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“More than most men am I dependent on sympathy to bring out the best that is in me.”
Commonplace Book

“The Grandfather’s New Year’s Story” An Unpublished Story from Gissing’s Juvenilia

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After his well-documented period of exile in America, George Gissing returned to England in the autumn of 1877 and achieved almost immediate success with the publication of his revised “The Artist’s Child” in *Tinsleys’ Magazine* in January 1878. Little did he think that it would be March 1884 before another short story of his appeared in print. When success in short fiction eluded him, he tried his hand at producing essays, drama, poetry and non-fiction, replicating in some respects his experimental efforts at composition in early adolescence, much of which remains unpublished.

Of Gissing’s eclectic range of juvenilia, “The Grandfather’s New Year’s Story,” written when he was sixteen years old, undoubtedly bears the stamp of individuality and innovation, much in evidence in the author’s later work. For instance, at one level the story can be seen as an innovative reversal of Swift’s depressing account of the Struldbrugs in *Gulliver’s Travels*. Although the Years in Gissing’s story are similar to the Immortals in their ability to live forever, the Struldbrugs physically, the Years in memory, their behaviour towards one another differs dramatically. While the ancients of Luggnagg are “opinionative, peevish [...] incapable of friendship, and dead to all natural affection,”¹ the old Years, at the stroke of midnight, joyfully welcome the new into their fold: “All the old years gathered round the throne & began to offer presents to the young King.” For the writer to make such a conceptual leap reveals enormous promise in one so young.

Although it may have been sold by the late author’s family in the 1920s, the manuscript of “The Grandfather’s New Year’s Story” first became known to Gissing scholars and collectors in 1931. The story is listed on p. 699 of *American Book Prices Current* for that year, which states that the manuscript, signed with initials, is seven quarto pages long and was sold at auction on March 17 for \$65. (At the same sale several other well-known manuscripts were disposed of, either by the Gissing family or previous collectors, among them “Reminiscences of My Father” and a set of charts about Gissing’s earnings from 1880 to 1898.) The manuscript is now held by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

It would appear that young Gissing wrote this story during the Christmas holidays 1873, for the narrative refers to the incoming New Year as 1874. A second year student at Owens College, he was at the time of writing (very likely to amuse his brothers and sisters, three of whom are named in the story) at home in Wakefield, and this short piece shows him following in his own way his father's example of celebrating the New Year. In "Reminiscences of My Father," he wrote of his parent: "Always read aloud Tennyson's 'Death of the Old Year' on New Year's Eve."² He meant the eight stanzas of Section CVI of *In Memoriam*.

¹ Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726 ; London: Penguin Classics, 1985), p. 257.

² Pierre Coustillas, "Gissing's Reminiscences of His Father: An Unpublished Manuscript," *English Literature in Transition 1880-1920*, Vol. 32 (1989), no. 4, pp. 419-39.

The Grandfather's New Year's Story

"Gran'pa" said little Nelly, when she had at last succeeded in climbing up onto the old gentleman's knee, "do tell us a pretty tale."

"Oh yes ! Please do !" said Maggie, "A very funny one to make us laugh."

"But you know what mama says," put in Willie, a thoughtful child. "Tales should instruct as well as amuse us." And all the children cried out together, "Oh yes, gran'pa, a tale, a tale !"

The old man thought for a moment, & then, looking round on the rosy faces that were lit up with joy at the expectation of a story, he said, "Well, children, you shall have a story ; & I'll promise you Willie that you shall learn something from it. But it is such a very queer tale you'll perhaps think it foolish when I have finished."

"Shall we ! No, no, gran'pa !" cried all the children together. So the grandfather, smiling at their eagerness, began his tale:

"Well, my dear children, you must know I was sitting in the room by myself on New Year's Eve, after every one had gone to bed, & naughty thoughts began to come into my head. I felt discontented that all little children had gone out to parties & were enjoying themselves, but I was too old to go out. It didn't seem right that I could no longer dance as I used to do, & I thought that no one cared for me now I had got white hair and wore spectacles."

