early years in Suffolk. Apart from that, the relatively sunny, dry climate of Nayland recommended it for people with pulmonary tuberculosis at a time when there were no proven remedies. To implement fresh-air therapy, the central building, which Dr. Walker helped to design, had tall casement windows, several to a room, and covered porches.

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The steeply-pitched roof was ornamented with a cupola, and there were other decorative details, for she had a keen aesthetic eye. Patients occupied single and double rooms facing south on two floors, with staff rooms above. There were fireplaces, but also steam heating and electricity

throughout. The sanatorium had its own laundry and sewage system. During Gissing's stay, not all the plantings and lawns were in place, and the vegetable gardens and chicken coops had yet to attain the scale that would eventually allow for the sale of excess produce and milk.¹³ Reached from London by train to Bures or Colchester, the sanatorium was well-situated to allow Dr. Walker to continue her active professional and social life in London, where she was known as a generous hostess.

Less than half a year after the sanatorium opened, Gissing was admitted, on 24 June 1901. He gave his address as Arundel Street, the Strand, the office of J. B. Pinker, his literary agent. Already 137 patients had preceded Gissing, some remaining only for a short time, the total at one time never exceeding 30. Most, but not all, were tubercular.¹⁴ The daily regime called for rising at 7:15 a.m. (for those not confined to bed), breakfast at 8, dinner at 1, tea at 3:30, supper at 6:30, with rest or walking between meals, lights out at 9 p.m. in winter and 9:30 in summer, and no alcohol (unless prescribed), no food between meals, no card playing until after tea, no gambling ever, and no expectorating anywhere but into a mug or flask provided. Visitors were discouraged but permitted on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. There was a chapel (eventually two), for Dr. Walker was a good Anglican, a member of St. Pancras Church, just across Euston Road from the New Hospital for Women.¹⁵

Gissing's admission note reads "Complaint = P.T.," and he followed the regime for pulmonary tuberculosis that Dr. Walker was pioneering in England. But did he have the disease? The evidence on this question is unclear, which is perhaps not surprising for that period before x-rays. He had suffered from upper respiratory ailments and sore throats off and on most of his adult life—but who living in the English climate before the advent of aspirin and central heating did not? At various times he received conflicting reports of the immediate and long-range implications of his symptoms. Consequently, his road to the East Anglian Sanatorium was far from straight. Yet there are signposts we can follow.

Gissing himself pointed to a fork in that road at the end of 1896, when a physician he had consulted because of a persistent cough found a "weak point" in the right lung. "This may be a

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grave matter, and may not," Gissing noted. He was ordered to "paint [his throat] with iodine and take syrup of hypophosphites."¹⁶ By February he appeared so ill that Hick took him to see Dr. Philip Henry Pye-Smith, a lung specialist at Guy's Hospital, London. He advised seeking a better climate in South Devon. This Gissing did, having already decided to leave his quarrelsome wife Edith and their younger son in Epsom.¹⁷ Soon Gissing became convinced that excoriation of the nasal cavities [from the iodine?], rather than the lung, was causing his breathing problem.¹⁸ But in June, Pye-Smith diagnosed his condition as "emphysema" (loss of lung tissue elasticity), possibly "compensatory" (related to some other condition).¹⁹ When a final attempt at reconciliation with his wife failed, Gissing departed for Italy in September. In Siena he lost weight and noticed blood on his handkerchief, apparently for the first time.²⁰ Nevertheless, he traveled south to Calabria, the trip he later depicted in *By the Ionian Sea*. In Cotrone (Crotone today) he suffered from "congestion of that old enemy, the right lung" and was treated by the local doctor with hot poultices and quinine (*dosi forti!*), which produced hallucinations.²¹ In Rome early in 1898 influenza and bronchitis led him to try a remedy for tuberculosis described in a German newspaper sent by his friend Eduard Bertz: creosotal, a caustic wood tar compound. Gissing mixed it with cod liver oil, and thought it diminished his cough and increased his appetite.²² But back in England in the spring, a medical examination disclosed "decided phthisis" (a common synonym for tuberculosis) that was "not very active," and complications: a "strong gouty tendency—uncertainty of heart – bad emphysema, liver at any moment to give trouble – disposition to eczema." Understandably, Gissing thought this "all rather discouraging."²³

It was about then that Gabrielle Fleury entered the picture, and soon Gissing was

persuaded that she had given him “a new life, physical as well as mental.”²⁴ He tried to minimize the seriousness of his symptoms while professing devotion to the other invalid in her life, her “maman.”²⁵ Gabrielle was naturally apprehensive about adding to her nursing burdens, but she eventually yielded to his protestations of love. After a self-styled “marriage” and “honeymoon” in France in the spring of 1899, they lived in Paris with Gabrielle’s family, spending periods in Switzerland and central France. At St. Honoré-les-Bains, a local doctor recommended the curative waters for an ugly eruption on the right side of Gissing’s forehead, probably the psoriasis that troubled him for years and which may explain what Henry James described as a “purple scar” disfiguring Gissing’s face.²⁶ Back in Paris by the end of 1900, Gissing began

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complaining about the meager meals Gabrielle’s mother served him, and of respiratory symptoms that he attributed to influenza. Dr. Anatole Chauffard, a professor in the Faculté de Médecine de Paris, traced them to a moist spot on Gissing’s right lung, bad emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and rheumatism, and prescribed hypodermic injections and ignipuncture, a treatment using hot needles.²⁷

Traveling to England with Gabrielle for a short visit in May, 1901, Gissing caught cold. At H. G. Wells’s house at Sandgate, on the Kent coast, he alarmed both his host and Hick, who had come over to see him from New Romney, for he looked like a skeleton. His complaints about his diet in Paris had been justified. Hick urged Catherine Wells to “feed him for all she was worth.” This she did, with “marvellous results.”²⁸ When after a few weeks Gissing could no longer prolong his stay at Sandgate, Wells and Hick convinced him that he should continue the regime of nourishing food and rest at Dr. Walker’s sanatorium. Gabrielle, who had by then returned to Paris to care for *maman*, objected to any further separation, but Gissing stood his ground, arguing that Hick said it was a matter of “life or death.”²⁹ To Bertz, Gissing wrote later that his right lung was “seriously threatened with tuberculosis.”³⁰

Gissing’s belief that he had a marked tendency towards tuberculosis but not a full-blown case seems borne out by the later *roman à clef* about him written by Morley Roberts. Roberts learned of the crisis only after it was over, and formed the impression that Hick and Dr. Walker had found no “active pulmonary trouble” except for the emphysema, but allowed Gissing to believe that they had in order to reconcile him to a stay in her sanatorium.³¹ Correspondence between the two doctors after Gissing’s death supports this idea. In 1904 Hick wrote to Dr. Walker to ask about Gissing’s condition when under her care. She replied that there had been no expectoration: his symptoms were “shortness of breath and a slight cough and a temperature varying between 97 and 99” (a normal range).³² In his “Recollections of George Gissing,” Hick interprets this to mean that Dr. Walker found “no evidence of tuberculosis.”³³ Why, then, her admission diagnosis? Gissing wrote to Mrs. Wells from the sanatorium saying that Hick, despite his own illness, had sent a long letter about him to Dr. Walker.³⁴ It may have proposed the idea of treating Gissing as a tuberculosis patient in order to buy some time for him before he had to return to Gabrielle and the meager diet.

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Whatever Dr. Jane thought of Gissing’s condition when she admitted him she confined him to bed for the first day and a half of his stay (perhaps a routine procedure for all patients regardless of diagnosis). For the rest of the time he was apparently ambulatory, but, in his words, “condemned to absolute idleness,” and for once he was content to do nothing. The food was “stupendous,” the place “beautiful,” and Dr. Jane seemed “cheerful” about his case. There were rumors of “strange cures,” and he was impressed when she read a paper in London at the International Tuberculosis Congress.³⁵ Even the society of other patients at first proved pleasant

enough, partly because they showed an interest in his literary accomplishments. By early August, his weight was normal and he had “practically no cough,” though the rich diet had to be curtailed because it had been upsetting his stomach. His long-term sleep problem had disappeared. In short, it seemed that he “had done all here that can be done.”³⁶ Dr. Walker’s laconic discharge note on 10 August reads “slightly improved.”³⁷

Gissing and Dr. Jane had some literary conversations, though whether they talked about his books is not known. He did, however, find out that her favorite story by Wells was *The Wonderful Visit*. To Bertz, Gissing described his own wonderful visit: he had “benefited considerably, chiefly in acquiring the habit of living, day and night, with windows open,” though he worried about how he could continue doing so when he returned to writing.³⁸ But soon he had other worries and complaints. He told Clara Collet that English doctors were clearly inferior to the French. Compared to Dr. Chauffard in Paris and his doctor in Arcachon, the resort town where he had gone to escape the cold in Paris, “Englishmen seem mere bunglers & amateurs.” Pye-Smith’s examinations had been “most perfunctory,” and his advice “vague.” Dr. Walker suffered from deafness, and had been too optimistic about his case and at least one other he knew about. She had neglected to prescribe anything effective for his stomach upset, and “the Nayland system of living, not in the open air, but in *draughts* – windows open *on both sides* in all weathers – is obvious madness.”³⁹ His Arcachon doctor prescribed poultices, which seemed to do good – but also capsules, which did not, prompting Gissing to exclaim, “Oh, these doctors!”⁴⁰

Though Gissing corresponded with at least one fellow patient after leaving Nayland – Rachel Evelyn White – and probably took some of her characteristics for the heroine of his short story “Miss Rodney’s Leisure,” he seems to have neither kept in touch with Dr. Walker nor to have used her as a model in fiction.⁴¹ Of course, his death in December 1903 cut short the time

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he had to think about his experience at the sanatorium. It also prevented his knowing the full extent of its founder’s professional distinction.

