

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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The International George Gissing Conference  
 9-11 September 1999 at Amsterdam

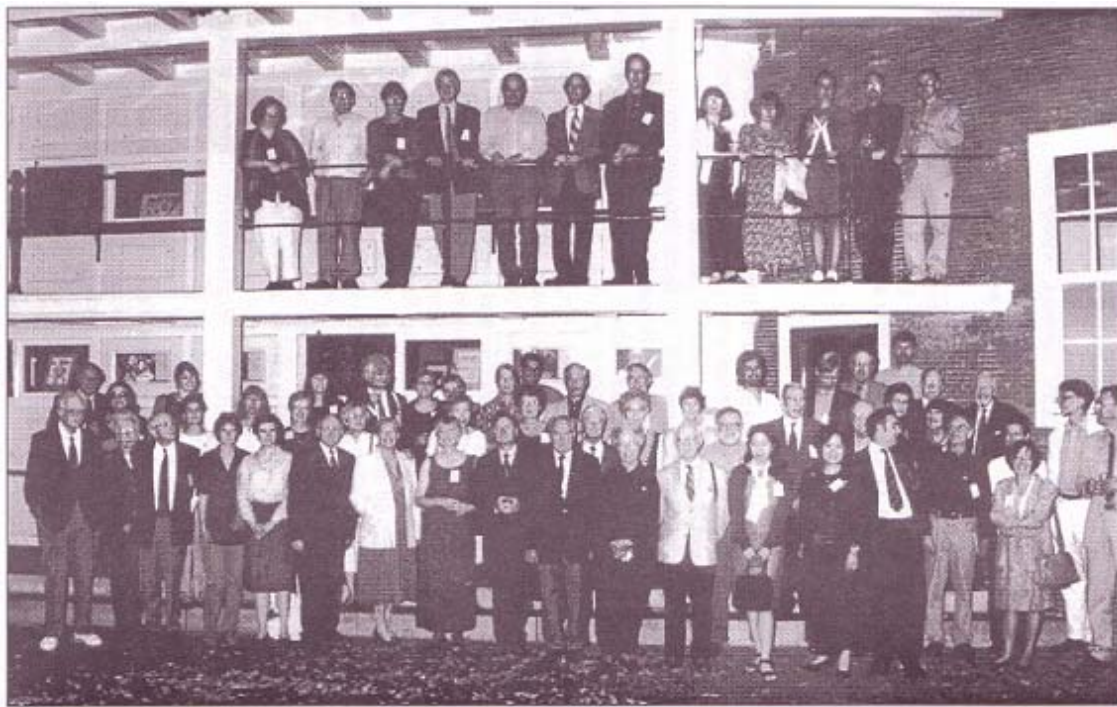
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Gissing scholars have gathered in the past to share their views on the novelist. To give only three examples: several of them spoke in 1975 at the unveiling of the plaque on the novelist’s residence in Chelsea, London; in 1981 some 35 of them attended an international Gissing Symposium in Wakefield organized by Ros Sinton; and again in that city in 1990 a group assembled for the opening of the Gissing Centre. Discussions of his life and works have, of course, been *the raison d’être* for the *Gissing Newsletter*, and its offspring, the present *Journal*. But Gissing studies gained new visibility on Thursday, September 9th, 1999, when Dr. Bouwe Postmus convened the first International George Gissing Conference at the University of Amsterdam.

The sun shone brightly as we made our way to Number 210 Spuistraat to register the afternoon before the conference opened officially, and the weather continued to favor us for the next three days. Eventually some 80 men and women from some 13 countries turned up at the English Department Office there to obtain their badges (which bore a portrait of Gissing), their packets, and, if they had not pre-registered, a copy of the handsome conference program into which was tucked a list of the names and addresses of all 75 who had signed up earlier. The

packet also contained note-taking paper bearing the imprint of the Faculteit der Geesteswetenschappen, which provided the conference venue; a map of Amsterdam with sites of the principal conference events marked; picture postcards of Lily Waldron's portrait of Gissing and of Joe Clay's sketch of the family home in Wakefield, and a flyer on the Gissing Centre. Finally, everyone received a copy of Oswald H. Davis's *George Gissing: A Study in Literary Leanings*, reprinted from the original 1966 edition and presented to the participants by

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Some of the participants in the Amsterdam Conference

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the Gissing Trust, and the Idle Booksellers' Gissing Catalogue No. 3. In a room just off the English Office were the booksellers themselves, Ros Stinton and Michael Compton, with a wonderfully full collection of Gissing books to be inspected, discussed – and purchased. In the late afternoon, drinks were served at the Amsterdam Academic Club in a delightful room small enough to encourage conversation.

The conference itself was opened at P. C. Hoofthuis, Spuistraat 134, with greetings from Bouwe Postmus, who alerted us to the presence in our midst of the novelist's granddaughter, Jane Gissing, from Lausanne. How appropriate it was, then, that the plenary session immediately following his remarks was a paper by Professor Pierre Coustillas on Gissing the European. After discussing the novelist's changing views of France, Germany, and Italy, he noted that Gissing has now been translated into ten European languages and that many of his titles exist in Asian languages as well. The Conference marked the first coming together since 1964 of the three members of the editorial board of the *Gissing Journal*, Shigeru Koike from Japan, and the founding and present editors, Jacob Korg and Pierre Coustillas, though they met many times in twos over the years. Professor Koike generously distributed copies of his book of Japanese translations of some Gissing stories.

In order to maximize the number of papers that could be presented, they were limited to

20 minutes delivery time and scheduled in parallel sessions during the morning and afternoon of the first two days of the conference. In addition to Professor Coustillas's opening talk on Thursday, there was a plenary session on Friday afternoon: a slide presentation by Wulffhard Stahl on sites mentioned in *By the Ionian Sea*. Another plenary session occupied all of Saturday morning, ending the conference. For it, each of the three editors of the *Collected Letters of George Gissing* – Arthur C. Young, Paul F. Mattheisen, and Pierre Coustillas – and their indispensable colleague, H  l  ne Coustillas, had prepared a ten-minute presentation on some phase of their remarkable editorial achievement. Art Young recounted the inception of the project by him in the 1960s while editing Gissing's letters to Bertz. Paul Mattheisen recalled his experiences editing Edmund Gosse's correspondence, which prompted him to think deeply about what constituted an adequate philosophy of editing. He was thus well prepared to join Young in his project when both were teaching at Rutgers University in New Jersey. Pierre Coustillas dwelt on the value of the biographical details contained in such a comprehensive

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edition of correspondence as theirs; and H  l  ne Coustillas amazed and amused us by explaining the lengths to which she as a researcher sometimes had to go to obtain a snippet of information. Anyone who has done historical research could appreciate the trials she recalled, and the zeal with which she and her husband followed up every lead. Questions and comments from the floor continued after the coffee break, until Bouwe Postmus was obliged to make his farewell statement and provide directions to the final luncheon. Before this he suggested the setting up of an editorial board who would select the papers to be collected in volume form if a publisher can be found.

As for those papers, no one, because of the conference format, could have heard them all, but topics they introduced sparked conversations during the coffee and luncheon breaks. Here are some ideas that floated my way, either as I sat in the audience or mingled with the other participants. (If you have the program, matching these *aper  us* with a particular session might make a nice parlor game.) Gissing, it was said, had no critical axes to grind in his Dickens studies; but when it came to writing his own novels, he declined to take Dickens as mentor and struck out in new directions, approximating, for example, the dramatic mode. He produced his more than 100 short stories largely when his long works were going badly or he needed money, and his stories reveal his gift for experimentation. In addition to advancing stylistic developments in fiction, he contributed to the flow of ideas, especially in his characters' explicit references to Darwinism. Jasper Milvain's Social Darwinism should be contrasted with the liberal belief in individual perfectibility held by Gissing himself. He was in conflict about women's education ("Are you fair to Gissing?" was asked of the speaker making this assertion), and he depicted the new white-collar woman as a destabilizing force. It is fruitful to compare him to Hogarth as a satirist and to Meredith as a moral critic, and to view him as a thwarted aesthete.

He was also a man of marked gustatory desires, and also, alas, a victim of nutritional minimalists (the Manchester prison authorities and his adopted French family). In the early 1880s he kept starvation at bay by tutoring children of wealthy families, thereby gaining glimpses of a social world he had not hitherto known. One of those pupils frequently wrote about him in later years, and the husband of another published his work. His relationship to modernity was ambiguous. Ahead of his time in some ways (he has been called a postmodernist *avant la lettre*), in some ways he lagged behind Bennett and Wells in his understanding of where

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society was going. Judging his views of masculinity and femininity is a tricky enterprise, but

one worth doing, for we are all sexologists now. It can be safely said that he understood the literary marketplace and how the commodity culture of his day affected it.

Altogether, what was heard and overheard in the lecture rooms and hallways left no doubt that the papers exhibited a diversity, complexity, and subtlety that mark a notable advance in Gissing studies. No regular conference-goer, however, would deny that sometimes what is said spontaneously over a plate or glass, or while walking from lecture hall to hotel, can be just as memorable as learned pronouncements delivered on the podium. By locating the conference's social activities beyond the confines of Spuistraat 134, Bouwe Postmus gave us ample chance to mix and mingle as we made our way to the various venues of conviviality, always mindful that the bicycle paths running adjacent to the sidewalks were potentially lethal zones. Lunches required a brisk walk over canals and along narrow streets to Café Van Pusselen, where the dim lighting offered a welcome respite from the hot sun, and soup and sandwiches awaited us at rustic tables.

Early Thursday evening there was an auspicious reception by the Burgomaster and Corporation of Amsterdam in the Councillors Lounge of the Town Hall. Two of Gissing's novels, *New Grub Street* and *In the Year of Jubilee*, were presented to the Acting Burgomaster, to be set on the shelves of the Amsterdam Public Library. His acknowledgement of the gift seemed to place us in a long tradition of civic receptions of the sort famously depicted in paintings by the Old Masters in the Rijksmuseum. Friday's Conference Dinner, held in the Amsterdam Historical Museum, was a glorious affair, from the drinks served in the colonnaded old-world courtyard, to the banquet served in the Restaurant David and Goliath, where a gigantic statue of the over-confident warrior greeted us as we entered. After remarks by Bouwe Postmus, it was good to hear a few words from John Spiers, the former Sussex publisher whose Harvester Press began bringing Gissing works into print in 1969, an important spur to Gissing studies.

Also reminding us of those early days was the presence at the conference of two early critical biographers of Gissing: Jacob Korg and Gillian Tindall. Her book inspired the *New York Times* to say that Gissing was "unlucky in life, lucky in his biographer." We might add that he was lucky in his admirers. They made the Amsterdam Conference a memorable occasion. And it was especially heartening to observe the number of younger scholars attending, for it is they who will determine the course of Gissing studies in the next century.