"Oh ! gran'pa," cried little Nelly, "that *was* naughty."

"Hush !" said the others quietly, & grandpapa went on.

"Yes, Nelly, it was naughty, & I knew it was, but I could not keep away the thoughts. Well, I had been like that for a short time, looking hard into the fire, when I began to fancy that one of the red coals looked like that

wooden Father Christmas that Willie brought home from the Christmas Tree. The likeness kept getting stronger & stronger, till at last the old man actually jumped out of the fire & stood in front of me. He had grown a little & his head reached up to my knee as I was sitting. I did not feel frightened, indeed I felt rather angry with him because he had brought me no presents & no invitations, so I only said 'Why ! How's this ? I thought you had left us a week ago !' 'So I did' said the old man with a white beard, 'so I did ; but do you see after I had gone I thought I had really treated you too badly, &, as you are old like myself, I began to think of some present to bring you. Yet I could find nothing to suit you, for my bag was full of toys only for the children. But the idea has just come into my head & I have come to invite you to see the christening of the New Year.' 'Indeed, I shall be very glad to come,' said I, & I began to feel something like I did when I was your age & going out to a party ; 'but,' & I remembered I was not so strong as I used to be, 'is it far?' 'Oh no !' cried Father Christmas, 'just step with me into the fire & we are there in a minute.' It was very queer but I did not feel in the least afraid. 'Give me your hand,' cried the old man. I gave him my hand & all at once found myself smaller than the kitten that was dozing on the rug. 'Now jump !' shouted Christmas, & at once we were on the lowest bar of the fire-place. We then walked through the fire, but, far from being disagreeable, it seemed to be a long passage, with red carpet on the floor, & flags of all colours hanging on the walls. Down the centre of the ceiling was a row of glittering lamps which gave such a dazzling light that I had to shade my eyes with my hand. The passage seemed to be a very long one, but at the end I could just see a streak of brighter light than even that which we were in. Just then I began to hear a sound of bells, which reminded me very much of the bells in the old church we visit every Sunday. However they seemed very far off & as I was anxious to reach the guest chamber I said nothing to my companion, & we walked on very quickly. Now too I regained my usual size, and everything around me grew in proportion. At last we drew near to the streak of light which turned out to come from behind two large folding doors, which were not quite closed. 'Here we are,' said my guide. 'But stop ! You must be dressed for the occasion' ; & he then took from the large bag which he carried with him a crown of holly, thick with berries, which he placed on my head, & then gave me a pair of gloves & a very thick scarf, both quite white. 'Your beard & hair are already white, I see,' said Father Christmas, & laughed heartily. I laughed too, for it seemed good fun then. Our loud laughing brought to the door the porter. He was the very image of the old man with the hour-glass that I have shown you so often in my scrap-book ; in fact he was Time himself.

He looked hard at me, but Father Christmas nodded to him & said, 'A friend of ours, all right. Happy new Year, when it comes !' We then passed on into what seemed to be the ante-room, but when we had turned our backs I could hear old Time grumbling to himself. 'Happy new Year indeed! I wonder who's that youngster he's got with him. Somebody that thinks himself old I'll be bound! Well, well, these young fellows now-a-days will be the death of me ! I've hard enough work to keep up with them as it is !'