Like Gissing, Dr. Walker was a clear and forceful writer. In 1904 she published *The Modern Nursing of Consumption*, a useful summary of what was known about tuberculosis and its treatment at the time.⁴² The book’s arguments for providing sanatoria for the poor explain why in the same year she converted a farm building at Nayland to treat patients who could not afford to pay for their care. It was financed by profits from the fee-paying patients, for the shareholders were not primarily interested in making money on their investment. A block for tubercular children was added in 1912, another for soldiers in 1916, and later a separate block for officers. With this proliferation of units went additional non-medical activities: classroom teaching for the children, light farming and housekeeping for the non-paying adults, and crafts and vocational training for the soldiers. After 1911, the National Insurance Act provided funds for extending the facilities, and local agencies sent patients as well. The East Anglian Sanatorium became a model for other institutions in the country.⁴³

In London, Dr. Walker took an active role in her profession, not only in tuberculosis treatment, but in helping to found the Medical Women’s Federation in 1916, and serving as its first president.⁴⁴ In 1923 she spoke of its work to the New York Women’s Medical Society.⁴⁵ A variety of women’s causes won her support: the women’s suffrage campaign led by Millicent Fawcett (who was on her Board of Directors), the struggle for the admission of women into the Anglican priesthood (advocated by her friend Maude Royden), and the purity campaign of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.⁴⁶ In 1918 she protested against the army’s denial of commissions to women doctors, and in 1927 argued against a factory bill that would restrict women’s right to work alongside men.⁴⁷ She helped found Godstowe, a girls’ preparatory school, but in general advocated co-education, and she lent her paintings for public exhibitions arranged by the British Institute of Adult Education.⁴⁸ Named a Companion of Honour in 1911, she was

able to add C.H. to the other initials after her name: M.D., J.P. (for West Suffolk), and LL.D. (from the University of Leeds). She was one of the oldest women practicing medicine at the time of her death at age 79 on 17 November 1938. More than 50 friends and colleagues wrote notes of condolence to her successor at Nayland, Dr. G. Eleanor Soltau, and three memorial services gave

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thanks for her life.⁴⁹ There can be no doubt that Dr. Jane Walker was one of the most distinguished of the “people Gissing knew.”

¹*Henry Hick's Recollections of George Gissing: Together with Gissing's Letters to Henry Hick*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (London: Enitharmon Press, 1973), pp. 2, 4, and 60 (hereafter cited as “Hick”).

²Memorial Tributes, Contemporary Medical Archives Centre, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, SA/MWF/c.54 (this collection of Dr. Walker's papers is cited hereafter as WI, by the courtesy of the Wellcome Trustees), a reference I owe to Professor Harold L. Smith.

³*London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1978), pp. 389, 395-96, 400-03, and 590 (hereafter cited as *Diary*).

⁴*Our Friend the Charlatan*, ed. with Intro. and Notes by Pierre Coustillas (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1976), p. 56.

⁵*The Hygienic Treatment of Consumption... East Anglian Sanatorium, Nayland, Suffolk*, copy in Suffolk Record Office, Bury St. Edmunds Branch, ID 507/8/1 (file on the East Anglian Sanatorium hereafter cited as SRO).

⁶Tributes to her in *Medical Women's Federation Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1939, pp. 17-21 (hereafter cited as *MWFQR*); *Talk Given by Dr. Dawkins at Memorial Service to Dr. Jane Walker*, typescript kindly provided by Gillian Riches, Assistant Administrator of the Jane Walker Hospital (hereafter cited as *Dawkins*).

⁷See “The Tale of Dr. Jane, Nayland Dictator,” *East Anglian D.T. [Daily Times?]* 26 Jan. 1951, cutting, WI, SA/MWF/c.53-4.

⁸Obits: *The Times*, 18 Nov. 1938, p. 18d (misdating her M.D.); *Lancet* CCXXXV (26 Nov. 1938), p. 1259; *MWFQR*, Jan. 1939, p. 17.

⁹*A Handbook for Mothers* (London: Longmans, Green, 1893); *A Book for Every Woman*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1895-97).

¹⁰“Women Doctors Are a Success says Dr. Jane Walker,” *Manchester Evening News*, 2 Feb. 1932, cutting in WI, SA/MWF/c. 53-4.

¹¹*Lancet*, p. 1259; *MWFQR*, p. 17; on Walther, see Linda Bryder, *Below the Magic Mountain: A Social History of Tuberculosis in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 24.

¹²*Open-Air Treatment of Consumption: Seven Years' Experience in England, reprinted with some additions from 'The Practitioner' July 1899* (London: J. & A. Churchill, 1899), cited in Bryder, *Below the Magic Mountain*, p. 25.

¹³*Prospectus of the East Anglian Sanatorium Company, Limited, for the Treatment of Consumption*, May 1899, SRO, ID 507/1/5, mentioning capital of £20,000, shares to be issued totaling £16,000, and an interim sanatorium for 18 patients at Boxted, near Nayland; see

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Dawkins on the later farm, with a herd of Friesians, poultry, a piggery, and ten gardeners under the “iron” rule of a “college trained lady.”

¹⁴Patients Records, SRO, ID 507/6/1, listing Gissing as no. 138.

¹⁵*Rules and Regulations for Patients*, SRO, ID 507/8/4 (undated but probably more or less the rules for 1901).

¹⁶*Diary*, p. 430 (29 Dec. 1896).

¹⁷*Diary*, p. 435 (2 June 1897, but covering an earlier period), p. 585 (on Pye-Smith, 1839-1914); *Hick*, pp. 31-33. Gissing's elder son, Walter, was at Wakefield.

¹⁸Letter to Hick, [27] February 1897, *Hick*, p. 33.

¹⁹Letter to Hick, 2 June 1897, *Hick*, p. 40.

²⁰*Diary*, p. 448 (7 Oct. 1897).

²¹*Diary*, pp. 463-64 (29 Nov.-5 Dec. 1897); the episode is discussed in *By the Ionian Sea* and in Francesco Badolato, "Meeting Dr. Sculco's Son," *Gissing Newsletter*, X (July 1974), pp. 7-8.

²²*Diary*, pp. 483-84 (19-22 Feb. 1898); *The Letters of George Gissing to Eduard Bertz 1887-1903*, ed. Arthur C. Young (London: Constable, 1961), p. 245 (10 Feb. 1898), p. 247 (8 March 1898) (hereafter cited as *Bertz*).

²³Letter to Wells, 26 June 1898, *George Gissing and H. G. Wells: A Record of their Friendship and Correspondence*, ed. Royal A. Gettmann (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), p. 102 (hereafter cited as *Wells*).

²⁴Letter to Gabrielle, 23 [October 1898], *The Letters of George Gissing to Gabrielle Fleury*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (New York: New York Public Library, 1964), p. 72 (hereafter cited as *Fleury*):

²⁵See, for example, *Fleury*, pp. 83, 88, 109, 110-11, and 118-19.

²⁶*Diary*, p. 530 (26 Aug. 1900); Frank Swinnerton, *The Bookman's London* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1952), p. 135, quoting Sydney Waterlow in the *New Statesman*, 6 Feb. 1926.

²⁷Letter to Hick, 17 Dec. 1900 and 8 April 1901, *Hick*, pp. 57-59; H. G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), p. 490 (hereafter cited as *Exp*); *Diary*, p. 539 (26 April 1901).

²⁸*Hick*, p. 12 (quoted); letter to Clodd, 17 June 1901, *The Letters of George Gissing to Edward Clodd*, ed. Pierre Coustillas (London: Enitharmon Press, 1973), pp. 73-74; *Exp*, p. 490 (quoted).

²⁹Letter to Gabrielle, Friday [7 June 1901], *Fleury*, p. 135.

³⁰Letter to Bertz, 22 June 1901, *Bertz*, pp. 296-97.

³¹*The Private Life of Henry Maitland* (London: Eveleigh Nash, 1912), p. 256.

³²Letter to Hick, 23 July 1904, *Hick*, p. 68, from her family home, Lees House, Dewsbury, expressing her interest in "the biographical notice" of Gissing [Hick's "Recollections"?] and inviting Hick to visit when he was in the area.

³³*Hick*, p. 12.

³⁴Letter to Mrs. Wells, 25 June 1901, *Wells*, p. 179.

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³⁵Letter to Wells, 25 June 1901, and to Mrs. Wells, 24 June 1901, *Wells*, pp. 180-81, and 178-80; letter to Collet, 6 Aug. 1901, copy Pierre Coustillas, saying that Dr. Walker had read the paper "& has a good reputation"; "Sanatorium Treatment of Phthisis Among the Poor," by Dr. Jane H. Walker, *Transactions of the British Congress on Tuberculosis for the Prevention of Consumption*: London, July 22nd to 26th, 1901, vol. II (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1902), pp. 410-12, and report in the *Lancet*, 20 July 1901, pp. 164-65.

³⁶Letter to Hick, 8 Aug. 1901, *Hick*, p. 62.

³⁷SRO, ID 507/6/1.

³⁸Letter to Bertz, 8 Sept. 1901, *Bertz*, p. 298.

³⁹Letter to Collet, 10 Jan. 1902, copy Coustillas (noting, too, that he had cured his eczema himself by diet after three doctors had failed).

⁴⁰Letters to his sister Ellen, 8 Dec. 1901, *The Letters of George Gissing to Members of His Family* (London: Constable, 1927), pp. 378-79; to Gabrielle, 19 Dec. [1901], *Fleury*, pp. 143-44 (quoted). Following the one recommendation upon which all his doctors agreed, Gissing sought a warm winter climate and settled at the foot of the Pyrenees, where he died 28 December 1903 of pneumonia and resulting heart disease.

⁴¹See James Haydock, "Miss White a Source for Miss Rodney?", *Gissing Newsletter V* (Jan. 1969), pp. 7-11, pointing out that Gissing downgraded Miss White's occupation in the story from lecturer in the classics at Cambridge to school teacher.