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The following is a list of the papers that were read:

*Gissing the European*, Pierre Coustillas

*Gissing's Criticism of the Works of Charles Dickens*, Michael Cronin

*Buried Treasure: George Gissing's Short Fiction*, Barbara Rawlinson

*Social Subordination and Superiority in Gissing's "A Daughter of the Lodge,"* Russell Price and Francesco Badolato

*'This Spectacle of a World's Wonder': Commercial Culture and Urban Space in Gissing's "In the Year of Jubilee,"* David Glover

*Unhappy Realism, or, How to Read a George Gissing Novel*, Simon J. James

*Gissing and Hogarth*, John Sloan

*Gissing and Modernity*, William Greenslade

*Living in Exile: Self-Image, Social Role, and the Problem of Identity*, Lucy Crispin

*Selection, Sex, and Survival in "Born in Exile,"* Stephen Andrew Ogden

*Dangerous Minds: The Education of Women in Gissing's Marriage Quartet*, Sandra R. Woods

*Eve and Rhoda: Doubled Enigma*, Arlene Young

*"Denzil Quarrier" and the Politics of Dissimulation*, Emanuela Ettore

*Deception, Violence, and the Criminal Act in Gissing's Fiction*, Lewis D. Moore  
*Pickled Walnuts and Eating Houses: Gissing, Food, and Eating Out in Late-Victorian London*,  
 Scott McCracken  
*The Feminization of the City: The Streetwalker, the Flâneuse, the Shopgirl*, Maria Teresa  
 Chialant  
*Gissing and Ancient Rome*, Jacob Korg  
*A New Biography of Gissing: Facts and Problems*, Paul Delany  
*Gissing and his Japanese Readers*, Fumio Hojoh  
*Men at Work: Masculinity and the Ideology of Labour in Gissing's Novels*, Liz Hedgecock  
*Idiot Heroines and Worthless Women? Gissing's 1890s Fiction and Female Independence*,  
 Emma Liggins  
 'Written, Too, in Exile!': A Metatextual Approach to "Born in Exile," Christine Huguet  
*At Their Millennium, Fables for Our Time: The Bankruptcies of the Nations in Meredith's "One  
 of Our Conquerors" and Gissing's "The Whirlpool,"* Raymond L. Baubles, Jr.  
*Gissing as Thwarted Aesthete*, Diana F. Maltz

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*Women with Ideas: Gissing's "The Odd Women" and the New Woman Novel*, Constance D.  
 Harsh  
*Gissing and the Lushingtons*, Anthony Curtis  
*Gissing and Austin Harrison*, Martha S. Vogeler

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#### Money as Language and Idea in George Gissing's Fiction

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 of the District of Columbia

The importance of money in Victorian Fiction can hardly be overestimated. From the 1830s to the end of the nineteenth century, money penetrates every aspect of the social structure and the very meaning of society. In *Masculine Identity in Hardy and Gissing*, Annette Federico writes, "The state of the economy and the political events of the 1880s and 1890s [...] were frighteningly unstable, and in their public roles, men began to feel gradually overwhelmed, sucked into the whirlpool of financial risk and imperialist controversy" (pp. 18-19). Marriage, family, class, love, politics, education, work, the fine arts, literature, and, more generally, the very quality of life partially reveal themselves through the figurative power of money. Of Gissing, John Halperin observes that "In the 1890s he was often ranked with Meredith and Hardy among the leading novelists of the time – yet he never earned much from his books. Because of his continual need for money he sold outright for ready cash the copyrights of many of his novels and rarely collected royalties under this arrangement" (p. 2). John Sloan, speaking more widely of writing in the nineteenth century, states, "The writer in effect lives out in his very labour a wider social conflict between the claims of free selfhood and the determinations of the market-place" (p. 86). Mr. Micawber's ironic adjuration to David in Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (1850) surely sets the decisive demarcation that money draws between happiness and misery: "He solemnly conjured me, I remember, to take warning by his fate, and to observe that if a man had twenty pounds a year for his income, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence, he would be happy, but that if he spent twenty pounds one he would be miserable" (p. 173). It is only when the full play of language and idea exists that money

operates in its manifold significances, testifying to its suggestive power. Gissing, writing at the

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end of the century, employs the ideas of love, art, and money in a rich linguistic display that demonstrates money's essential, figurative role in his fiction.

Juxtaposing Gissing's Arthur Golding from *Workers in the Dawn* (1880) with Henry Ryecroft from *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* (1903) resembles nothing so much as an exercise in comparative literature, especially regarding their feelings and statements about money. For Golding, money is secondary to love and the chance for happiness while to Ryecroft, writing in an elegiac mode, money has assumed mystical powers and hovers over and colors all that he reveals about himself and his early struggles before the legacy, the fairy-tale-like method of deliverance, descends and literally cuts him off from his previous life (*The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, XVIII-XIX, pp. 99-100). In contrast, Golding has some initial difficulty adjusting to the idea of the money left him by his dead father's friend, the Reverend Edward Norman, father of Helen Norman, the woman he loves but cannot have (*Workers in the Dawn*, Vol. 1, pp. 240-44, 247-48). The rich repose in the West of England that money grants Ryecroft and which he reveals in sensuous detail in his memoir, the latter divided into the seasons and redolent with a nature so long alien to his London existence, suffuses the book and the hope for a few years in which to enjoy nature's presence. Golding, cut off from Helen, first by her refusal to stay with him once she learns he is married to, though separated from, Carrie Mitchell, an alcoholic prostitute, and second by Helen's early death from disappointment and overwork, dramatically commits suicide by throwing himself over Niagara Falls (*Workers in the Dawn*, Vol. 2, pp. 436).

Golding's feelings for Helen resemble no one's more than Piers Otway's love for Irene Derwent in *The Crown of Life* (1899). While the outcomes of their love affairs are quite different, Golding would probably agree with Otway that the crown of life is "the love of the ideal woman" (p. 61). Harold Biffen in *New Grub Street* (1891) repeatedly tells Edwin Reardon that he must reunite with his estranged wife Amy, that the love of a woman such as she is not lightly to be tossed aside or given up without a struggle (pp. 342-43, 368, 440-42). Less weak than Golding in the pursuit of his ideal, Otway must first acquire the money and position necessary to win Irene. Sufficient money, along with the mature cultivation of his faculties, thus becomes a stream that eases his way to Irene, lifting him over practical difficulties and bringing a calm steadiness that creates a possibility for their union. The application of this water

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metaphor also clarifies Ryecroft's condition inasmuch as money has relieved him of his hard literary struggle, but Ryecroft does not continue his voyage beyond Devon once he gains the peace of his rural retreat. The stranded Edwin Reardon sees money's power to save one from misery and carry one into a better life but, like Golding's death at Niagara Falls, even when money becomes available, personal pressures and illness prevent him from fulfilling this envisioned hope. And, in *Workers in the Dawn*, Gissing also demonstrates, once one satisfies the needs of food, shelter, and clothing, money's profuse complexities. From Samuel Tollady's generosity, the man who raised and sheltered the young Arthur, to Will Noble's projects to help the working man and woman to Helen's time, labor, and money to aid young working girls to the Christmas bacchanalia of Carrie's aunt's family and friends, money appears, paradoxically, to separate itself from ownership or control and spin off into the social world, somehow personified as both innocent and depraved. Jacob Korg, commenting on Helen Norman's sense of failure, states, "She finds that the poor do not respond to her kindness, that the money she gives them goes for drink, and that her devotion and hard work produce no improvement"

(p. 36).

Although nearly every Gissing novel employs the language of money, *New Grub Street* represents its strongest use. Charles Dickens, one of the English novelists Gissing most admired, was a clear forerunner in incorporating money into the rhetorical and figurative structures of his novels. Of course, in works such as *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), characters like the Cheeryble brothers paradoxically rob money of its importance by its abundance and freely given nature. The gain or loss of money in that novel has at times little urgency after the brothers appear in the lives of Nicholas, his sister, and their mother, and thus it loses in significance compared to its role in such works as *Oliver Twist* (1838), *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844), *Bleak House* (1853), *Little Dorrit* (1857), or *Great Expectations* (1861). For Gissing, *New Grub Street* demonstrated the effect of money's thematic and linguistic saturation. Robert L. Selig states "Few other novels, in fact, devote so many passages to money" (p. 170). And in *George Gissing*, Selig writes, "A single anti-idealistic principle runs throughout *New Grub Street*: in a society that values only money, neither love nor art can flourish without sufficient cash" (p. 46). Nearly every character and event turn on the way that money describes, characterizes, or affects the momentum of the plot. Speaking generally of where the novel's writers live, John Goode remarks, "what is more important than the topographical region is the social zoning which

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commits the writer to living in a middle-class style on a working-class income" (p. 112). The intimate connection that Gissing makes between money and Harold Biffen's welfare presents money transformed into an organic substance, improving or lessening Biffen's physical condition by the amount he possesses. This organic image is strengthened when Reardon lies dying in Brighton, and Biffen, summoned by his friend, goes first to Amy as if invested with a new skin:

She found him in the dining-room, and, even amid her distress, it was a satisfaction to her that he presented a far more conventional appearance than in the old days. All the garments he wore, even his hat, gloves, and boots, were new; a surprising state of things, explained by the fact of his commercial brother having sent him a present of ten pounds, a practical expression of sympathy with him in his recent calamity. (p. 452)

Symbolically renewed by the fire which nearly destroyed the manuscript of his novel, *Mr. Bailey, Grocer*, Biffen appears, for him, resplendent; his brother's money thus becomes his new outward surface, giving him a presence that, as Amy observes, makes him socially more acceptable.

Edwin Reardon's situation prefigures this integration of money with all of life's activities and the necessity of its possession for any chance of happiness or success. In a crucial dialogue shortly after their introduction into the novel, Edwin and Amy speak of money or its lack in a series of metaphors reflecting an evolutionary momentum: money as holiday, business, security, art, fear, value, power, family and home, and social position (pp. 50-55). Survival comes with money, and the novel's many allusions to Darwin, Spencer, and the struggle for existence emphasize this metaphorical portrait of money as sustenance (Moore). Jasper Milvain, living on both an allowance from his mother and his hard-earned money, presents an image the reverse of Reardon's. Rachel Bowlby notes, in a metonymic figure, that Milvain's mental and physical efforts "will be wholly convertible into the 'value' of money" (p. 109). As Milvain moves up in literary and social circles, his clothing reflects someone well adapted to succeed. Gissing notes his impeccable evening dress at the dinner that he and Amy, Reardon's former wife, give at the end of the novel (p. 511). Just as Milvain has gained a surface polish so has he acquired both a

decorative and socially valuable wife. Peter Keating states that “the qualities Jasper Milvain looks for in a wife are unequivocal: she must possess money, good looks, and sufficient personality to help him advance his career. Reardon’s widow Amy has all the necessary qualities,

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plus an appropriate touch of hard materialism” (pp. 202-03). Gissing’s descriptions of their material ascent support the image of harmony with one’s environment. Michael Collie writes of Milvain that “to be successful he needed money and that it made sense to marry for money, especially if that established a basis for understanding between husband and wife; and further that to marry for love, when everything about marriage was arbitrary and accidental, was the height of foolishness” (pp. 119-20). Reardon, in contrast, lacking the money necessary to clothe himself in ways that would image forth his cultural attainments, gradually has lost in the battle of life. Rushing to Brighton in response to Amy’s telegram that Willie lies perilously ill, Reardon has no time to change to his better clothes and appears somewhat shabbily dressed. Gissing heightens the irony by juxtaposing Amy’s expressions of affection and a desire for reconciliation, prompted in part by a sufficient income for their lives, with Reardon’s mortal illness. Willie dies and Reardon dies. Beyond a certain point in the struggle, money cannot save one.