⁴²*The Modern Nursing of Consumption* (London: The Scientific Press, 1904), with a second edition in 1924.

⁴³*The Hygienic Treatment for Consumption: Accommodations for Working Men and Women...*, SRO, ID 507/8/1; typescripts, WI, SA/MWF/c.53-55: "History of the East Anglian Sanatorium"; "Draft: East Anglian Sanatorium Co. Ltd"; "Fifty Years Ago," by G. Eleanor Soltau.

⁴⁴Obit., *MWFQR*, Jan. 1939, pp. 18-25, by various colleagues, announcing her legacy of £500 to the Medical Women's Federation; WI, SA/MWF/c.94 (correspondence about the MWF).

⁴⁵*Medical Women's Journal*, Dec. 1923, p. 375.

⁴⁶Barbara Caine, *Victorian Feminists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 210, on her friendship with Fawcett; Sheila Fletcher, *Maude Royden: A Life* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 144, 154, and 210; *British Medical Journal*, 26 Nov. 1938, p. 1120.

⁴⁷*The Times*, 4 July 1918, p. 13c; *Medical Women's Journal*, March 1927, pp. 84-85.

⁴⁸*Lancet* CCXXXV (26 Nov. 1938), p. 1259; *Daily Telegraph*, 1 April 1935, cutting in WI, SA/MWF/c.53-4; Dr. Jane H. Walker, *Co-Education* (London: The Saint George Press, 1908), reprinted from *Saint George*.

⁴⁹WI, SA/MWF/c.55; the services were held in London, Wissington (near Nayland) and Dewsbury; the sanatorium is now the Jane Walker Hospital serving the mentally handicapped. It is scheduled to close in 1994.

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Gissing in the "O.E.D."

John Simpson, Co-Editor
Oxford English Dictionary

The nether world of lexicography provides some interesting sidelights on English literature. Listed below are the eighty-three quotations from the works of George Gissing which appear in the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Now that the 20-volume *OED* is available on compact disc, it is a relatively simple matter to obtain listings of this sort for any author or work cited in the Dictionary. More significantly, it is also possible for readers unfamiliar with the Dictionary's conventions to search rapidly through the full text of the Dictionary's database or, using the powerful Boolean search facilities, to pursue more complex literary, linguistic, historical or other investigations.

Some of the Gissing quotations are simply cited by the Dictionary as good modern examples of a word in context, others document idiosyncracies of Gissing's style, and yet others (marked here with an asterisk) represent the earliest use of a term in a particular meaning available to the Dictionary's editors at the time of compilation.

Further details of the *OED* on *CD-ROM* can be obtained from Oxford Electronic Publishing, Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6DP. In addition, the editors

would be delighted to receive notification of other early or significant uses of terms (words, subsenses, phrases, idioms, etc.) from Gissing's works for consideration as the next edition of the Dictionary is prepared.

bio-sociology *n.*

1901 G. GISSING *Our Friend the Charlatan* ii. 22 'It's uncommonly suggestive,' said Dyce... 'The best social theory I know. He [J. Izoulet] calls his system Bio-Sociology, a theory of society founded on the facts of biology.'

blatant *a.*

1903 G. GISSING *Private Papers H. Ryecroft* 274 The blatant upstart who builds a church, lays out his money in that way not merely to win social consideration.

block *n.*

1903 G. GISSING *Private Papers H. Ryecroft* 256 The sixth floor of a 'block' in Shoreditch.

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blusterously *adv.*

1905 G. R. GISSING *Will Warburton* xl.273 'The counter; my counter!' shouted Will blusterously.

caviare *n.*

1899 GISSING *Crown of Life* xix, We call caviare the bits blacked out in our newspapers and periodicals.

cerebrally *adv.*

1901 G. GISSING *Our Friend the Charlatan* xxi, If I am not cerebrally oxidised, ...it's all over with my hopes of leading a moral life.

***charming** *ppl. a.*

1893 G. GISSING *Odd Women* I.iv.95 'If you are long away you find the table cleared.' 'Charming arrangement!'

commercialism *n.*

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* II.xi.228 Commercialism had divorced art and the handicrafts.

companion *v.*

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morn.* III.102 It needs a long time before the heart can companion only with memories.

dehumanization *n.*

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* III.i.19 The last step in that process of dehumanisation which threatens idealists of his type.

dusk *v.*

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* xi. (1890) 169 When it began to dusk, Hood descended and supper was prepared.

fall v.

1890 G. GISSING *Emancipated* II.i.xiii.100 Her...health began to fall off.

flittingly adv.

1884 G. GISSING *Unclassed* III.v.ii.22 A slight wrinkle might show itself flittingly here and there.

get v.

1884 G. GISSING *Unclassed* II.iii.iv.86, I was in the laundry nearly six months, and became quite clever in getting up linen.

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glass v.

1887 GISSING *Thyrza* I.i.7 The opposite slopes glassed themselves in the deep dark water.

go v.

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* I.ii.72 Her worldly tastes did not go altogether ungratified.

go v.

1889 GISSING *Nether World* III.xii.253 You'll eat this or go without.

idle v.

1890 G. GISSING *Emancipated* II.i.xiv.127 Cecily let her fingers idle upon the keys.

***impaste** v.

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* I.vii.290 [She] helped herself abundantly to marmalade, which she impasted solidly on buttered toast.

impractical a.

1887 G. GISSING *Thyrza* I.xi.228 He is...I'm afraid, so very, very impractical.

inassuageable a.

1887 G. GISSING *Thyrza* II.viii.155 To bear the torture of an inassuageable desire.

indifferentist n.

1890 G. GISSING *Emancipated* I.75 Madeline was an indifferentist in politics and on social questions.

keep v.

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morn.* II.xiv.227 For a week he kept his counsel, and behaved as if nothing unusual had happened.

keep v.

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morn.* II.xv.302 It really seemed to me as if she were keeping something back.

kick v.

1890 G. GISSING *The Emancipated* III.ii.xvii.289 He kicked off his boots, kicked on his slippers.

leaver *n.*

1890 G. GISSING *Emancip.* III.ii.xvii.288 Hither came no payers of formal calls, no leavers of cards.

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look *v.*

1884 G. GISSING *Unclassed* III.vi.i.136 Could you manage to look in at the office tomorrow?

make *v.*¹

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* III.xix.110 The shopman put them aside, to be made into a parcel.

make *v.*¹

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* I.xii.272 He...made off at a run.

mill *n.*¹

1903 G. GISSING *Private Papers H. Ryecroft* 138 His hardships were never excessive; they did not affect his health or touch his spirits; probably he is in every way a better man for having... 'gone through the mill'.

missing *ppl. a.*

1898 GISSING *Town Traveller* xxv, The missing word this week, discovered by an East-end licensed victualler, was *pick-me-up*.

mis-spelling *vbl. a.*

1898 GISSING *Town Traveller* xxv, Mis-spelling, he knew, would invalidate his chance.

mundungus *n.*

1901 G. GISSING *Our Fr. Charlatan* 137, 'Here's a new mixture, my own blending, ... I see your pipe is empty'... 'I stick to my own mundungus; any novelty disturbs my thoughts'.

myopically *adv.*

1901 G. GISSING *Our Friend the Charlatan* x, He... blinked myopically at his visitors before rising.

not *adv.*

1895 GISSING *Eve's Ransom* 110 You mustn't tell me anything.

parchmenty *a.*

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* II.ii.18 Parchmenty cheek and lack-lustre eye.

parer *n.*

1887 GISSING *Thyrza* III.iii.62 The old man must have...friends about him, and not cold-blooded pinchers and parers.

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parliamentarily *adv.*

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* III.xix.113 Mr. Baxendale was in London, parliamentarily occupied.

paying *ppl. a.*

1895 G. GISSING *Paying Guest* i.7 It's a very common arrangement nowadays, you know; they are called 'paying guests'.

pincher *n.*

1887 GISSING *Thyrza* III.iii.62 Cold-blooded pinchers and parers.

***polyarchic** *a.*

1892 G. GISSING *Born in Exile* II.iv.i.164 He could admit that such men as Runcorn and Kenyon – the one with his polyarchic commercialism, the other with his demagogic violence – had possibly a useful part to play.

praisingly *adv.*

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* III.xiii.289 Miss Lant ... did not speak of her too praisingly.

***prefulgence** *a.*

1892 G. GISSING *Born in Exile* II.iv.iii.227 In his most presumptuous moments he had never claimed the sexual prefulgence which many a commonplace fellow so gloriously exhibits.

***press** *n.*¹

1901 G. GISSING *Let.* 30 Nov. in *G. Gissing & H. G. Wells* (1961) 200, I have never dared to subscribe to the *press-cutters for I remember... the day when a press notice meant a sneer which disturbed my work.

promise *v.*

1887 GISSING *Thyrza* I.ii.29 It promises for another fine day to-morrow.

put *v.*¹

1889 G. R. GISSING *Nether World* III.v.94 He put no faith in Sidney's assertion.

put *v.*¹

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morn.* II.ix.73 He did not put to himself the plain alternative.

quaff *n.*

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* I.v.97 Each guest having taken a quaff of ale.

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queer *n.*¹

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* II.xi.233 'Got any queer to put round?'... 'You know what he meant, Bob?' Bob nodded and became reflective. *Ibid.* III.ii.38 He opened it, and showed about a dozen pieces of money – in appearance half-crowns and florins.. 'The snyde' or 'the queer' is the technical name by which such products are known.

que voulez-vous *phr.*

1880 G. GISSING *Let.* 21 Dec. in *J. Korg George Gissing* (1965) iii.90, I fear they put me down for a prig, an upstart, an abominable aristocrat, but *que voulez-vous?*

read *v.*

1891 G. GISSING *New Grub Street* I.vi.122 She ... liked to know who 'read' for the publishing-houses.

reader *n.*

1891 G. GISSING *New Grub Street* II.xiii.4 One of Mr. Jedwood's 'readers'... was expressing a doubt whether Fadge himself was the author of the review.

re-book *v.*

1898 G. GISSING *Let. 27 Jan.* in R. A. Gettmann *G. Gissing & H. G. Wells* (1961) 85 The trunk ... will have to be ...re-booked to Rome.

ruffiandom *n.*

1886 G. GISSING *Isabel Clarendon* II.v.109 He never sank to sheer ruffiandom.

saddleless *a.*

1886 G. GISSING *Isabel Clarendon* I.ii.33 She had learned her riding on a saddleless colt.

satiate *ppl.*

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* I.xii.262 The gratuity expected from each guest as he rose satiate.

schwärmerei

1880 G. GISSING *Workers in the Dawn* I.xii.261 He has no belief whatever in the heroic woman, laughing to scorn women's rights, and speaking almost as disrespectfully of that *schwärmerei* of which you are yourself such an exalted instance.

***scrubbily** *adv.*

1891 G. GISSING *New Grub Street* I.vi.142 'By the by, how has *The Study* been in the habit of treating you?' 'Scrubbily.' 'I'll make an opportunity of talking about your books to Fadge.'

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seem *v.*²

1898 G. GISSING *Human Odds & Ends* 57 As a lad, I couldn't stick to anything – couldn't seem to put my heart into any sort of work.

servantless *a.*

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* III.xiii.295 Bessie was just now servantless.

set *v.*¹

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* III.xxii.210 Her features had set themselves in sorrow.

set *v.*¹

1889 GISSING *Nether World* iii, She only gets more and more set against me.

seven *a.*

1898 GISSING *Town Trav.* 81 Oh, we all know that Mr. Gammon's more than seven.

skylless *a.*

1888 GISSING *Life's Morning* III.xxii.208 In what black, skylless, leafless town was she pursuing her lonely life?

slackly *adv.*

1892 GISSING *New Grub Street* I.5 When one kind of goods begins to go slackly, he is ready with something new.

slinkingly *adv.*

1889 GISSING *Nether World* III.ix.185 He went slinkingly, hurrying round corners, avoiding glances.

soilure *n.*

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* I.iii.110 With minds disengaged from anxiety of casual soilure.

stand *v.*

1889 G. GISSING *Nether World* III.xii.253 His hair stood up like stubble.

stay *v.*¹

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* II.xi.135 I'm obliged to ask them to stay tea.

stead *v.*

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* II.147 The consciousness of what was before her killed her power to stead him in his misery.

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stiff-necked *a.*

1898 GISSING IN *Strand Mag.* XV.28 The stiff-necked old aristocrat had gone to London.

strike *v.*

1884 G. GISSING *Unclassed* II.iv.i.109 She exaggerated the refinement of her utterance that it might all the more strike off against the local twang.

supplement *v.*

1890 G. GISSING *Emancipated* I.i.v.151 Then he strolled away and supplemented his meal with a fine bunch of grapes.

there *adv.*

1901 G. GISSING IN *Literature* 21 Dec. 572/1 Thereamid stood a girl, her eyes fixed upon the prospect of city roofs.

toilet *n.*

1890 G. GISSING *Emancipated* I.i.iii.83 But when at length he appeared at the dinner-table, once more fresh from his toilet, then did a gleam of animation transform his countenance.

Trollopian *a.*

1903 G. GISSING *Private Papers Henry Ryecroft* 213 Any Trollopean work that lay upon the counter.

turn *v.*

1886 G. GISSING *Isabel Clarendon* viii, Ada seemed about to rise, but turned it off in an arrangement of her dress.

upper-middle-class *n.*

1903 G. GISSING *Private Papers H. Ryecroft* 210 A lad whose education ranks him with the upper middle class.

vestry *n.*¹

1891 G. GISSING *New Grub Street* I.198 Where are your out-of-door things? I think there is a ladies' vestry somewhere isn't there?

wageless *a.*

1889 GISSING *Nether World* II.18 Employed on piece-work they might at any moment find themselves wageless.

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woman *a.*

1893 G. GISSING *Odd Women* I.viii.235 A strong character, of course. More decidedly one of the new women than you yourself – isn't she?

wrying *vbl. n.*²

1888 G. GISSING *Life's Morning* III.xx.161 Wilfrid [spoke] with a little wrying of the lips.

The Critical Response to Gissing in the *Chicago Times Herald*

Robert L. Selig, Purdue University Calumet
with the assistance of Pierre Coustillas

It seems no accident that one of the two most interesting groups of Chicago Gissing reviews come from the *Times Herald* (from 1881-May 1895 known as the *Herald*). Its publisher, John R. Walsh, had, after all, started the *Evening Post* as a sister newspaper in 1890 and had given it the best literary section in Chicago.¹ By 1895 the parent morning paper had also developed a strong book review department of its own. Its leading reviewer was one Mary Abbott of the North Chicago suburb, Lake Forest, the author of the novelette *Alexia* and also a local lecturer on various subjects.² In one of her four Gissing reviews, she declares him “a great novelist” but adds that he “sets one thinking, and one hates the thoughts.”³ In spite of her misgivings about his often sordid themes, she writes more favorably about the details of his novels than does any other Chicago critic of her time. Her high estimate of him is all the more remarkable in that, like most other Chicago reviewers, she had no knowledge of either *New Grub Street* or *Born in Exile*, for neither had yet appeared in American editions. To move to a much larger writer than Gissing, this seems roughly equivalent to someone's declaring Shakespeare a great playwright without any knowledge of *Hamlet*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, or *Romeo and Juliet*. Yet even with this truncated awareness of Gissing's work, Mary Abbott's judgments have considerable perspicacity. Furthermore, the *Times Herald* literary department agreed enough with her about George Gissing's greatness to carry large sketches of his face, with the familiar drooping mustache, on three separate occasions.⁴ In short, this Chicago paper saw Gissing's merits far more clearly than most others in that city. The complete *Times*

Herald reviews of Gissing follow in chronological order.

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¹Bessie Louise Pierce, *The Rise of a Modern City: Vol. 3 of A History of Chicago* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1957), p. 418; Louise Seymour Jones, "Horatio Winslow Seymour, 1854-1920," unpublished biography in typescript written by Seymour's daughter in 1948 and held by the library of the Chicago Historical Society, pp. 44-45.

²"Alexia," *Daily Inter Ocean*, 9 November 1889, p. 10.

³"Eve's Ransom," *Chicago Times Herald*, 29 June 1895, p. 12.

⁴"George Gissing," *Chicago Times Herald*, 3 August 1895, p. 12; "George Gissing, Author of 'The Whirlpool'," *Chicago Times Herald*, 5 February 1898, p. 5; "George Gissing, Novelist and Critic," *Chicago Times Herald*, 9 April 1898, p. 9.

Anon., "Literary Notes and News," *Chicago Herald*,
1 June 1889, p. 7

George Gissing's novel, "The Nether World," just published in cheap form by Harper & Brothers, picks up the threads of a story in the slums of the East End, London, and in following them up finds a strong indictment against modern civilization.

Anon., "Literature Today," *Chicago Herald*,
13 May 1893, p. 10

"The Odd Women" is the title of a new novel by George Gissing, dealing with middle-class life in England and illustrating the hardship of life for women in that class who are left to earn their own livelihood. Six unmarried sisters are suddenly left, through the death of their father, to struggle for life on an inadequate income, and it is their various fortunes that form the interest of the story. It is not a sunny story and it makes one grieve to think that it can be true, but it is undoubtedly a realistic portraiture of life.

Mary Abbott, "Eve's Ransom," *Chicago Times Herald*,
28 June 1895, p. 12

One of the very first phrases in George Gissing's story, "Eve's Ransom," stamps it with the author's nationality. A "porter's barrow laden with luggage" is sufficiently definite to convince the most obtuse that the writer is an Englishman. George Gissing is a fiction writer who has made little fuss over himself and has been little exploited. He is also one of those who are "forging" slowly and surely on toward fame, as the saying is.

He should not "forge," he should leap. He is a great novelist. He is vivisectional, terrible, minute, dreary. He strips the subject of the cuticle of romance, and shows the ugly muscles, organs and sinews working. He is a realist and an analyst of the first and most unsparing order.

Middle-class English life is inevitably sordid and dreary. And a sordid and dreary life leads to plotting – sometimes unintentional or undeliberate – to secure the income of life. "Eve's Ransom," George Gissing's latest story, sets forth the impossibility of buying real love, and the hopelessness of trying to substitute gratitude for it.

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It shows also that a "grand passion," if it be not founded upon the rock of integrity, may be overcome or worn away, for without faith love dies of starvation, and, with cause for unfaith, of nausea. Again and again love rises, undaunted, in support of an unworthy object. Each time it rises with less spirit, each time with more weakness. George Gissing's hero returned many times, but his love had no foundation, and when distrust and disgust beat upon it, because it had no root,

it withered away. From the impotent frenzy of unreturned love he emerged at last a free and disenchanted man. His freedom made him happy, and his love had never done so.

The story also demonstrates that a man, no matter how brave, how noble, how different, may not act the part of a guardian to a young and beautiful woman, either financially or otherwise. If he does it from love, he is burning himself in the fire unquenchable, if from philanthropic motives simply – well, he doesn't do it, that's all. There is little disinterested generosity between men and women of eligible ages, without a deeper sentiment underlying it, and the natural and logical working out of that sentiment is by marriage, when there is no impediment.