When in *New Grub Street* Alfred Yule speaks to his daughter Marian about her supposed legacy of £5,000, he tremulously, almost fearfully, expresses his hopes that she will invest in a journal with him as editor (pp. 312-20). Seemingly craven in his approach to his daughter, who reluctantly hears him, Yule in reality reveals his deepest desires that his life will be saved, transformed, redeemed from its bitter disappointments by this manna from heaven. Nothing less than a religious-like fervor lies at the heart of his words to Marian. Her rejection of his plan for her money and the substitution of her desire to marry Jasper Milvain and give him the legacy are destructive of Yule’s last chance to achieve power in the literary world. Blindness and death follow soon after. Contrasted with the reality of what he would do as the editor of a new journal, to whose certain failure Jasper attests (p. 332), Yule’s language to Marian is pure hyperbole. It would not be too fanciful a comparison to contend that Yule creates a mirage, not some capricious illusion, but the surest description of what to him seems the most palpable reality: he the editor, Marian a valued contributor, Hinks and Quarmby his loyal lieutenants. If Yule did not consult a doctor and learn he suffered from cataract, one would assume a psychosomatic blindness resulting from Marian’s answer (p. 409).

Gissing, to a certain degree, is a novelist of limits. Apart from his own personal liabilities, these limits reside in the physical and emotional conditions of his characters’ lives, the extent of their intellectual capabilities, their knowledge and tastes, their degree of understanding life’s complexities, and their abilities to imagine, to envision what they can accomplish and for what

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they can hope. Satire, irony, and paradox naturally fit with the idea of limits. George Orwell touches on Gissing’s ironic sense of life’s restrictions: “Understanding better than almost anyone the horror of a money-ruled society, he has little wish to change it, because he does not believe that the change would make any real difference” (p. 3). The above figures shape, pull, control, and even distort, along with the allied figures of hyperbole and understatement, the literary contexts in which they appear. In these restrictive but suggestive figures, Gissing observes and explores limitations that charge his fiction and, paradoxically, open it up, linking it to other ideas through the power of imaginative discourse. In *The Odd Women* (1893), Alice and Virginia Madden, in a scene of understated pathos, follow the latter’s suggestion: “Let us review



our position” (p. 15). What follows is a careful analysis of their money and expenses for six months against the possibility that neither spinster will obtain employment during that time. Alice suggests that they could live on four-pence a day for food, to which Virginia replies (noted also by Selig, *George Gissing*, p. 65), “Is such a life worthy of the name?” (p. 16). Lady Ogram and her secretary Constance Bride in *Our Friend the Charlatan* (1901) present a linked pair exemplifying an exquisite balance of situational ironies with money at its center. Lady Ogram, old and in poor health, comes from a working-class background and, despite her infirmities, still desires to influence society, politically and intellectually. Though she lives retired in the country, her Liberal contacts extend far beyond it and include backing Dyce Lashmar for a parliamentary candidacy for Hollingford. In addition to physical and class limitations which she transcends with varying degrees of success, Lady Ogram’s autocratic manner – assuredly based on money, her title, and a lifetime’s experience – conflicts with her secretary’s sense of pride and self-respect, warning Lady Ogram that she must not transgress the limits of assertion too far or too often (pp. 142-43).

Constance exists in a state paralleling Lady Ogram’s. Educated but born into straitened circumstances, she nonetheless feels herself endowed with great gifts. This paradoxical condition is a constant theme in Gissing’s fiction, developed with varied degrees of acceptance by his protagonists. From the agon of a Godwin Peak in *Born in Exile* (1892) to the sad acknowledgement of Gilbert Grail in *Thyrza* (1887) and Sidney Kirkwood in *The Nether World* (1889), uneasy lies the weight of poverty on those who feel it an unjust mark of fate or chance. David Grylls notes “In [Gissing’s] view, most virtues depended on money: poverty demoralized” (p. 105). With the sudden discovery of her niece, May Tomalin, Lady Ogram

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plans to reduce the amount of money for the trust which Constance, continuing her patron’s charitable work, will administer (*Our Friend the Charlatan*, pp. 183, 186-87). While not disheartened by this unforeseen irony, Constance must adapt both her discourse and her plans. Confronted with Lashmar’s enquiries about the effects of May’s appearance and the intended diversion of money for the latter’s future position in society, Constance continues to be sanguine, projecting a firm belief that though reduced, Lady Ogram’s charitable interests have not abated (p. 188).

Another monetary irony is that Lady Ogram presses Lashmar to ask Constance to marry him (p. 182). All who see Lady Ogram after even a brief absence notice her advancing illness, and her insistence on arranging the lives of those beholden to her is in inverse proportion to the time she feels remaining. When Lashmar speaks to Constance, he does so with feelings of trepidation. Not that he initially feels that she will accept him but that she will not agree to a subterfuge which, while they pretend an engagement, will outlast the autocrat’s life. Much to his delight, Constance concurs with his plan and provides rationalisations for it (pp. 189-90). Thus, Gissing presents one person of presumed principle, Constance, and one of assumed principle, Lashmar, seemingly bending under the necessity and the hope of future largesse. However, the satire is not so broad as it would appear since Constance has apparently recovered her love for Lashmar; the disappointment she suffered six years before at his hands has not survived a new hope even when mixed with a surer knowledge of his unsavory character. Thus, both have mixed reasons for their collusion in frustrating Lady Ogram’s hopes, e.g., Constance, ambition and love, and Lashmar, ambition and wealth, for if he can hold on long enough, May Tomalin might still be unmarried, an heiress, and available.

Obfuscation, deception, and concealment are Lashmar’s methods of dealing with questions about his intentions. Once he receives May Tomalin’s anonymous note, “HAVE MORE COURAGE. AIM HIGHER. IT IS NOT TOO LATE” (p. 241), he correctly guesses her authorship and then attempts to pull May into his marriage deception, placing her on his side *vis à vis* both

Lady Ogram and Constance (pp. 284-87). In the midst of the above complexities, Lashmar visits his parents, and against the background of his father's worries over money, they have an exchange, frank on the father's side and part openness, part obfuscation on Dyce's. Gissing's rhetorical strategies in this instance extend from the religious to social Darwinist discourse. Mr. Philip Lashmar, vicar of Alverholme, in reply to Dyce's statement, "I'm afraid you're a good

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deal worried, father," says, "I'm putting my affairs in order, Dyce [...] I've been foolish enough to let them get very tangled" (p. 233). When Mr. Lashmar shifts the conversation to Dyce's affairs, Gissing states that "Dyce drifted into verbosity," losing "from sight the impossibility of telling the whole truth about his present position and the prospects on which he counted" (p. 235). Calling Dyce a "post-Darwinian" unable to believe in the Sermon on the Mount (p. 236), the basis for his own beliefs, Mr. Lashmar says, "To me your method of solution seems a deliberate insistence on the worldly in human nature, sure to have the practical result of making men more and more savagely materialist" (p. 237). Rather than the precepts from the Sermon on the Mount, Mr. Lashmar observes that "You have to teach "Blessed are the civic-minded, for they shall profit by their civism." It has to be profit, Dyce, profit, profit" (p. 239). The father-son colloquy, a set-piece of revelation and concealment on the son's part, projects several things. One is that Dyce has not completely cut himself off from dialogue with a better vision that precludes treachery and dissembling. The other, as subsequent events show, is that Dyce cannot, in the larger world, translate his father's sincere Christian rhetoric into practical form.

Change is an essential part of the language of money in Gissing's work and evinces itself in many areas, e.g., social, personal, and intellectual. It is obvious that Rev. Lashmar does not see change in a positive light while admitting that the New Testament speaks of "rewards" (p. 239). His criticisms of the world his son hopes to inhabit center on the tendency of economic exchange to rob the world of spirit. Acknowledging the post-Darwinian environment and even admitting to an earlier belief in organic evolution as compatible with a broad Anglicanism, he nonetheless deletes this from his sermons because it is a view his parishioners could not understand (p. 1). Paradoxically, he does not remove from his preaching Christ's historically profound teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. Rev. Lashmar apparently believes that having heard these ideas all their lives they will proceed to ignore them.

Gissing exemplifies Rev. Lashmar's views on the differential but inimical effects of society's materialist direction in two earlier novels, *The Town Traveller* (1898) and *The Paying Guest* (1895). These two modern allegories, written in a comic, satiric style, demonstrate a basis for Rev. Lashmar's belief that the modern world of profit and practicality has ineluctably arrived. Gissing focuses his portraits in these novels in two ways. First, he employs young women as the

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protagonists, one from the working class and one from the lower-middle class, respectively. Second, both women speak the language of money as almost an inherited character trait. Secluded from the London urban world of *The Town Traveller* and the suburban London environment of *The Paying Guest*, Rev. Lashmar and later Ryecroft in *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* incontestably perceive and speak of this new age as both arriving and sweeping away the values of the old.

In *The Town Traveller*, Polly Sparkes, a good-hearted vulgarian, sells "programmes at a fashionable theatre" (p. 5). Grylls speaks in general of the characters' "rasping illiteracies" (p. 113). Understandably, as a young, self-supporting woman living alone who prizes her respectability, she must have her material welfare as a dominant concern. If she were to fail, the

streets, a notorious receiver of impoverished women, might engulf her. Admittedly, Gissing has in *The Unclassed* (1884, 1895) sentimentalized to a degree the profession of prostitute, but this is an aberration in his fiction. Carrie Mitchell's portrait in *Workers in the Dawn*, undoubtedly based on his first wife Nell, remains the touchstone for understanding his views on the subject. Polly's manner of expressing her economic and other concerns rests on the volume used to state them. An increase in the auditory level of the utterance substitutes sound for thought, but Polly also uses sound to still anxiety. Functioning somewhat as a caricature of working-class life, she nonetheless represents a method of communal dialogue in which support is expressed and received. Gissing describes Polly early in the novel as "[m]eaning to pass an hour or two in quarrelling with Mrs. Bubb [...] whom [...] she had known since her childhood" (p. 4). Though early reviewers noted Gissing's awkwardness in dealing with middle-class life (Coustillas and Partridge, pp. 52, 56, 60-61, 83), he was at least knowledgeable of intellectual culture, if not all the distinctions of fashionable norms. But he correctly reproduces the din associated with the crowded world of the London poor. Gissing's well-known description in *Workers in the Dawn* of Whitecross Street on a Saturday night; his portrait of the Mutimer household in *Demos* (1886), especially Alice, the daughter; the bank holiday mob in *The Nether World*; the celebrations in *In the Year of Jubilee* (1894); and the boat trip to Gravesend in "Lou and Liz" (1893) are just a few examples of the noise of the poor as they establish their levels of communication. In her rooming house in *The Town Traveller*, Polly moves from loud hilarity to equally loud hostility and frequently in regard to money. Paying rent is one of Polly's chief monetary concerns. And, when she decides to leave Mrs. Bubb's, she responds to her landlady's

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warnings with vituperation and haughtiness in an effort to preserve her precarious sense of self-respect. Overshadowing her assertiveness, based on a youthful, barely contained energy, a prospective bleakness looms, masked by her insistent rhetoric. Financial need traps and directs Polly as surely as in the lives of other characters.