Somehow, the woman in this story – Eve Madeley – was a little like Bourget's woman in "Cruelle Enigme." The same lack of sustained deception, impulse to be truthful, weakness alone preventing, and sometimes with the weakness overruled by the desire to be frank. The same charm of a rather indescribable sort, although Gissing's hero falls in love with a photograph first, and finding its original differing diametrically, loves that. He spies upon her when he finds her; he is not exactly noble, but he is so natural, so human, so honest, so imperfect, that one feels he is alive in every limb, and every nerve quivers with the vitality of manliness. Not a very high sort of manliness, yet his chivalry was that of a knight, when he was paying the "expenses" of his wretched lady love in Paris because she was morbid from very naughtiness in London.

The power in the book is its repression. There are no scenes, they are self-controlled or indifferent, or schooled to seem so. Hilliard never made Eve uncomfortable in public, when he was suffering most from her slipperiness. And, after all, it was he who sought her and made himself her mentor. It was a case of two lives mingling that could not keep apart, and they were forced apart, but while the threads interlaced they made part of the pattern.

It is dreary, depressing; it is Howellsy, with more strength, and Jamesy, with less finish. It sets one thinking, and one hates the thoughts.

Mary Abbott, Review of *In the Year of Jubilee*,
Chicago Times Herald, 3 August 1895, p. 12

George Gissing must be rising with the lark, writing early and late, and seeking no rest. He has a new book out every few weeks.

The latest, called *In the Year of Jubilee*, is not the Salvation army romance its name betokens. It is a British political novel, a clever, horribly clever unravelling of a skein of gray worsted yarn, rough and full of kinks and ugly and base; a yarn which would never make

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anything but the coarsest woolen socks, even if wound and knitted with care. Gray woolen socks have their uses; they keep the cold out, but they are not handsome, and they do not fulfill a mission in all homes.

Mr. Gissing drops stitches and picks them up sometimes, and sometimes he doesn't. He "seams," too, and makes fancy patterns, but most of his work in this volume is just plain, ugly, rough knitting, with an irregular pattern, not always discernible, running through it.

To drop the figure, Mr. Gissing is making studies of sordid, hideous, commonplace human nature. His characters are thoroughly natural, and never overdrawn. He is a realist of the most consistent type.

The principal figures in the story are a young girl, named Nancy Lord, and her husband, Lionel Tarrant. They meet, and 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, he 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 history. 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 extreme 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 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 dénouement, 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.

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

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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 very 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 of recognition, pay, or gratitude. The book is well worth reading, and must stand high in contemporaneous novel literature.

Mary Abbott, Review of *Sleeping Fires*,
Chicago Times Herald, 28 March 1896, p. 9

To anyone who has read George Gissing's novels – disagreeable, even repulsive, as they mostly are, the reappearance of a loftier, stronger and better story than "Eve's Ransom," "The Emancipated," or any of the others, will not come as a surprise. Whatever Mr. Gissing's realism made sordid his genius caused to seem only preliminaries to nobler themes.

“Sleeping Fires” is to be followed, too, let us hope, by a still better book, in which crude purpose does not talk as mightily as in this; a book which no everlasting phase of the “social problem” pervades in crude and unappealing nakedness. But “Sleeping Fires” is an improvement in fineness and dignity upon anything George Gissing has yet done; and the movement is elevating and of a subtle influence.

Even if the primary object is to settle the question of the method in which a sower of wild oats in youth is to reap, or shirk the responsibility of reaping his harvest – even if the problem of a man’s duty toward a woman he has betrayed, in opposition to duty toward a child born of a random, unloving and unfitting momentary passion be the unwelcome subject of a narrative – the narrative itself and the clever analysis of characters it opens as it rolls, are strong and helpful. The web of a woman’s mind, when she has been trained in many meaningless conventions, is as tough to tenderness as the mind of a hardened criminal; and offense against, not virtue, but her idea of it, is worse to her than enforced goodness would be to a hardened housebreaker. Her soul

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revolts from it, because she has been brought up in direct opposition to it.

Langley, the hero, has in his early life committed a sin; and lost a wife as the result of confessing it. He nobly goes to the father of the girl he loves, and tells him that he has had an entanglement; but that the mother of his child was never attached to him; and has married a man in her own station. The father refuses the marriage alliance for his daughter without acquainting her with the true story. Years after, at Athens, Langley sees his son, who has been adopted by the very lady he had loved, now married. Although Langley was ignorant of the relationship, intimacy followed; and the budding and blossoming and ripening of this friendship makes a really wonderful bit of novel writing. The reasoning of this man in the book might be indignantly repudiated by the reader as false and revolting, if the woman of the piece did not furnish forth all the indignant disclaimers necessary by her clinching replies to his pleadings. The son dies; and both the adoptive mother and the father who repudiates, yearns for, and mourns – lament together, he adding bitter reproach of her to his own sorrow. She forgives him after many months, loving him all through, and having adopted the boy for love of him; and the ingenious tale ends happily after much vicissitude, principally of a purely psychical nature, although brought about by purely physical conditions. It is a remarkable study; and as the style is clear cut and dignified, and scenes are, for a wonder, those of the strictly refined classes, the effect is to make one thoughtful, if not sad, over life. Mr. Gissing never lets his readers really enjoy themselves.

Anon., “New Novel by Gissing,”

Chicago Times Herald, 5 February 1898, p. 5

George Gissing’s novel, “The Whirlpool,” is well named. It is a study in maelstrom effects, although dealing with everyday life. To those who maintain that the human character is complex of good and evil, and that no one being presents either phase in more than an occasional preponderance, the actors in this drama will give all the corroborative testimony required. Yet heredity and criminology enter into the scheme, and for an impartial statement of the great problem of life, Mr. Gissing may be fully applauded. To call his story anything but disagreeable is another thing. He never writes agreeable novels. Life is evidently as Mr. Gissing sees it – an octopus of hideous mien. So many personages move about on the stage, coming and going, as to make the plot at first nothing but confusing, but very soon it takes shape and becomes consistent, moving on with the main figures as they go to their fates. Harvey Rolfe, who is neither old nor young, rich nor poor, opens the scene, and is the central character, as is afterward found. He has episodes all the time, though none of his own at first. He meets first one friend and then another, and each has a fateful question to ask or statement to make. And all ask about a certain Bennet Frothingham, who, of course, is coming to smash directly and going to take their investments

with him. Harvey Rolfe is a friend to them all. He visits the Carnabys, who have just been robbed by their housekeeper, and are about to be robbed by Frothingham; he visits the Frothingham

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family, the head of which is about to kill himself; the daughter of which fascinates him; he sees another friend named Abbott in a cab, is hailed by him, learns that he has taken a relative's deserted children, is suffering horribly with neuralgia, and is also about to be fleeced by the devastating Frothingham. Abbott also kills himself at about the same time.

But it does not read like tragedy. The movement is swift, but quiet and powerful. There is little or no dramatic description. Harvey's offices are never brought into prominence; there is no cant about him. Alma Frothingham, daughter of the embezzling suicide, is the real study, however. She is insidiously drawn, so as to attract little attention at first, but grows magnetic and absorbing. She combines good and evil, honesty and dishonesty, wantonness and prudishness in a remarkable way. There is no one scene that shows her character, and Harvey's too, so strongly as the last; when Alma, who is Harvey's wife, does not care half as much to have her own innocence established in her husband's eyes, as the believed or pretended – who shall say? – guilt of another woman, of whom she is jealous! And the husband, "hesitating in revolt against the entreaty," yields, because she is hysterical, and says, calming her: "Very well, then, I will believe that, too."

His answer satisfied her, though she was a guilty woman, and she lay in his arms, shedding tears of contentment. She dies that night, and Harvey's life and that of his little son go on peacefully enough. No one can accuse Mr. Gissing of violence in his methods.

The wooing of Alma by Cyrus Redgrave, consisting of a perfectly bloodless proposition on his part that she should go and live with him in a distant country, without even breathing a word of love to her, is a whole epitome of life in itself. For Alma's father has just killed himself, she is poor, in disgrace, and that makes the difference to the Cyrus Redgraves.

Alma's repudiation of the insult arises more from wounded vanity at the omission of love-making preliminaries, and her half regret that she did not accept his offer is one of the most striking situations in fiction. Bourget could not have done so well in human heart analysis, nor Balzac better. Her affair, of another sort, with Felix Dymes, who "manages" her musical debut, shows another side of this polygonal nature; while the fascination Redgrave afterward exerts for her, and his gradual tempting her to his very house, where she is seen by her husband's friend in search of his own wife – who murders Redgrave then – is a tremendous weaving of the shuttles. Alma's deliberate sacrifice of both Carnaby and his wife – letting one be imprisoned for manslaughter, and herself traducing the other – are perhaps atoned for by her untimely death – nothing less could have done it. The writer's [aims] are satisfied: the novel is symmetrical, if ghastly. The whirlpool is, after all, as integral as a cyclone. It moves in a regular circuit, even if it rises unexpectedly.

"The Whirlpool," if it were more concrete, had fewer characters, and were not so hideously long, might be called great, as it is certainly deep and powerful. But there are side issues and counter plots, as, for instance the story of Mary Abbott and her care of the Wager children, which seems, though ramified and amplified, and lugged in continually, to be merely a horse to hang

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Alma's unreasoning jealousy of her husband upon. Mr. Gissing overwrites, and has put material for three novels into this, and done it lumberingly. But the story of Alma and Harvey and Cyrus Redgrave and the Carnabys is a wonderful drawing.

Anon., "Books of the Day. Gissing Lovingly Criticizes the Works of

Dickens," *Chicago Times Herald*, 9 April 1898, p. 9

With loving hand George Gissing has indited many – perhaps too many – chapters of a criticism upon Charles Dickens. Too many, because if there had been more system in sorting them, there need have been no less said, but much less repeated.