Two males in these novels complement, respectively, the female portraits of Polly Sparkes in *The Town Traveller* and Louise Derrick, to be discussed below, in *The Paying Guest*. Gammon and Tom Cobb, respectively, reflect a decisive gender difference in relation to the rhetoric of money. Certainly, Gissing acknowledges the realities of economic life when granting men a greater expectation of and success in the struggle to earn a living. Gammon in *The Town Traveller* is an effective salesman, typed by Grylls as one of the "short-sighted smilers" (p. 4), who never seems to doubt his ability to acquire money. Consequently, his statements regarding money vary greatly from those of Polly, to whom he is temporarily engaged. He expends energy and reaps his admittedly modest reward. Will the world always need and remunerate the traveling salesman, especially one who does not see his work as a burden? Evidently so, and confident of his abilities, he initially seeks to marry the seventeen-year old Minnie Clover. However, the mother has different social expectations for her daughter and refuses for her. Gammon eventually marries Mrs. Clover whom he has continued to admire.

Tom Cobb, in *The Paying Guest*, expresses an equal certainty in his ability to survive and prosper economically. An engineer, Cobb epitomizes the calm assertiveness of the technological expert, thus disclosing his sense of a share in the world he inhabits. Lacking the gender-related uncertainties of the female dependent upon herself for sustenance, or even a salesman on his commission, Cobb harbors little misgiving about his economic future. He says to Louise Derrick, the woman he intends to marry, "You seem to think I want to drag you down, but you're very much mistaken. I'm doing pretty well, and likely, as far as I can see, to do better" (p. 110). Luckworth Crewe, in *In the Year of Jubilee*, makes a similar statement to Nancy Lord in response to her observation about the high cost of portraits while they stand on top of the Monument: "I know. But that's what I'm working for. There are not many men down yonder,"

he pointed over the City, 'have a better head for money-making than I have' (pp. 95-96). Both Cobb's and Crewe's rhetoric reveals the imagery of male sexual potency, the male's dominance through language when fully aroused. Gissing replicates this figure, though on a higher class

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level and with varying degrees of success, in *Our Friend the Charlatan* and *Sleeping Fires* (1895). In the latter work, Edmund Langley asserts his right to Lady Agnes Revill's love and her hand in marriage (pp. 96-97) while in the former novel Dyce Lashmar confidently, but mistakenly, assumes he can bend the independent Constance Bride to his will (pp. 336-48). The inescapable image in both novels is of a male bird flaunting its plumage in a mating ritual. Gissing grants occasional success to the man in this exaggerated dance.

*The Paying Guest's* Louise Derrick is not in a higher class than Cobb but initially aims higher. Louise's stepfather, Mr. Higgins, has gained a small fortune in business, and she lives in relative affluence. Halperin states that Louise is a "girl from a family rich but vulgar and unrefined" (p. 223). Desiring to acquire social polish and refinement, Louise goes to live with Clarence and Emmeline Mumford, a middle-class London suburban couple with one child. The possession of money prompts Louise's desire for change and creates the possibility of her conceiving that change is within her reach. Much like Constance Bride's admission to the hapless Dyce Lashmar, after Lady Ogram's will has left her £70,000 and a paper mill, that the sudden possession of wealth has affected her (*Our Friend the Charlatan*, pp. 329, 344, 347), Louise demonstrates the power of money to generate thoughts and ambitions that would previously have been impossible to imagine or implement. In his introduction to *The Paying Guest*, Ian Fletcher notes generally "that attitudes to [money] are complex and often unconscious" (p. xiv). However, Louise's wish to remake herself does not equal the attainment of her goal. Cobb's insistent passion speaks to her apparently real desires, and she lapses back into her world, to the great relief of the Mumfords.

Gissing's incorporation of the idea of money into the figurative patterns of his novels reveals money's omnipresence. Both overtly and covertly, money as the means of existence and exchange, the object of longing and the path to transformation, integrates itself into the characters' practical lives and emotional relations. Speaking of *New Grub Street*, Selig states, "Reardon feels obsessed by money's beneficent power, and even the tougher Biffen can write cadenced prose only about people short of money and simple creature comforts" (p. 52). Rarely concerned with money as a physical object, Gissing instead writes of the social and psychological tensions and concerns that money engenders, creating a complex mixture throughout the range of his fiction.

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"The Man is a Born Artist": The Relationship  
between George Gissing and John Wood Shortridge

(Concluded)

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The next stage of Shortridge's peregrinations is unambiguously suggested in the entry for 6 September when he received from a correspondent named Ivan "two doubtfull [*sic*] addresses," apparently those of prospective Roman landladies, but he did not leave Normandy until mid-October when, after recapitulating his last expenses ("Board and lodging 242.00 Servant 10.0 Luggage to Paris 3.45 Ticket 15.0 Cab & porter in Paris 5.00 Luggage to Marseilles 14.60 Ticket 60.00 Eatables 0.60"), he summed up his impressions of the last few months: "Most of my time was spent in study here and in wandering up and down the country. I made no acquaintances with French people and was always with the Norwegians."

This wandering life was to go on in the same way for another half-dozen years, until he settled at Massa Lubrense, and some notion of his adventures will be formed if we add that the

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relation of the events we have so far summed up, from March 1868 to mid-October 1874, at which time he stopped for a few days at a hotel kept by M. Lemmet, 30 Boulevard de la Paix, Marseilles, only covers 39 out of 134 pages in Diary A and 84 out of 147 in Diary B, which stops in the middle of a sentence in the entry for 25 February 1875. Only the broad lines of his wanderings will from now on be given, supplemented by some documents which will carry the narrative up to the end of Carmela's life.

With his short stay in Marseilles on his way to Italy came the discovery of a new race of men or at least of men endowed with a kind of temperament of which he had had no experience so far. Although the Marseillais were just as French as the Normans, he noted that they were quicker and merrier than the slow-blooded creatures he had seen at close quarters at Touques and thereabouts.

By 26 October 1874 he was in Rome, having called at Genoa and Leghorn. With several passengers whom he met on board, he remained in touch during his stay in Rome, notably with "a fellow who came with us [that is the Segitori family, a woman, her four pretty daughters, her son, and himself] from Genoa called Girard [...] one of the careless sons of mother earth [...] a queer character, about 6 feet in height, well-made, good-looking face, black moustache and in everlasting good humour, been most of his life a soldier had fought twice under Garibaldi, once under V. Emanuel and in the late French war" (21 October). Shortridge used the past tense because the version of his diary we quote from is a fair copy made years after the events, but he thereby gives the somewhat misleading impression that he had then seen through this twenty-eight-year-old ne'er-do-well whose genial insouciance was a mask concealing ingrained sycophantic proclivities. Jean-Baptiste Girard was to sponge on him throughout his stay in Rome. Shortridge lived there in strange company. The Neapolitan priest, Enrico Saviano, who gave him Italian lessons was "about three sheets in the wind" when he first met him, and he was only one of various shady individuals with whom Shortridge consorted. Good humour prevailed.

Simultaneously the diaries testify to constant cultural activity, as intense as that noticeable earlier in Paris. The daily record of his work as a self-educating artist bristles with references to the museums and churches he visited, notebook in hand, and to artists and writers with whose achievements he was familiar. His will to explore and study the artistic patrimony of Italy is conspicuous on every page. Gissing would have been delighted if he had been given a chance of reading this account of his friend's ramblings in Rome – and later in and around Naples. He

would have pored over the patient transcriptions of inscriptions, whether known or unknown to him, and would have recognised in Shortridge one of his cultural predecessors. The ebullient Yorkshireman did not keep to himself; he mingled with the natives, and in Rome as elsewhere was remarkably articulate. Candid he was also in his diary, witness the concluding lines of the entry for 8 December, in which, after a detailed account of his visits to churches, the last of which was St. Clement's with its mosaics ordered by Cardinal Jacques Tomasi in 1229, he wrote: "Dined among the democrats [i.e. the people], came home and was arranging [...] photographs all evening. Girard was in my bed all night. I could not sleep in it on account of the fleas so roosted on the sofa until the morning." His curiosity, it would seem, knew no bounds, being historical and geographical, literary and artistic, focused on Italy yet easily diverted to other areas, say, the house in which Goethe lived or the Protestant cemetery, where he noted Latin, German and Chinese inscriptions. The Roman entries reveal a strong sense of topography, an aesthetic appreciation of all he saw (and of which he spontaneously imagined a pictorial reproduction), from "a hard up priest who was begging" (26 November) to "the dungeons where Beatrice Cenci, her mother-in-law and Benvenuto Cellini were confined and the room where B. C. was executed" (25 October). Little information is offered about his reading – one notes in passing the names of Goethe and Silvio Pellico, the latter being quoted with obvious approval: "*Io amo appassionatamente la mia patria, ma non odio alcun'altra nazione. La civiltà, la ricchezza, la potenza, la gloria sono diverse nelle diverse nazioni; ma in tutte havvi anime obbedienti alla gran vocazione dell'uomo, di amare e compiangere e giovare.*"<sup>22</sup> We find him in many places duly visited by Gissing some fourteen years later: the Vatican museums, the tomb of Cæcilia Metella on the Via Appia, the church of Ara Coeli, which inspired Gissing to write his essay "Christmas on the Capitol," the basilica of San Paolo Fuori le Mura among others. And Shortridge, also like him, was attentive to any public sights. He was in time for the Roman Carnival, an occasion for largely innocent amusement and careful observation which supplied him with a wealth of material for long entries in his diary, a fit receptacle for accounts of odd incidents like the following on 2 February 1875: "Some woman who has some knowledge of who I am got me by the beard as she passed. Also one whispered good night as she passed me. I could not make either of them out [both women wore masks]." Amusement and tragedy were noticeable side by side a few days later when "there was an assassination this evening [6

February] in the passage of 464 Corso, a young Piedmontese shot a girl through jealousy... Also another not far from us and within an hour... Raeffello (*sic*) Sonsogno editor of the paper 'II Capitale' was assassinated in his office by a joiner supposed to be a tool of some party or other. He gave him several stabs with a Moorish stiletto and he died immediately."

Stories about religion or accounts of religious experience, past and present, gave rise to disbelieving or mocking comments. Thus, after visiting a church and hearing a monk relate the execution of St. Paul, and miracles associated with it (which even the monk was doubtful about), Shortridge expressed scepticism about the evidence adduced and suggested natural explanations. Again Shortridge went with an acquaintance to "a kind of prayer meeting in the American Mission Rooms [...] It was a regular humbug and as usual all on the converting line. It is astonishing what fellows are allowed to speak in these places. An Italian, who had been converted? was one of the speakers and tried the patience of his hearers with a long senseless and rambling discourse that a child of 12 would not have uttered, that is if it was in its senses" (17 and 7 February).

Of all the Roman vignettes the most interesting and valuable is that concerning the arrival of Garibaldi (whom Shortridge consistently calls "Garabaldi") in Rome. Shortridge's

description of it clearly expresses his admiration as well as his consciousness of having attended an event of historic significance:

At home all the morning and at 2 went to see Garibaldi land in Rome. There were not many there but at 3 o'clock the place was full enough. Mostly the working classes and each trade and club with its banners. No rioting and all very polite and quiet. Train arrived exactly to time so I took up my position upon a heap of rubbish amongst a very Democratic looking group. First came the horses that had been cut from the traces, band of Music playing L'inno Garibaldiano and then the old fellow himself in an open carriage and drawn by old Garibaldians my "worthy" friend Girardo [*sic*] in the thick of it. Garibaldi passed very close and I had a good look at him. The poor old fellow was much moved at his reception and tried to stand up and acknowledge the "Evvivas" but was at last obliged to seat himself. He was in his usual dress. Red mantle, handkerchief tied loosely round his neck, red shirt, round black cap with blue braiding and tassel and carried a crutch as he is lame from old wounds. The most noble looking man I have ever seen and with the eye of an eagle; when one has once seen the man's countenance it can easily be accounted for how far men would go for such a leader. There is also a strange look of uncle about him. He made the best of his way to his

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hotel and spoke before entering, few words and simple as usual; he told all to go home quietly, make no demonstrations and that they must excuse him speaking for he was no orator. His voice is still strong and sonorous. Not a priest was to be seen in Rome. The English ladies distinguished themselves in particular in their salutations. Dined tonight in 1<sup>st</sup> class style and had for a table companion the master and mistress of ceremonies from the Palace. (24 January 1875)

An echo of his admiration for the old warrior appeared belatedly in the diary on 19 March, when he transcribed the "Inno di Garibaldi," just as he had transcribed "La Marseillaise" a year before. He had by then moved to Naples, little suspecting doubtless that he was to make his home in the area early in the next decade. But meanwhile he was still haunted by the past. On 19 February he noted without comment that this was Rosa Wulf's birthday. And his taste for the macabre endured. Thus on 27 February he visited the Catacombs with some American friends. "It was a wonderful place, passage over passage and extending for miles underground. It had been for the most part plundered and we saw only a few skeletons. I managed to purloin two arm bones which are now in my chest."

Shortridge stayed only three weeks in Naples, with friends who had accompanied him from Rome. They travelled on 4 March: "The scenery," he noted with delight, "was magnificent all the way down to Naples especially in the Volsque [Volscian] mountains where I saw the snow line for the first time in my wanderings. The land is for the most part still cultivated by hand and we saw many a troop of women with their clothes tucked up over their knees delving away with their spades." The party met all sorts of uncommon individuals in and around Naples. At the museum his attention was arrested by splendid frescoes and vestiges of life in Pompeii at the time when Vesuvius destroyed the town and nearby Herculaneum (among the remains "a piece of lava with the imprint of a young girl's bosom" and surgical instruments), while in the smaller museum at Pompeii he was struck by the presence of remains of food such as bread, seeds and wheat, and still more by the skeletons of domestic animals that had been overtaken by



the flood of burning lava. “We were in two houses formerly brothels where only gentlemen are admitted. The paintings were beastly and the interior was arranged into small cells with a stone settle and the name of the occupant over the door. The door was confronted by a small office where the mistress of the house sat to take payment. Outside was also a peculiar sign, best not inserted here.” His time in Naples and its surroundings was spent in the way usual among

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educated tourists; yet it must be repeated that Shortridge’s approach to the world he was discovering was that of an eager student of all the disciplines involved in his cultural peregrinations. He never rested. When he was not visiting the many towns and villages round Naples, duly noting their historical associations, he would study paintings and architectural vestiges in the museum, and write down a detailed account on his return to his lodgings, making time nonetheless for correspondence with a number of relatives and friends, for he was indeed a very sociable man, fond of talking and debating, doubtless rather un-English in behaviour and bearing, at least by the conventional standards of the period. Almost invariably he concluded his diary entries with a list of his expenses. Thus on 9 March 1875: “Post 1.20 Cigars 0.10 Museum 1.00 Eatables 2.40. Oranges and icewater 0.25 Music 0.20,” the last item, which probably refers to the purchase of some sheet of music, reminding the reader that from mid-January to his departure for Naples he had taken music lessons.

On 22 March he embarked, again with friends whose names and nationalities are the only clues to identification, for Messina, Sicily. An exception seems to have been one Harry Wiest,<sup>23</sup> an American journalist of sorts who hailed from Philadelphia, about whom a two-and-a-half-line press cutting is pasted in Diary A, and whom Shortridge always calls West. “We sailed at 6 o’clock, third class passengers among a motley crowd of convicts, soldiers and sailors, also a chain gang of brigands going to prison [...] I slept under an old tarpaulin alongside of a cavalry soldier all night and got rather wet with a sea that came on board during the night.” It was a situation symbolical of some aspects of his turbulent life as he described it in his letter of August 1903 to Gissing. At Catania, where he went by train, he was – to his great amusement – mistaken for a Turk hawking tobacco samples. “One so seldom sees an Englishman travelling in the way I did, and certainly I looked more like a Turk than an Englishman,” he admitted (25 March). From Catania he “trained it down to Siracusa,” which he called “the capital of the flea communities” (26 March). The population did not impress him: “The men are a rascally set and are sharp customers to deal with.” And from Syracuse he went on to Malta, Tunis, Sardinia, Palermo and back to Naples and Rome, staying only briefly in these last two towns. By the time he got to Naples trouble had begun to gather over his head. A letter to his maternal grandmother, which he transcribed in his diary entry for 17 April, echoes some crisis in which he was involved: he was very sorry to hear of his grandmother’s illness, but he could not go to see her

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“because the gentleman with whom I am at present is also dangerously ill”; he could not comply with his aunt’s request to return to England, being “under legal engagement here it could not be broken until I have fulfilled it.” He could not approve of his sister Nellie’s going to Kexby, Yorkshire, where his grandmother was living, because a member of the family there, an aunt or a cousin Mould, had made herself obnoxious. Obviously he was concerned that some people were accusing him of indifference and waxed solemn as he continued: “Perhaps they too may learn the truth of the saying ‘He laughs who wins.’” A month later, by which time he had moved to Lucca, via Florence and Pisa, he heard that his grandmother, Sarah Ann Wood, née Mould, had just died.

The diaries make it clear that, ever since leaving Hamburg in 1873, he had planned to

return there some day. Meanwhile his intellectual and artistic progress continued untroubled despite occasional incidents, like the one which occurred at Naples on 25 April when alarming noises close to his door in the night caused him to stand until dawn, revolver in hand (he carried a revolver when travelling abroad). While in Florence he did not miss an opportunity to visit the Pitti Gallery, where he saw “the Madonna della Seggiola by Raphael and a number of other things,” going later in the day to the cathedral where he located the place where Dante used to sit. Fully did he use his week in the city and the next two days in Pisa, where he admired “the lamp in the Cathedral that first gave the idea of the pendulum to Galileo,” that eternally famous victim of ecclesiastical obscurantism, and afterwards during a stroll along the Arno noticed “the factory girls coming clattering from their work in clogs, [...] the exact counterpart of our English ones.” In Venice he only remained from 18 May to 2 June, staying at Hotel Sandwirth on the Riva degli Schiavoni, but he saw and heard enough to compare his own memorable recollections with Gissing’s if, as is likely, they recalled their respective impressions when they met for the second time in late 1889 and early 1890, that is after Gissing’s own Venetian explorations. Like so many before and after him he noticed that the floor of St. Mark’s was falling into a sad state and that the mosaics and tessellated work were, he thought, without equal; he went to the Academy and saw the work of Titian; he took a gondola and had a ride in the moonlight on the Grand Canal; he mounted the Campanile so as to have a bird’s eye view of the city; he walked out to the Rialto bridge and looked round the fish and vegetable market; but, unlike him, not all tourists had a chance of hearing “the priest blackguard the Protestants” in the basilica. He was much amused, and so would Gissing have been.

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Milan and Como were not much more than stopping-places on his way to Hamburg via Zürich, but Shortridge being ever inclined to court difficulty, he chose to cut across Switzerland and found himself up against the prospect of marching eighteen miles, carrying some sixty pounds on his back, from Colico to Chiavenna near the Swiss border, prior to reaching Zürich through Chur. Footing it where there was no stage-coach was the only solution, and he did not balk at it, whatever state his feet might be in at the tramp’s end. After a fortnight’s stay in Hamburg, where he found the friends, including the Wulfs and one Sireno, whose names appear throughout his diaries from early 1872 onwards, he left for the Isle of Man and in late July went home to Heeley. None of his friends in Germany (some sort of international colony, whose activities are defined nowhere in the diaries) had at first recognised him, and his own relatives must have marvelled at the change in his appearance. Still, his links with the past remained very strong. The bewitching Rosa was again uppermost in his thoughts; she appears several times during the new German interlude, once as the recipient of flowers.

Now, apparently, Shortridge had reached a turning-point in his life, and an entry dated 13 August 1875 in Diary A confirms this impression: “Came to London to enter in my artistic career which I expect will end like all my others. *N’importe maintenant!*” On 18 August, he went “to live at Mrs. Webster’s, 16 Trevor Square,” off the Brompton Road, where he stayed for several weeks. He remained pretty idle until 6 October, only pretending to keep his diary. A visit from his uncle and aunt, Alfred and Sarah Sellars, and from his brother Herbert on 30 September triggered no comment. On 6 October he went to his first lesson in the South Kensington Museum, finished his first and second “pieces of work” during the next two days and his “pass figure” on the 10th. Obviously he was going through a period of depression, wondering where he would be next year, that is in 1876, and hoping it might be in Rome. On New Year’s Eve, he lamented: “Another year gone.” He now only recorded the sums of money he received, not those he spent. Instability had become the most notable feature in his life, though from January to 20 March he went on with his artistic “work” at the South Kensington Museum and was in touch with some artists, a situation which may be partly accounted for by

his having moved to Danvers Street, Chelsea, on 2 November. The entry for 23 March in Diary A reads gloomily. After “a look round the Bethnal Museum” and a farewell dinner with his uncle, he wrote: “Here I am now about to spend my last night in England for some time. May it

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be my last.” Abruptly he discontinued his diary for almost a year, giving instead a somewhat incoherent summary of that period. The rambling mixture of English, French and Italian conveys an impression that he had lost his bearings, at least for a time:

I spent 7 days in Paris with Herbert stopping at my old hotel, all things as usual and then came on to Normandy with Herbert. Was there together a month or 5 weeks and then Herbert left for London. I came home to London 2 or 3 months later and found him gone away to America. Aunt and uncle were down with Elsie. Went together to Academy. Came away shortly after and came to Heeley. La même réception comme d’autrefois et regardé comme un chien enragé. Nanette et Elsie partent pour l’Isle de Man et sur le retour Elsie me donne mon congé... et Tom me chasse d’une manière de chez lui. J’avais déjà proposé à K. J.<sup>24</sup> pendant une visite à Llandudno. Après 3 mois à Liverpool je prend[s] ma liberté et maintenant sans... sono qui nella isola di Man.

The passage in French is self-explanatory: he was no longer welcome at Heeley, where he was looked upon as a mad dog (*un chien enragé*). More obscure is the meaning of the next three and a half lines in Italian:

Febbrajo. Lunedì 5° 1877. Mi trovo nella casa della Signora W è [e?] nella stessa condizione come era [ero?] dianzi. Ma non! a dispetto di tutto so bene que *tu* m’ami sempre sempre come nei tempi passati e resterò costante durante la vita mia – è ben corta...

[I am at Mrs. W’s; she is/ I am in the same condition as before. Yet no! I know very well that *you* love me always, always as in the past; I will remain faithful [to you] for the rest of my life... life is so short.]