George Gissing comes near being a great critic; this book convinces the careful reader. If it were more concisely planned it might convince any reader. There is one point made by Mr. Gissing which is of universal interest, and so well taken that it must convince. And that is, that [the effects of] Dickens' neglect in childhood remained to the end of his life, [accounting] for bitterness, for lack of taste. It is such a common idea that the more shunted off a boy is the greater and more glorious his career as a self-made man, and the truth that self-made men are only the rarest exceptions to the rule of failures – that it is gratifying to see this statement made so clear. Dickens' reluctance to referring to the dismal fact that he spent ten years of his young life in a blacking factory [actually, Dickens spent only four or five months there] the world puts down to snobbishness – Mr. Gissing (partly) to consideration for his parents. His mother is reported to have been opposed to his withdrawal from the blacking emporium at the end of the ten years. No wonder he was ashamed of his boyhood – not for his own sake, but on his parents' account. If he had not had marvelous genius he, an uneducated drudge, would have come to nothing – or worse.

The public interest in Dickens ebbs and flows – as does that of all great men whose greatness is not of the settled and recognized first magnitude, and even they rise and fall, as vide George Washington. Twenty-five years it is now since Dickens died, and it is time that he should be assisted into his proper niche and fastened there. Now, after all the contempt and derogation genius has suffered – contempt that has been bred in the shallow deprecation of his superficial manners, tricks and mannerisms, and not really of his deeper faults – the more serious of the critics are endeavoring to rate this great man as he should be rated – not too high or too low. Others have begun the work: George Gissing, however, cannot be called their imitator. He is too sincere, too genuine and too original for that.

Dickens' times furnish the first theme for discussion. They were the days of fearful public abuses—especially those of children. A humane law was passed when Dickens was just growing to manhood restricting the hours of child labor to thirteen hours a day! And they were days of misery of the lower classes, public and obscure. *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* were furnished with their squalid young material from the story of Dickens' own hard experiences.

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Each book is taken in turn and looked over, some of the characters in the book, after the plot and other matters are discussed; and this plan is what leads to the confusion and diffuseness mentioned at first. Going with Mr. Gissing through "Martin Chuzzlewit," the reader is referred on to another chapter for an analysis of Pecksniff or Mrs. Gamp – not important, perhaps, but the skipping about is disconcerting. Characterization and characters are hopelessly muddled, as far as classification is concerned, and it is only in the opening and closing chapters that a definite idea of the critic's purpose is revealed. His gists – for there are many – are very favorable. Dickens' faults were caused sometimes by the exigencies of serial writing, sometimes, as in 1838 and 1839, by overwriting and lapping of stories; sometimes by ignorance, as when he plunges into political economy and such subjects upon which he was actually uninformed, sometimes by private worries. He drew best the lower middle class, to which he belonged and with which he was intimately familiar. He became theatrical when his characters got into provinces he had not explored, as Bill Sykes, when cornered with death. He had no psychology in his composition, either imaginative or otherwise.

But about his genius, his marvelous knowledge of what he did know, his wonderful power of expression, the critic becomes enthusiastic. Certainly Dickens chose vulgar subjects, and

could but be vulgar while enlarging upon them, but he never was gross. His industry, his pains, his prolificacy, his confidence in himself, on these and many other traits with which the world is familiar – and which Forster has made thoroughly so – Mr. Gissing dwells; but it is of his novels, his treatment of his characters, his conceptions, his methods and his literary style that he principally treats. That he thinks everything important about Dickens is a relief to the malcontent who has been made unhappy by hearing him cheapened and belittled. Of course the creator of immortal personages must be important, and no one can be thought despicable who has created such.

In the gallery of the legal world Dickens has presented to us – a world which he knew to the core – a gallery in which he “painted from nature, and knew his subjects by heart,” there is no equal of Dickens. The attorneys and barristers in “Pickwick,” sources of fun perennial – the Old Bailey practitioners in “Great Expectations – in these, Mr. Gissing says, “one passes one’s eye along a row of masterpieces.” Jorkins and Spewlow and Jaggers, Mrs. Vholes – they are the finest. “The Father of the Marshalsea” Mr. Gissing considers the finest portrait Dickens ever painted. And “Should ever proof be demanded – as often it has been – that Dickens is capable of high comedy, let it be sought... where will be seen the old Marshalsea prisoner, Mr. Dorrit, the bankrupt of half a lifetime, entertaining and patronizing his workhouse pensioner, old Mr. Nandy.”

Of the purely eccentric figures, the children and the crazy people, Mr. Gissing speaks well generally. Quilp and the others he does not find overdrawn. He himself has known a Wemmick, although Wemmick is of course not included in the last title, and a Jaggers. Everybody has known somebody in Dickens, who seems impossible to almost everybody else. It is only when they are consistently devoted to a straight course of evil, like Mr. Pecksniff, that they are overdone.

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It is interesting and valuable to go over these characters one by one with a conscientious and careful critic. He is quietly and shrewdly humorous, as when, referring to the fate to which Dickens consigned Mrs. Gummidge – cheerful happier life in Australia – Mr. Gissing remarks:

“It may have been so, but Mrs. Gummidge was very old for such a ray of reason to pierce her skull. In any case, we do not think of her in Australia. She sits forever in the house on Yarmouth sands and shakes her head and wipes her eye – a monument of selfish misery.” This is a mere hint of a book full of study, and one that will well repay a reader anxious to do justice to a neglected writer of once almost incredible popularity.

Mary Abbott, “George Gissing’s London Life,”
Chicago Times Herald, 5 November 1898, p. 5

George Gissing is a past master in depicting low London life. He has sounded the depths of its dead level squalor with plummet and line, and his low life novels depict these abysmal recesses with faithfulness, and the style of the literary man adds spirit to otherwise dispiriting scenes. “The Town Traveler” is the latest of these cockney novels, which an unusual set of circumstances makes new. The plot hinges on the disappearance of a man named Clover, who leaves behind a wife and daughter, and a niece – wife’s niece, named Sparkes – a perfect London lodging-house production of the virtuous virago type – coarse and insinuating, but honest. Through [a] sudden encounter – the young lady being a programme-seller at a theater – Polly Sparkes, the niece, finds out that her uncle is alive, meets him, takes presents from him, suffering in reputation therefore. She becomes engaged to the “town traveler,” or, as Americans would call it, “drummer,” and, incidentally, [reckons on him] to expedite the search for her uncle, whom she has, after a time, lost. The “town traveler,” Mr. Gammon, is the hero and eccentric character of the piece, and with his dogs, his mirthful qualities, his dash, his officiousness, and his general

chatter, he makes a grotesque central figure.

Mr. Clover is in reality a disreputable nobleman, Lord Polperro, who has married far above his station, as mind and heart and decency of motive go, but beneath him socially. He marries a woman who knows nothing of him – his character, his pursuits, his family or his finances – after the fashion of her helpless kind – and twice deserts her, sending money in more or less straggling, and more or less bountiful, installments. The brave little woman keeps a china-renting shop, brings her daughter up modestly and well, and shows rare courage through all. Her heart does not break, but quite contrarily to the ordinary belief in such matters, she forgets the deserter and ceases entirely to mourn his defection, in her cheerful industry. The realistic touch, and it must be confessed, so hide-bound are most of us in romanticism – the disillusioning one is that which puts common and vulgar and shrewish language into the little woman's mouth, but it is no doubt a wise reminder that a brave soul in the body of a cockney could hardly express itself in the elegant language becoming its intrinsic refinement. Lord Polperro appears fitfully in cabs, at variety shows, and as fitfully disappears. He comes back half insane and dying to his wife, but

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has an instinct that moves him away again, not daring to intrude his death upon her, and she in turn when she learns who he is, refuses to visit him at the hospital. There is an utter absence of sentiment – commonly exploited as such – on any page of the book, and therein lies the book's main strength. Underneath is the character, where it belongs, and between the lines. Mr. Gammon's soft moments are when he has been drinking, and a serio-comic singer, scantily clad, rouses his noblest fits of generosity and devotion. The book is a sad destroyer of idols. Miss Sparkes, the niece, with a bad temper; Mrs. Bubb, a landlady; Moggie, a "general," or maid of all work, at the lodging-house; Mr. Greenacre, a curious, mysterious hunter of genealogies for gain—these are a few of the really humorous people in the story. The scenes at the lodging-house, one in particular, in which Mr. Gammon bursts open the door of Miss Sparkes' apartment, to facilitate an interview with her aunt, which she has refused, and which was none of his business, and the interest of all the lodgers in the fray, is a bit worthy of the author of the *Pickwick Papers*, and of the *Pickwick* pages themselves. Mrs. Clover, making a tentative sortie, with a determination to be firm but gentle, changing her tone in a moment to irrelevant scolding as she is defied, is as funny as Mrs. Raddles or Mrs. Snagsby. Here are some snatches of it... [A quotation follows about Mrs. Clover's rebuke of Polly Sparkes].

This was conciliatory and wise, of course, and the general fracas that ensued – in which all the lodgers took a hand – bore testimony to Mrs. Clover's wisdom. The mingling of elegance with what might by some fastidious mortals be called abruptness is shown in Mr. Gammon's careful query: "Are you properly dressed?" before he breaks down the door. The general muddle and *mêlée* existing in the minds of their class about dignity and reserve are also exhibited in Miss Sparkes' subsequent ignoring of the indignity when she wanted information and engagement to the marauder. It is a pretty pessimistic jumble, and horribly depressing in its effect upon the reader looking for inspiration and amusement.

Book Review

Jacob Korg (ed.), *George Gissing's Essay on Robert Burns: A Previously Unpublished Manuscript*. Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1992. 83 pp. ISBN 0-7734-9533-9.

Jacob Korg's edition of George Gissing's Owens College essay on Robert Burns, recently

unearthed in the National Archive of Scotland in Edinburgh, will fascinate student and scholar alike. Teachers who assign it will be giving a lesson in how to write literary essays, with both

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Gissing's and Korg's serving as models. Scholars will welcome this latest addition to the Gissing canon.

Take the young Gissing's effort first. How often do we have available a carefully edited version of a famous writer's schoolboy composition? With this essay in print, we need no longer expect students to take on faith our assertions about Gissing's precocity. The Edinburgh manuscript shows him gracefully covering his subject – Burns' life in its private and literary dimensions – and placing Burns in British cultural history. Gissing's own expository prose should impress today's students, and will perhaps inspire their own efforts. But as Professor Korg notes in his introduction, the essay is not notably original. Its achievement lies rather in Gissing's summary of what was generally thought in his day about Burns. Gissing had done his homework. But, as Korg shows, the future novelist did more than merely report received opinion. He responded with sympathy, not condemnation, to the evidence of Burns' drinking and illicit sexuality, and was sensitive to the rural poet's dilemma as an outsider taken up by Edinburgh's intelligentsia.

Professor Korg's introduction will also be pedagogically useful because in brief compass it manages to touch upon the high points of Gissing's early life. Korg speculates that Gissing produced his essay during his first year at Owens College, Manchester, when he was a mere 15 years of age. Korg also reminds us that the piece is not unique evidence of Gissing's talent and devotion to literature. His academic prizes leave no doubt of his ambition and ability. Yet only a few years later, in 1876, his hopes would turn to dust and ashes when his foolhardy thefts at the college were discovered and he was imprisoned briefly and then went to America to build a new life.

This edition of Gissing's essay on Burns nicely complements Robert Selig's edition of the fiction Gissing wrote during his American exile. Taken together, these early works, published by the Edwin Mellen Press, provide a benchmark against which to measure Gissing's progress as a writer after his return to England in 1877. To appreciate fully what an artist has achieved it is useful to know where he started. For Gissing this now means following the trail back to Korg's edition of the Owens College essay and to Selig's edition of the American stories.

Students and experienced Gissing scholars alike will find Professor Korg the ideal guide to the youthful Gissing's attainments and limitations. Korg's 1963 biography of the novelist virtually began modern Gissing studies. By founding the *Gissing Newsletter* in 1965, Korg

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provided a venue for the detailed bibliographical, biographical, and critical studies that followed in the wake of his biography. Soon major journals and publishing houses were receiving manuscripts on Gissing, and his works were appearing in new editions and in translations. To this outpouring of scholarship Korg has contributed not only important essays but critical editions of Gissing's works – two novels (*The Unclassed* and *Thyrza*), his *Commonplace Book*, and his *Pall Mall Gazette* essays entitled *Notes on Social Democracy*.

Given his major role in Gissing studies of the last quarter century, it is fitting that Professor Korg should have been the one to rescue Gissing's 15-page manuscript essay from the obscurity in which it languished for over a century. To increase its intrinsic interest, Korg has added biographical entries for 13 persons mentioned in the essay, and lists 3 works on Burns and 5 on Gissing's Owens College period. Newcomers to Gissing studies as well as the novelist's seasoned readers will all find ample direction for their own investigations.

And to provoke further discussion, Professor Korg enlivens his introduction with a number of biographical and critical insights. He notes, for example, that Gissing, now known for his fiction, began writing “credible” poetry at Owens College, later published at least one poem, but was abandoned by his muse. Still, his interest in poetry continued, as did his reading of Burns.

Perhaps no detail in Korg’s introduction is more arresting than his quotation of the marginal comment made on Gissing’s essay by the teacher for whom it was written, probably Professor A. W. Ward: “I think that the style is simpler and pleasanter as a whole in this essay than in previous attempts. This will do very well.” Professor Korg rightly deems the judgment (offered, remember, to an obviously superior and highly ambitious fifteen-year-old) “not very enthusiastic.” Korg also discloses that not long before his death, Gissing sent Ward a copy of his most popular book, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, and received in response a correction of his interpretation of a passage by Goethe. Will not the modern student and teacher shudder at Ward’s pedantry?

Gissing is better served by members of the academic community today. Studies of his life and works have never been more sympathetic. It is hard to imagine anyone interested in Gissing today who could read Korg’s edition of the essay on Burns and not think, but with far more warmth than Ward did of the original, “This will do very well.” — Martha Vogeler, California State University, Fullerton

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Letter to the Editor

23 January 1993

Sir, – I am astonished that Gillian Tindall should suppose that I tried, in my stage adaptation of *The Odd Women*, to “turn it into a tract for our time.” She complains: “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.”

The lines about contraceptives read thus:

RHODA: You know that until a safe form of female contraceptive can be found, women will never be safe from pregnancy.

EVERARD: Or a form of male contraceptive that is not so thick that it halves the pleasure. (RHODA GRIMACES). Forgive me, I should not have said that.

RHODA: No, I have heard that before from women. They are aware of it too, you know.

And on abortion:

RHODA: She is determined to have it [the baby]?

ALICE: Of course.

VIRGINIA: Surely you are not suggesting –? But that would be criminal. She might die, or go to prison.

RHODA: Would it be more criminal than bringing the child into the world? What kind of life can it expect?

ALICE: It has the right to live.

I should like to know what is “amiss” with any of these lines as regards either period or class. As regards the “more minor verbal gaffes,” the *OED* does not suggest that “the school will fold” is an anachronism, and would anyone be surprised to hear “make a pass” in a performance of *Charley’s Aunt*, written in the same year as *The Odd Women*? As the translator of 34 Ibsen and Strindberg plays I am well aware of the problem, having tried, as far as I know successfully, to avoid anything that was not current contemporary English. If, which I don’t admit, one anachronism has surfaced in 100 pages of largely invented dialogue, I would have thought that forgivable.

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Regarding the “happy ending” for which Ms. Tindall forgives me, I would have thought it obvious that my ending is no more “happy” than, say, Ibsen’s in *Little Eyolf*, on which in fact I based it. In both plays the characters are left with an enormously steep hill to climb, and there is no certainty that they will succeed. What matters is that they have the courage to try. Gissing, bless his heart, did tend to kill off his main characters rather arbitrarily, as also in *New Grub Street*, *Demos*, *The Whirlpool* and *Born in Exile*, and a glibly unhappy ending is as unconvincing as a glibly happy one. Surely *The Odd Women* is in praise of such people, and the ending should be, not “happy,” but upbeat.

Yours, etc.,
Michael Meyer
4, Montagu Square, London W1H 1RA

Gissing a Character as Well as an Author?

Jacob Korg

Anna Clarke’s *The Lady in Black* (William Collins & Sons, 1977; Berkley edition, 1990) is a clever mystery novel about the firm of Chapman and Hall in which both Frederic Chapman and George Meredith figure as important characters. Gissing readers will react sharply to a minor detail: the office boy is sent to deliver proofs “for correction by the author, who lived in the direction of Regent’s Park.”

Can this author be Gissing, and are the proofs those of *The Unclassed*? The likelihood is certainly increased by the fact that Clarke (whose story is an offshoot of the research she did for her dissertation on Victorian publishers) includes Gissing’s *Letters* (1931) in the short list of sources she has appended to her novel.

However, the facts do not support this. The action of the novel takes place in the spring of 1882. Gissing did not submit *The Unclassed* to Chapman and Hall until early in 1884, after it had been rejected by Bentley. His famous interview with Meredith took place on February 13, 1884, and he completed his revision and brought his manuscript back to Henrietta Street on the 19th or the 20th. Also, at that time he was living in Chelsea, and had not yet moved to Milton Street, near Regent’s Park.

Clarke’s novel makes splendid use of many authentic details of the period, but Gissing’s connection with Chapman and Hall is not one of them.

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The Entrance to the Villa Cozzolino, Massa Lubrense.
 (Courtesy of Sig. Tommaso Staiano, Mayor of Massa Lubrense, and Dott. Francesco Badolato)

This photograph, taken in 1991, shows the entrance of a house, now standing at no. 13 Via Parthenope, which Gissing visited on two occasions while staying in Naples. There lived John Wood Shortridge, with his wife Carmela Esposito and their children, in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The house is splendidly situated and commands an impressive view of the sea. A good deal of information on the Shortridge family is to be found in Volumes 3 and 4 of Gissing's *Collected Letters*, but much more material will be published in Volume 9, in particular a long letter from Shortridge to Gissing about his family's adventures in the previous thirteen years, and his projected settling in New Zealand. The recent discoveries made about the Shortridge family are a fine example of fruitful international collaboration.

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Gissing Books Currently in Print

Considering that the availability or otherwise of an author's books is constantly changing, and has changed considerably as regards Gissing since the Harvester Press and the Hogarth Press were taken over by other firms, it may be useful to compile a list of titles which can apparently be obtained either from the publishers or through booksellers at the present moment. In the following list paperbacks are preceded by an asterisk.

- Workers in the Dawn**, 3 vols. in one, AMS.
- The Unclassed**, ed. Jacob Korg, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; AMS.
- Demos**, intr. Jacob Korg, AMS.
- Thyrza**, ed. Jacob Korg, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; 3 vols. in one, AMS.
- A Life's Morning**, 3 vols. in one, AMS.
- The Nether World**, ed. Stephen Gill, *Oxford University Press (World's Classics); ed. John Goode, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
- The Emancipated**, ed. P. Coustillas, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; 3 vols. in one, AMS.

New Grub Street, ed. Bernard Bergonzi, *Penguin Books; Random House (Modern Library); ed. John Halperin, Ryburn Library Edition (cloth or leather).

Denzil Quarrier, AMS.

Born in Exile, ed. David Grylls, *Dent (Everyman Paperbacks); 3 vols. in one, AMS.

The Odd Women, intr. Marcia Fox, *Norton; intr. Margaret Walters, *Virago (Virago Classics); ed. Elaine Showalter, *New American Library (Meridian Classics); 3 vols. in one, AMS.

In the Year of Jubilee, *Dover/Constable; AMS.

Eve's Ransom, *Dover/Constable; AMS.

Sleeping Fires, *University of Nebraska Press.

The Paying Guest, AMS.