The few incoherent words of the entry for 29 March 1877 express his consciousness that he wished to break away from England and resume the roaming life. “*Maintenant pour la vie française... Je n’écriverai [sic] plus... Viva pour le vagabondage.*” Indeed by 2 June he was in Brittany, where he stayed for a full year, returning to London via Havre and Southampton on 1 June 1878. His adventures during those twelve months make fairly mild reading compared with those of earlier and later years. His main occupation was sketching, which kept him on the move constantly, appreciative of the beauties of the landscape, of the striking features of ecclesiastical architecture, of the peculiarities of the habitat and of the characteristics of the local population. Always attentive to sharp practice in hotels and elsewhere, he occasionally wrote down remarks like the following, which free thinkers would not have disapproved of:

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A painting by John Wood Shortridge (Courtesy of Betty Everson)

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“Priests seem to drive a good business here in the confessional.” More generally he was fascinated by the manners of the natives, and a good many jottings convey the atmosphere of the period as well as his attitude towards the other sex. Thus on 19 August, while at Concarneau, whose whole population, he says, he found in the water, he sat “on the rocks most of the day to study female anatomy which one sees here to its full advantage.” On 5 September he candidly remarked: “No need to hunt long for women here. Some fine made ones too amongst them.” During his long stay in Brittany he would mostly walk from one village or town to the next, often staying in miserable country inns, and make innumerable sketches.

Except for a big gap during the autumn and winter of 1877-1878, he kept his diary regularly, giving graphic accounts of his long tramps in the countryside. His garb, not only then but probably at all times, must have been quite unconventional, and he noted on several occasions that he had difficulties in finding a room for the night, being “regarded as suspicious,” but nowhere, despite a mode of life that might have told on his health, does he report having been seriously ill. With haphazard arrangements, with disorderliness he put up without grumbling. Indeed there is abundant evidence that he welcomed rather than disliked life *à la bohémienne*, a phrase which he himself used, and Gissing’s account of the state of things he found in the Villa Cozzolino, the Shortridges’ home in the glorious surroundings of Massa Lubrense, ten years later, does not give the lie to this assumption. In Brittany it was most definitely the life of an itinerant artist that he led and his diary suggests that he liked it, even prided himself on it. Along the roads one would find him in company with all sorts of humble people who could only afford to travel on foot, tinkers for example, hence frequent misconceptions about his capacities, purposes and character, hence also requests from distrustful gendarmes to produce his passport. In early May he moved, with a friend and a dog called Jack, on to Normandy, and on the 9th, after stopping in Caen, where they put up in the Hotel Saint-Pierre, they were mistaken for two showmen with a performing dog. “Both of us looked seedy after our long tramping. Jan’s long beard, old castor and blouse, both our sacks and Jack attracted quite a crowd who at length got impatient and asked when we were going to commence. I had to shove J. into a cab with the traps and break away to get clear of them all.”

He was now quite near to the home of his former landlord at Touques, M. Chrétien. “Poor

old Touques,” he exclaimed. “Found all same as usual.” The next sentence in this entry for 13 May 1878 draws a line under the Breton adventure: “Was here about a month [actually a fortnight] at work over sketches when letter came saying I was to clear to the States to look for Herbert. Set out with first boat from Havre to Southampton. On to London at once.” Then to Sheffield and after one or two days’ rest, to Liverpool, where he took “a ticket on the S. Algeria for New York.” With the entry for 17 June, when he was still on board, the daily entries come to an end. On a new page Shortridge cast a backward glance: “This journal neglected for many years [several only, to all appearances] I now resume from memory just noting the principal things. I landed in New York and after 2 days’ halt proceeded on by Albany to Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Saw Niagara. Then on to township of Mona Road where I found Herbert. From there both of us left for Hartford Connecticut and walked on to South Glastonbury to see my old friends the Miller family. What a hearty welcome! Large family. Wife not strong and no means... Stopt there 2 or 3 months.”

## VII

The great gap in our knowledge of Shortridge’s life lies between mid-1878 and early 1881, when his first child, Jessie (born 1 November 1881), was conceived, and it is in some ways especially unfortunate as it leaves almost entirely in the dark the circumstances under which he became acquainted with the Espositos in Capri. The story, as known among the family, is that Shortridge having fallen seriously ill, Carmela attended on him, and that he was impressed by her honesty. Yet the gap in our knowledge may not be quite as large as it looks. The album or autograph book we have several times referred to contains a number of sketches which attest that Shortridge revisited Sicily in 1880. He sketched the entrance to the Ear of Dionysius in Syracuse as well as an old portal in Castrogiovanni. During a stay in Girgenti (now called Agrigento), he drew the Temple of Juno Lacinia, which he called “Temple Junon Lucine”. In the summer of that year he must have been in Capri, as the album contains a drawing of a mandolin, dated “Capri, le 21 Août 1880,” and dedicated to Shortridge by one Nikola Masic, of whom we know nothing. A self-portrait in pencil, also dated 1880, shows him with a beard. Even more interesting is a fragment of a letter from Shortridge to an unnamed uncle in the possession of Mrs Olive Mary Shortridge, née Gifford, Rolf’s widow. The letter, which was probably addressed to his uncle and guardian Alfred Sellars, who was in charge of his financial affairs, is

mainly concerned with the possible purchase of a house on the island of Capri. The mention of Herbert implies a post-1878 date, some time in 1879 or 1880. The letter shows its author in a light that his diaries never do; and it reveals him at a time when, still a bachelor, he had rented rooms for a year.

...is a place up in Caprile on the other end of the Island a fellow wants to sell me for £280. A fine garden well planted with all the fruit trees one finds here, 3 good bedrooms, 1 eating room, canteen, good cellars, fine terrace and kitchen and place for a studio. It has a magnificent view from the terrace.

[sketch]

I have tried to give you an idea of it. This is from the terrace or roof which are all flat here

and you see miles away to the islands of Ischia and Procida and then the Appenines in the distance. I could never be [illegible word] with other houses and the only bother is that it is such a way up from the sea. Another spot I should like is on the sea shore with the outlook something like this. It is a small [sketch] plot of ground well planted with olives and vines and I could run up to rooms and a studio for 200£ and it would always sell well. One must think about such things well though ere commencing. The dark masses in this scribble are remains of an old palace of Tiberius Caesar that I could get along with it I think and the two blocks of masonry in the water would make a fine bath and boat house the view spreads all over the Bay of Naples and one can always see Posilippo, Camaldoli, Naples, Portici, Torre del Greco, Torre del Annunziata, Pompei, Vesuvius, Castelamare, Sorrento, Mount St Angelo and Massa. In clear weather the Abruzzi mountains overtop all and the whole bay is one smooth mass of pure cobalt blue.

...after. In the best hotel you would only spend 5s a day all included. Herbert would be a first class guard and I am sure you would feel much better for such a trip. I have taken my rooms for a year, rent 9£, bed linen and washing included, but shall lock up in the spring and go to Tunis for a month or two if well enough. Come back here unless fellows commence to come over. I have learnt a lot here this summer but have a lot to learn yet ere I turn out anything worth seeing. Am trying oils more now. As for sketch [end of line missing] so much bother in the post but I will send on two when Bert returns or you can plunder folios if you come over. There is a fearful amount of rubbish but you might pick something out to suit you. No there are no old prints [?] about. I pick up here and there odds and ends and in a few years will rake together quite a lot. My studio does not look bad as it is with what I have. I think I will make this my head quarters and keep bachelor's hall. If I could get hold of a small cottage I think I would buy it for property will rise here in a few years fearfully. There...

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I am glad your health is better but am sure it would be much better still if you would come down here for a while. It is now dark so no more give love to all and accept the same from your affectionate Nephew

J W Shortridge

Love to D<sup>r</sup> W[ood] and tell him I will write soon.

With the Espositos' entry upon the scene we somehow penetrate into Gissing territory, but Gissing had nothing to record in his diary concerning Shortridge's early days with the family. Undoubtedly the move from Capri to Massa Lubrense was made some time after the birth of Kate, the third daughter, when a larger house became necessary, and the fact that Gissing in December 1888 visited a home that was still unfinished and uncomfortable confirms this. The ledger containing Diary A fortunately holds various documents which throw light on those years and among them is to be found a copy, in Shortridge's own hand, of a letter which shows him as an affectionate father when Jessie was nearly three and Nina not quite one year old. It was meant to be read by them when they had grown and learnt some English.

Sept 8th 1884

My bonnie little lasses,

Thinking these few lines will afford you pleasure I commence to write you letters now and then, so in future years you can look back to the life you led when children in Capri.

To-day we are all rather in a disturbed state. The cholera which landed some few months back in France has travelled slowly down the Italian coast. For a few days it has been raging in Naples. All communication was cut at once and Capri declared shut up from all traffic. In spite of all, to-day the first case has landed in Capri. Poor Giuseppe a man I know has been attacked, but is not yet dead. To-day your good mother has been very uneasy on your account and mine, no thought of self, her principal thoughts are for you both. My little blond Jessie, so full of mischief and excuses. How you have bothered me today in the garden, running in every direction but where you ought with your little bare feet. "To help Papa"!! That is your cry. God bless you and carry you through life happily my little darling! And little Nannie who cannot yet toddle, how bonnie you are with your little chubby face and limbs. Full of good humour and so fond of playing in my basket of spare pipes. How you have crawled about today showing things with your finger and holding up your little face to give a coaxing kiss. God bless and preserve both of you... In the old fort [possibly the Fortino, on Lo Capo], our home, we have been very quiet today. I have worked most of the day in the garden, clearing up things and your dear mother in

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the house. You Jessie are now so full of merry mischief and when you get into a pickle, so full of comical excuses that mother and I must e'en excuse you, my bonnie lassie. When I ask you, do you love me, how you twine your bonnie little warm arms round my neck and kiss me with a "Si papa, una mamma mia d'amore." Poor little Nannie cannot yet speak, only to say "mangiare" and how dear you both were today between us both at table and Jessie filling up Nannie's mouth, always ready, and you Jessie acting like a little mother. Nannie today has made her first step, such a poor little uncertain toddle, may it lead you on little darling to a happy future under God's protection. My eyes are now getting tired as tis growing dark. Let us see what the morrow will bring forth. God guard you both and your good mother. Your loving father JWS.

Another letter, written twenty months later, offers evidence that the family was still living in Capri.

May 3rd 1886

To my bonnie affectionate little Nannie. Fast asleep at my side in the large saloon in the old fort at Capri. Sunburnt little face, bonnie blown hair and sweetly curved mouth. Know ye how I love thee little one? Thickset, healthy little body, smuggled up in my father's old plaidie and such a good sweet sleep. May thou always enjoy such, little one!

Jessie always on the move and singing full of joy and fun manufacturing dolls in the far room.

Fat little Kittie cooing away in her cradle and Narella crooning away.

Mother on the rocks fishing. All quiet around us. Salutations to all three my children from your father.

JWS

From another sheet we learn that on 10 January 1886 the proud father "weighed our three little lasses and they turned the scale: Jessie 36lbs Nina 31lbs Kate 19lbs," while from others we can obtain information on Shortridge's income and expenses during the years 1884-1886. Every year he would "draw from the estate 1000 £ sterling = 25000 francs," the franc and the lira being then of equal value. If some entries are rather difficult to analyse properly, others clearly indicate that Shortridge handled large sums of money and that he lent money at 6 per cent

interest. For instance he reckoned that the interests due to him for 1887 amounted to 1,092.50 francs and moneys in hand for the same year to 27,921.90.