The Whirlpool, ed. Patrick Parrinder, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; AMS.

Charles Dickens, a Critical Study: Haskell House; Reprint Services; Scholarly Press.

The Town Traveller, AMS.

The Crown of Life, AMS.

Our Friend the Charlatan, AMS.

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By the Ionian Sea, *Marlboro Press.

The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft, ed. Mark Storey, *Oxford University Press (World's Classics); ed. John Stewart Collis, *Routledge/Chapman & Hall.

Veranilda, AMS.

Will Warburton, AMS.

Critical Studies of the Works of Charles Dickens, Haskell House.

The Immortal Dickens, Kraus.

Contrary to the information given in *Books in Print*, neither *The House of Cobwebs* nor *A Victim of Circumstances* is available from Ayer. The only volume of Gissing short stories obtainable is *The Day of Silence and Other Stories*, ed. P. Coustillas, Dent, which contains sixteen stories, ranging from 1893 to 1903.

Notes and News

With regret we announce the death last January of Mr. Sydney Wheeler, President of the Wilmslow Historical Society. An authority on local history, he was a genial, disinterested correspondent who helped the editors of Gissing's *Collected Letters* to identify elusive Wilmslow and Alderley Edge people mentioned in William Gissing's letters of the 1870s. Quite recently he had sent us reviews of Michael Meyer's dramatization of *The Odd Women* that had appeared in the local press. In the words of Mr. J. Peter Harrison, the Hon. Secretary of the Wilmslow Historical Society, "Sydney Wheeler was a fine gentleman who will be greatly missed by the community."

Thomas Waller Gissing, his grandson Alfred used to say, was a Chartist in his youth. Some poems, written and published before his marriage to Margaret Bedford, testify to this. It was therefore with some curiosity that we opened a recent French study of Chartist poetry by Hugues Journès, entitled *Une littérature révolutionnaire en Grande-Bretagne* (Paris: Publisud, 1991), just in case the author referred to T. W. Gissing's early political enthusiasm as expressed through his verse. No real disappointment followed since M. Journès, in order to mention T.W.G. in context, would first have had to identify the man who published his first two collections of verse under

these initials, then to establish the connection with Margaret and Other Poems “by an East Anglian.” Hugues Journès has not fulfilled the Wakefield chemist, botanist and poet’s wish “That

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future ages yet in gloom, | Should add fresh greenness to my name.” Yet his book can be useful to any reader who wishes to enquire into the social climate that prevailed in Thomas Waller Gissing’s youth, and into some of the guiding principles of his political action in Wakefield. One can even say that the author’s strong empathy with his subject helps one to reconstruct some of Gissing’s mental attitudes in the days, essentially the first two years after his return from America, when he regarded himself as a mouthpiece of the radical party.

Belatedly we must mention the two volumes of *Bygone Wakefield and District* by Norman Ellis (Leeds: M.T.D. Rigg Publications, 1991 and 1992). They contain hundreds of illustrations, mainly of places, a number of which have obvious associations with Gissing’s life. Thus the postcard (vol. I, p. 104), by G. & J. Hall, the Westgate photographers who on various occasions photographed members of the Gissing family, shows Westgate Station as it was the last time the novelist visited his relatives. It had been opened only a few weeks before his birth. On p. 133, again of vol. I, is reproduced “a promotional postcard for Wakefield Amateur Theatrical Company’s performance at the Royal Opera House.” There Gissing once attended a comic opera with Matthew Bussey Hick. Views of Heath Common, Sandal Castle, the Sandal Post Office, Agbrigg Road, Westgate, the Market Place, the Girls’ High School, St. John’s and other places mentioned by Gissing in his letters and private papers, not to speak of *A Life’s Morning*, are to be found, excellently reproduced, in these two books.

Holbrook Jackson’s book on the 1890s, first published in 1913, has long been regarded as the authoritative study of the cultural climate of the period. Whether this overgenerous view will still prevail after the publication of Karl Beckson’s new book, *London in the 1890s* (Norton, 1993) is doubtful. Beckson is one of the best specialists of the period and the publisher’s announcement claims that the book is “an entertaining cultural history” in which we see the great figures of the time “engaged in the movements and debates, the great shifts in behaviour and feeling, that made the world we know.” The book is selling in America at \$24.95 (ISBN 0-393-03397-X).

Harold Orel’s anthology of *Victorian Short Stories 2: The Trials of Love* (ISBN 0-460-87007-6), currently available in Everyman Paperbacks at £4.99, is, like *Victorian Short*

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Stories: An Anthology (1987), an attractive selection, containing a Gissing story. Orel soundly observes for the benefit of “those who are still unfamiliar with the formidable talents of George Gissing that the humour of the situation [in “The Prize Lodger”], though grim, is genuine, and that this marriage [between Archibald Jordan and Mrs. Elderfield] exhibits an engaging sardonic wit.”

The two Gissing titles we announced in our last number as forthcoming Everyman Paperbacks, that is *Born in Exile*, edited by David Grylls, and *The Day of Silence and Other Stories*, edited by Pierre Coustillas, will be available on 28 April, at £4.99 each. The publishers contemplate including *New Grub Street* in the series within the next two years.

It was discovered recently, while the Everyman selection of Gissing short stories was being

printed, that one of the texts in *A Victim of Circumstances* (1927) was faulty to an extent that no commentator, to the best of our knowledge, has denounced in print. A sizeable passage from "The Fate of Humphrey Snell" was accidentally skipped by the printers on p. 60. Since the manuscript of the story does not seem to have been preserved, the only authoritative text is that which appeared in the October 1895 number of the *English Illustrated Magazine*.

Dr. Bouwe Postmus, who has begun to edit Gissing's scrapbook in collaboration with Pierre Coustillas, was recently at the University of Indiana, where the scrapbook has found an excellent home in the Lilly Library. Dr. Postmus gave a talk on Gissing to the Friends of the Library, on 25 February. Professor Jacob Korg, for his part, gave a lecture on *The Odd Women* on 10 February; it was delivered before the Classical Literature group of the Women's University Club of Seattle. This lecture was the first of two, the second being devoted to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, given the following week – the two novels being viewed as studies of the problems of Victorian women, one in an urban setting, the other in a rural environment.

A revised edition of Robert L. Selig's critical study of Gissing in Twayne's English Authors Series (no. 346), first published in 1983, will be issued in the forthcoming months. So the author tells us.

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Recent Publications

Volume

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, London: Penguin Books, [1993]. Edited with an introduction by Bernard Bergonzi. Pictorial paperback. 556 pp. ISBN 0-14-043032-6. £6.99. This is the sixth impression in the Penguin Classics since 1985. The format has been enlarged, 19.8 x 13 cm. If Bernard Bergonzi's introduction has scarcely aged, the "Suggested Further Reading" should be revised. The idea that Swinnerton's critical study of Gissing (1912) "remains an excellent introduction" was unacceptable by any standards in 1968 when the Penguin edition of the book was first published; it is now antediluvian.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Andrew Lees, *Cities Observed: Urban Society in European and American Thought 1820-1940*, Manchester University Press, 1985. Gissing appears on pp. 110-11.

Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control 1830-1885*, London: Methuen, 1987. Refers to *The Nether World*, pp. 184 and 235.

Harold Orel (ed.), *Victorian Short Stories 2: The Trials of Love*, London: Dent, 1990. Contains "The Prize Lodger" and several passages on Gissing in the editorial material.

Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991. References to Gissing's articles for the *Pall Mall Gazette* and to *Demos* occur on pp. 17 and 324.

Jacob Korg, "Reviews," *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, September 1992, pp. 256-58. Review of

Vols. I and II of the *Collected Letters*.

Francesco Badolato, "George Gissing: il romanziere vittoriano e la democrazia," *Rivendell* (periodico universitario indipendente), November-December 1992, p. 8.

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Andrew Shaughnessy, "A Man of Letters," *University Bookman*, Vol. 32, no. 4, [December 1992], pp. 26-29. Review of Vol. I of the *Collected Letters*.

John Carey, *The Intellectual and the Masses: Pride and Prejudice among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939*, London: Faber & Faber, 1992. Chapter 5 is devoted to "Gissing and the Ineducable Masses."

Jonathan Keates, "The Nether World of Amateur Pudding," *Times Literary Supplement*, 8 January 1993, p. 28. Review of Vols. II and III of the *Collected Letters*.

Peter Kemp, "Wells of Phoneyess," *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 January 1993, p. 5. A review of Michael Coren's *The Invisible Man: A Biography of H. G. Wells*. Peter Kemp's aptly exposes gross errors in the analysis of the relationship between Wells and Gissing.

Francesco Badolato, "Il romanzo vittoriano di George Gissing: Donne scompagnate," *Il Corriere di Roma*, 15 January 1993, p. 14. Review of Michael Meyer's play, "The Odd Women."

Anon., "Gissing First Edition," *Manchester Graduate*, January 1993, p. 18. On the copies of *Workers in the Dawn* and of Edward Clodd's copy of *The Private Life of Henry Maitland* recently acquired by the John Rylands University Library.

Francesco Badolato, "Gissing giovane: novelliere," *Il Corriere di Roma*, 15 February 1993, p. 3. Review of *Lost Stories from America*.

Pierre Coustillas, "Hardy and Gissing," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 36 (1993), no. 1, pp. 74-77. Review of Annette Federico's *Masculine Identity in Hardy and Gissing*. Martha S. Vogeler, under the title "Gissing's Lost Stories," reviewed *Lost Stories from America* on pp. 78-80. In the same number allusions to Gissing will be found in articles by Stephen D. Arata and Annette Federico.

Martha S. Vogeler, "Gissing Letters III," *English Literature in Transition*, Vol. 36 (1993), no. 2, pp. 208-12. A review.

David Grylls, "Reviews," *Notes and Queries*, March 1993, pp. 115-16. Review of Volume II of the *Collected Letters*.

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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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