Miscellaneous documents inserted before the back cover would be of some interest to a historian of the family. A list of hotels in Brittany shows that in 1878 Shortridge stayed in

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thirty-six establishments ranging from the Hôtel des voyageurs at Châteaulin to the Colombe blanche at Pontivy. A card which reads "In Affectionate Remembrance of Richard Shortridge, who died July 13th 1865, Aged 35 years" speaks for itself. So does a similar card commemorating "William Shortridge, who died May 5th 1877, Aged 40 Years and was this day interred at Heeley Church/ Myrtle Hill. May 10th 1877."<sup>25</sup> This uncle, as we have seen, had married Faith Rhodes, who outlived him by fifty-two years. A photograph annotated by one of Shortridge's children shows us their own Uncle Dick (Richard Parkinson Leach Shortridge) with Aunt Nell, whom Gissing met at Acton in 1889, and cousin Nell King, a daughter of Sarah Shortridge by her first husband George William King. Another photograph taken on a lawn represents "Father and Rolf at Falmouth," in the mid-1890s. Two articles entitled "Concert at Budock" and "Concert at Falmouth," both in aid of the Transvaal War Fund, tell us that the Misses Shortridge, that is the three eldest daughters, participated in these concerts with distinct success (one of them, probably Jessie, in Italian costume, played a mandolin solo and sang an Italian song, and all three played in the mandolin band) in these Cornish localities, probably about 1900. A press-cutting of March 1916 is an obituary of Dr. Thomas Wood Shortridge, Shortridge's brother, who died in Honiton, Devon. It gives a fair amount of information on his career and relatives, though none understandably on the brother who had exiled himself in New Zealand. A photograph, taken in winter, of Chipping House, Heeley, Sheffield, is correctly identified as the family home while another, which shows the tomb of John Shortridge (1804-1869), the wealthy manufacturer, is annotated "Jock at grandfather's tombstone. It would be great grandfather to us." Last but not least, a small advertisement inserted in some newspaper on New Year's Eve 1877 reveals that at that time Shortridge was thinking of following a career: "A Young Gentleman, aged 24, wishes to find Employment in a Merchant's Office. Can speak and write German, French, and Italian fluently, having resided two years in each country. Present salary not so much an object as an insight into business. – Address J.W.S., No. 2, College-street, North Liverpool."<sup>26</sup>

## VIII

The history of the Shortridge family after the dramatic letter to Gissing of August 1903 is known essentially through the papers currently in the hands of Mrs. Betty Everson and her

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cousin Mrs. Jocelyn Bigley. They confirm what Shortridge wrote in that letter, namely that Carmela, who lived in the Isle of Man,<sup>27</sup> kept "two little ones" – Ruth, who was about thirteen, and Eric, her youngest child, born in 1902. Eric was to remain with his mother until after his father's death, and Ruth, as we shall see presently, until her father's trip to Europe a few years after settling in New Zealand. The photograph of Shortridge sitting with seven of his eight surviving children, which was published in volume 9 of Gissing's *Letters* and which we reproduce here, shows Ruth, perhaps a little short of twenty, as she was about 1910.

Father and children did sail to Auckland, New Zealand, as planned, settling at nearby Birkenhead, on the Main Road, where they were still living as late as 1912. Considering that the New Zealand press, which had reviewed some of his novels, reported Gissing's death, and duly



noticed his posthumous works, Shortridge probably heard of it without much delay. Or perhaps he heard through friends or relatives in England who knew they were acquainted. About the children's education, first in Italy, then in England and finally in New Zealand, little is known, but it can at least be asserted that both Jock and Rolf attended the Seddon Memorial Technical College in Wellesley Street, Auckland, an establishment named after the former Prime Minister, Richard Seddon. Shortridge's very substantial income from the family estate made salaried work in his own case quite unnecessary. He went on sketching and painting and certainly added much to his personal collection of watercolours, of which Gissing had seen some fine ones. A portrait of Carmela, an oil portrait reproduced from a large painting done when she was still quite young, may conceivably be his own work. It must date back to the same period as a faded photograph on which Carmela and her parents as well as Shortridge and his brother Herbert are recognizable, standing or sitting in a yard. The epistolary relics that enable us to follow Shortridge during the eighteen years he was to spend in New Zealand are very few, but three of them must be mentioned. The first is a Swiss illustrated postcard sent on 28 January 1907 by one A. Destrelaz of Lausanne. It is addressed to J. Shortridge c/o Signor A. Rocca, 257 Chiaia, Naples and is the only written evidence available that Shortridge once returned to Europe from Auckland (one of the purposes of his journey, according to members of his family, was to recover old debts). And the message on the card – "Best wishes for your happy meeting with your daughter" – establishes that it was then, over three years after leaving Tideswell, Derbyshire, that he took Ruth to New Zealand, probably collecting her in England on his way back home.

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John Wood Shortridge with seven of his children. From left to right, back row: Nina, Rolf, Jessie; middle row: Ruth, Kate; front row: Jock, Nora (Courtesy Betty Everson)



Carmela as a young woman (Courtesy Betty Everson)

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A letter, headed and dated “Birkenhead. Auckland. N. Z. July 3rd 1910,” survives, which Shortridge wrote to “My dear Bert,” that is Albert William Smith, Kate’s future husband, who had recently gone to Fiji, to work for at least six months. Shortridge had been at the Great Barrier Island for two weeks, and he gave Smith news of the family. Since Ruth is mentioned in the letter as being present in the family group in Birkenhead, and since she is also present in the family photograph, all doubts concerning the identity of the daughter whom Carmela had kept with her in England and the movements of the Shortridges during the first decade of the century are dispelled. Shortridge’s letter makes it clear that he was already thinking of leaving Birkenhead if he could find a suitable estate. His project materialized about 1913 when he moved to Opuia, after Jock had visited a farm for sale there, on the Bay of Islands, some 100 miles north of Auckland. It was an extensive and attractive piece of land with steep hills on which there had been a Maori Pa,<sup>28</sup> the only access to it being up a tidal creek. The farm was eventually to be divided into two halves which were cultivated by Jock and Rolf in partnership. The part that belonged to Rolf was cleared of all the trees that had been planted by his father, and later sold to Fritz Hundertwasser (born 1928), the renowned Austrian artist influenced by Surrealism, then by Klimt and the painters of the Sezession, who, we are told, has grown trees all over it again, and plans to leave it to the nation. At Opuia, with Nina, Jock and Rolf around him, Shortridge supervised the work on the farm, but did not work personally. He remained to the end first and foremost an artist.

The last letter of biographical interest that has been preserved is from a correspondent he had known in the Isle of Man, which, the letter says, Shortridge had left in December 1902. The writer was a rather sententious old man named James Douglas, who remembered Shortridge’s many kindnesses to him and whose spirits were seriously affected by the war (he was writing on 1 January 1918). He had just received a letter from one of Shortridge’s daughters, probably Nora, who told him that her father had had a stroke and could not hold a pen. The old man’s response is essentially a message of sympathy: “Well Mr Shortridge! had I the pen of a George Gissing, I might, perhaps convey to you, how painfully shocked I was to read of your infliction [*sic*], it was a great blow to me, and, figuratively speaking, hit me right between the eyes.” Besides the unexpected allusion to Gissing, which doubtless implies that Shortridge had told Douglas about his acquaintance with the novelist and that Douglas was familiar with his work,

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a passage of the letter adds emphasis to the confession of great domestic unhappiness made to Gissing in 1903:

I am grievously troubled about your misfortune, all last night I lay awake tossing about in bed thinking about you & all your family; the anxious time you experienced in the Isle of Man, the surprising strength of character that enabled you to pack up & quit an environment that was redolent with painful memories, your long, long journey into, as it were, the great Unknown, the trials, perplexities, and anxieties, accompanied with the inevitable postponement before you got settled into a home of your own. You must have had the heart of a Lion & nerves of steel, with unlimited faith to have accomplished what, to some men, would never have been attempted & certainly never successfully accomplished.

It seems that Shortridge did not completely recover from this severe blow of fate. He died on 31 August 1921 and was buried at Russell, north of Opuā, also on the Bay of Islands. A number of his descendants still live in that beautiful part of New Zealand.

## IX

The posthumous episode still to be related is as surprising as many of the earlier ones. After their father's death, Jock and Rolf decided to fetch Carmela, who was then aged sixty-six, from the Isle of Man. The two elder brothers paid for their mother's and their brother Eric's fare to New Zealand and arranged for them to live in a house in the Avondale-New Lynn area of Auckland. William Rolf Calder, Jessie's younger son, said the family were a little sorry they had brought Carmela down under, as she was a bit of a tartar – a word defined in a current dictionary as a “fierce person with a violent temper.” Betty Everson recollects an incident in her childhood when her cousin Bert Bongard having been cheeky to their grandmother, the latter threw a bottle of marmite at him, an incident which left her aghast. However, when asked to reminisce about Carmela, Mrs. Everson's mother said she was quite placid. At least one photograph of her, where she appears with some of her descendants around her, Ruth and her children Ernest and Nina, has been preserved. She looks a bit dowdy and in good humour. A son of Ruth, Jack Bongard, who knew her for about twenty years, replied to an enquiry: “As far as Carmela my grandmother is concerned, I remember her very well, and used to come up from Hamilton [a city about sixty miles south of Auckland] and spend some of my school holidays with her and Uncle Eric, and really enjoyed their company as I did the Shortridge family at

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Opuā.” In another letter he was still more explicit: “Carmela and I were great friends. She was a marvellous old woman and I loved her very much. I never knew my grandfather Shortridge [Jack Bongard would have been about six when John Wood Shortridge died; he was born on 5 November 1915], but granny Shortridge had a ‘second sense.’ She would always know when we travelled up to New Lynn (Auckland) and was prepared for us although we never let her know we were coming. I only wish she had lived a little longer. She was absolutely marvellous.” Doubtless she had her good and her bad moments, and she was rather temperamental, as indeed was her husband. It must be stressed that Carmela was a sorely tried woman. She was born in an environment which by no means predisposed her to share the life of a man like John Wood Shortridge, who was a widely travelled artist and could speak and write four languages. She bore him ten children, two of whom died in infancy, and she can objectively be seen as somewhat of a domestic slave. That she eventually succeeded in expressing herself in English is very much to her credit.<sup>29</sup> Just as her husband lived with his children and without her in New Zealand for nearly two decades, she lived there with them but without him for some twenty years. These equal shares somehow satisfy one's sense of equity. Carmela died on 20 November

1941, in the darkest days of the Second World War. She was buried in the Catholic section of Waikumete Cemetery in Glen Eden, Auckland.

Fifty years passed before the slightest sign of scholarly interest in the Gissing-Shortridge relationship was noticeable. Alfred Gissing, in his unpublished biography of his father, had been content to write that, somewhat unexpectedly, John Wood Shortridge had not lost all contact with his acquaintance of the late 1880s, and to quote at length from the long letter in his possession which by great good luck had escaped destruction. This letter, when it became available in 1990, provided an incentive to an inquiry which, on the face of it, looked rather hopeless but which, should it prove successful, might enable one to reconstruct the history of the two men's relationship and to do them justice. In retrospect one sees pretty clearly why they took to each other so easily. They had much in common. Besides their Yorkshire origins, with Wakefield as a focal point, they shared a large number of cultural values. Because both men were, each in his own way, social misfits, black sheep in their respective families, they felt more at ease on the Continent, especially in Italy, than in their native country. The Italian portions of their diaries bear strong resemblances which are not to be accounted for by the sole fact that

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they often visited the same places and responded to the same topographical, historical and artistic aspects of the foreign world around them. Occasionally, if contexts were disregarded, some of their diary entries might be exchanged without any risk of the tampering being detected. With hypocrisy and smugness they had no patience. Gissing would have chuckled over the following remark in Diary B made on 16 January 1875 after a visit to the Vatican: "A Venus hid in a confounded iron drapery invented by some of these sanctimonious popish scamps who have been schocked [*sic*] by its nudity." As previously suggested, Gissing, who had a good knowledge of German, French and Italian, must have been pleased that his friend was also able to speak those three languages. Both of them bohemians and travellers, they could compare notes on various places which they had seen in very different moods (Gissing haunted by his chronic poverty until the mid-1890s, Shortridge largely unconcerned with money matters): Paris, where we find them at the Morgue and at the Cimetière du Père La Chaise, but also, Venice, Boston and the Niagara Falls. They must have had opportunities to discuss many things of common interest, particularly on Gissing's second visit to Naples, but probably remained unaware of not a few aspects of each other's past, when they parted on 20 January 1890, the last time they saw each other. In 1903 Gissing was "filled in" on the next thirteen or fourteen years in his friend's life, but we know nothing of the account he gave of himself in his reply. He is not likely to have gone into details. His marriage to Edith Underwood had ended disastrously, he had two sons, he now lived with a Frenchwoman who had translated some of his work, and above all he was in very poor health and could not look ahead confidently. If Shortridge ever came to know all the basic facts of Gissing's life, it must needs have been through Morley Roberts's *roman à clef*, *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*. Although the book was reviewed in that part of the world,<sup>30</sup> where a George Bell Colonial edition was available, it is doubtful whether, either in Auckland or on his large estate at Opuā, he ever became aware of its existence, unless, as in the case of Gissing's death, he was told by someone in England. So only the two men's descendants are now in a position to take in a full view of what was during two short periods, over a hundred years ago, a warm relationship between a proud intellectual novelist and a potentially powerful artist.<sup>31</sup>

[For their generous assistance during the research on which this article is based, we wish to give our warmest thanks to Elizabeth Mary Everson, Kenneth and Jocelyn Bigley, Francesco

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Badolato, Anthony Petyt, Bouwe Postmus, as well as to Mary Cobeldick, Librarian, Research Centre, Alexander Turnbull Library, New Zealand.]

<sup>22</sup>Shortridge is quoting from ch. 98 of Silvio Pellico's *Le mie prigioni* (1832), a book, incidentally, which Gissing bought in Naples and read in November 1888, before he met his fellow-countryman. The quotation can more conveniently be found on p. 595 of Pellico's *Opere scelte* (Turin [1954], third edition, 1968). We give it above in its correct form, not in Shortridge's slightly faulty transcription. Curiously, where the original reads *havvi*, that is, in modern Italian *vi sono* or *ci sono*, Shortridge wrote *sonvi*.

<sup>23</sup>He also appears in the album, in which Shortridge wrote: "Young American friend Harry Wolfe Wiest Roma Feb 15/75 York Penn. USA." Several other entries in the album were made in 1875: a sixteen-line poem entitled "The Signs of the Times," signed Arthur Griffith and dated "Rome Feb 15 1875," and a poem by Tom Wood Shortridge, "Dreaming," dated "Sheffield 1875."

<sup>24</sup>Elsie, Nanette and K. J. are still unidentified. Tom was probably his cousin Thomas King, one of the three sons of his aunt Sarah Sellars.

<sup>25</sup>Let us repeat that William Shortridge (1837-1877) was the fourth child of John Shortridge and Ellen Leach, therefore an uncle of John Wood Shortridge.

<sup>26</sup>Also worth noting is the presence in the album of a late poem by Shortridge, "Little Jock," dated "Wallace Ritson. Workington. April 2nd 1899," accompanied by a drawing and the following note: "Entrance to Palazzo Ricciardi Massa Lubrense, near Sorrento Italy where Jock was born JSW."

<sup>27</sup>Two photographs of Bella Cotten, the house in which the Shortridges lived, have been preserved by the family. It is a large, fairly plain house, built in a park. Carmela did not live permanently in that house after her husband, together with six of their children, left her. In 1904, according to Kelly's Directory, she was living at 54 Sheaf Gardens, Sheffield, where, her descendants tell us, Shortridge had bought three houses: one to serve as a home for her and the two children she had kept, the others to be rented out by her for an income. From 1908 to 1910 she was to be found at 99 Clough Road, according to White's Directory of Sheffield, in which she is described as "householder."

<sup>28</sup>A *pa* is a native fort or fortified village in New Zealand.

<sup>29</sup>A postcard that Carmela sent to her son Rolf (perhaps in 1903) shows that she was then capable of writing English fairly well. And Jocelyn Bigley confirmed that Carmela managed to speak English – doubtless not faultlessly, as she remembered Carmela once saying to her son Jock: "I am ill and you don't dare [care] if I die in the night." Mrs. Everson also commented on the English of her aunts, in a letter to us written in 1993: "Aunts Jessie and Nina had a strong accent and we used to tease Jessie when she couldn't get the English out quickly enough and would lapse into Italian."

<sup>30</sup>A number of reviews have been found in the Australian press as well as in New Zealand newspapers for 1913, notably in the *Otago Daily Times* (Dunedin), on 4 January, p. 4; the *New Zealand Graphic and New Zealand Mail* (Auckland), 8 January, p. 47; the *New Zealand Times*

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(Wellington), 18 January, p. 10; the *Press* (Christchurch), 1 February, p. 9; the *Triad* (Wellington), 10 February, pp. 37-38.

<sup>31</sup>A few paintings and drawings are still in the possession of the family. Outside the family and the world of readers interested in Gissing, the name of John Wood Shortridge seems to be forgotten. The only (partly inaccurate) mention of him we have found in a recent book occurs in James Money's *Capri: Island of Pleasure* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986, p. 42): "...

[August] Weber became a paying guest of the [Spadaro] family, but, when in October 1880 they asked him to go with them to Capri, he declined and instead found a small grotto at the foot of the Castiglione, which, with the help of a bricklayer, he turned into a little house. In 1882, for 5 lire a month, he rented a room in the *fortino* – a relic of the British/French occupation – which had just been bought by John Shortridge, a British merchant-seaman and his Sorrentine wife, Carmela Esposito.”

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#### Notes and News

Current news from England has been largely eclipsed by the Amsterdam Conference and various projects concerning Gissing's interest in and relationship with Italy, but it would be artificial to see these different areas as separated by hard and fast lines. The catalogue of the Idle Booksellers, that is Ros Stinton and Michael Compton, is a link between English, American, Japanese, Italian, Swedish, German, Swiss, Dutch and French publications, and Amsterdam where, for three days, they were for sale. The past tense is doubly justified in that some of the items being the single copies in stock, they are no longer available. Five hundred items are listed, the vast majority being books by Gissing, the rest books about him and books of related interest. Among the scarcest items are venerable three-deckers, the First Edition Club pamphlet *Two Letters from George Gissing to Joseph Conrad*, T. W. Gissing's botanical works in various bindings and a number of early editions of the novels that are rarely seen in catalogues, as well as translations of the novels, short stories and *By the Ionian Sea*. Not every day does one have a chance to see the first six impressions of *Henry Ryecroft* side by side, or the first English and American editions of *Our Friend the Charlatan*.

Arlene Young, who read a paper on “Eve and Rhoda: Doubled Enigma” at the Amsterdam Conference, would like all readers of the *Journal*, and indeed anybody interested in the current availability of *The Odd Women* to know that her edition of the book (Broadview Press,

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Canada) is still in print. Unfounded rumours to the contrary had been set afloat by some English booksellers a few month ago.

Innumerable must have been over the years the brief yet significant allusions to Gissing in little known magazines that have been overlooked in the bibliographical pages of this journal. As often as not they seem to have been inspired by *New Grub Street*, *The Odd Women* or *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. In recent years Harold Biffen was saluted twice in different contexts by William Levy, one of the participants in the Amsterdam Conference. The first time in the review of *Frisk*, by Dennis Cooper in the December 1993-January 1994 number of *American Book Review* (Boulder, Colorado), p.13, the second in no. 56 (1996) of *Exquisite Corpse* (Normal, Illinois), in “Hanging Out with Zalman Schneour,” p. 26. The oddity of ill-fated Harold and his mythical *Mr. Bailey, Grocer* seems to appeal to Mr. Levy's sense of fun.

A curious paragraph entitled “What's in a name?” was published in the *Wakefield Express* for 6 July, p. 8. “A hotel near Wakefield is naming rooms after famous local people and is looking for suggestions for its Wakefield wing.” The Milford Lodge Hotel, A1 Great North Road, Peckfield, Leeds, LS25 5LQ has refurbished its premises and is dedicating wings to each of its four neighbouring districts – Wakefield, Leeds, Selby and York. “Suggestions so far for the Wakefield wing include Victorian novelist George Gissing or singer Jane Macdonald of the

Cruise television programme.” It seems that any subscriber to the *Journal* travelling north may have a chance from now on of sleeping in the “Gissing room.”

Any book on Seascale, where the Gissing family spent their holidays on various occasions from the late 1860s to the late 1880s, invites consultation. Tony Petyt, the hon. sec. of the Gissing Trust, has drawn our attention to the latest volume of the kind, *Seascale: The Village of Seascale, the History and its People*, a small quarto of 310 pages in blue card covers with 32 illustrations. The author, Neville Ramsden, has done much historical and genealogical research, and he has found the late Frank Woodman’s article in the *Gissing Newsletter* for October 1980. The Tyson family, who appear in Vols. I to III of the *Collected Letters*, will be found on many pages of Mr. Ramsden’s book. Old views of the village and of the Scawfell Hotel help one to visualize the environment with which Gissing was familiar.

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#### Recent Publications

##### Volume

George Gissing, *La terra del sole: Lettere dall’Italia e dalla Grecia (1888-1898)*, ed. Francesco Badolato, Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino Editore, 1999. Pictorial card covers. Gissing’s letters from Italy and Greece, with illustrations by Leo de Littrow, Gissing and Maria Dimitriadou. 240 pages. Lire 24,000. ISBN 88-7284-772-9.

##### Articles, reviews, etc

David Englander and Rosemary O’Day (eds.), *Retrieved Riches: Social Investigation in Britain 1840-1914*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995. Contains a chapter on “Women and Social Investigation: Clara Collet and Beatrice Potter” by Rosemary O’Day, interspersed with references to Gissing.

Mark Samuels Lasner, *The Yellow Book: A Checklist and Index*, London: The Eighteen Nineties Society, 1998. Occasional Series No. 8. A useful volume. Gissing appears on pp. 5, 15 and 43.

Maria Dimitriadou, “George Gissing, *Prooptike* (Athens), February 1999, p. 1. Short article in English by a Greek admirer of Gissing. With portrait of Gissing by Lily Waldron.

Tim Minogue, “The Old ’Un’s Diary,” *The Oldie* (London), May 1999, no. 122, pp. 6-7.

Francesco Badolato, “Le Memorie di Brian Ború Dunne,” *Il Corriere di Roma*, 15 June 1999, p. 15. On Gissing in Siena and Rome.

Jonathan Keates, “Hearing giggles in the Vatican,” *Spectator*, 11 September 1999, pp. 41-42. Review of *With Gissing in Italy*.

Ken Faig, “An Amateur Journalist Sighting?,” *Leather or Prunella* (A Journal of Indifferent Stuff), October 1999, pp. 1-4. Review of *With Gissing in Italy*.

Michael Cole, *Literature: Annual Register of Book Values*, London: The Clique, 1999. For Gissing books sold in 1998, see pp. 90-92.

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### Information for Contributors

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

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