We passed through another door & found ourselves in a banqueting hall, but so large that I could see nothing at the opposite side. In the middle of the room stood a font, ready for the christening, & round about it a great many tables spread with all sorts of good things. More curious however than all this was a long row of figures of old men standing on one side of the hall against the wall. It was impossible to see to the end of the row, but, as far as I could see, I noticed that they seemed to get older & older as they got further off. In front of them was a high throne, & on it was seated a figure very much like the old man nearest me in the row, but not quite so old, & having a golden crown on his head, with many other symbols of royalty. Everyone in the room, the person who seemed to be King included, had his eyes fixed on a spot in the centre of the ceiling. My curiosity was now raised to such a pitch that I could bear it no longer, & turning to Father Christmas, who like the others was staring at the ceiling, I asked him who all these queer old fellows might be. 'Those,' said he, 'who stand there in a row are the Years. They have all sat on the throne where old 1873 now sits, & they have all had to get down to make place for another, as he will have to do directly for the New Year. They do not always stand like that, they are waiting at present to see Young 1874, who will descend directly to be christened by his father, & then will take the old fellow's place.' He stopped speaking & stood quietly looking up at the ceiling. I looked in the same direction & saw a large cloud in the middle of the ceiling. Presently 1873 rose from his seat & walked down the steps to the bottom of the throne. As soon as he had reached the floor the cloud on the ceiling opened & the New Year appeared. He sank gently to the ground supported on each side by a clock with wings. I looked at the clocks & noticed the hands pointed exactly to five minutes to twelve. No one in the room moved or spoke, but I saw old Time peep through the door &, as he turned away, I heard him growl out 'Oh ! Very nice this ! Why, he's almost full grown already ! A fine race he'll lead me I've no doubt !' Old 1873 then led the New Year to the font & christened him, just as you, Nelly, were christened a short time ago. Just as he had finished the two clocks with wings began to

strike, &, at the same time, gently flew up to the ceiling. The minute they struck the twelfth time they entered the cloud. Then old 1873 took off his crown & placed it on the youngster's head, & '74 ascended the throne in state. Then began the merry-making. All the old years gathered round the throne & began to offer presents to the young King. First came a very old-fashioned year & offered him a beautiful dress woven from the purest snow-flakes. But the youngster was proud & would not take that. 'No,' said he, 'I will dress differently to that. Those kind of dresses for the New Year have quite gone out of fashion. Bring me a coat made of rain-drops, mixed with an occasional sun-beam, & a good scarf of real yellow fog. That shall be my coronation dress.' I then began to mix with the old years, & listen to their conversation. They grumbled very much at the youngster's presumption. 'The young rascal,' said a very old Year, 'why can't he be content with the fine old dress that we always have worn. But he's just like the rest of them, so forward !' Then another very old Year came walking up. He seemed to be much respected for they all made way for him, & I heard some of them whispering ; 'Here comes old 1564, listen how he'll brag.' He walked up & shook hands with '74, and said ; 'Well, I hope you'll have a lucky reign. You'll do well no doubt, but of course you can't be expected to give the world another *Shakespeare*.' Many other Years then came up, some of them very, very old, & all of them boasted of some great benefit they had conferred on the world. The last I noticed was – 'Wish you luck, youngster,' said he. 'By-the-by have you any presents for the girls & boys ? You remember I gave them The Chatterbox ; I'm afraid you've nothing that will please them so much.' 'Now,' said young '74, 'let's have a song.' And all the Years at once set up a loud song in praise of the New Year. They had no sooner begun however, than they made such a noise, that I woke up & found myself sitting in my armchair. Outside the bells were ringing in the New Year."

"Why ! You were asleep after all then, gran'pa ?" cried little Nelly.

"Of course I was children," replied gran'pa laughing. "Come let us go to supper."

GRG

"It is because nations tend to stupidity and baseness that mankind moves so slowly ; it is because individuals have a capacity for better things that it moves at all."

The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft, Spring XX

“The Decently Ignoble – or, the Ignobly Decent?”
George Gissing’s Fictional Clerks
(Concluded)

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III

Had the discussion of Edwin Reardon’s predicament proved Gissing’s final word on the subject of the clerk in late Victorian society, his reputation would have undoubtedly remained that of an essentially sympathetic, if admittedly subjective, observer of a then largely overlooked section of the urban population. But during the middle years of the 1890s Gissing’s approach to writing about characters from this group underwent a considerable shift of emphasis, one that forces us to separate his work into two discrete halves. From the latter period, largely abandoning the sensitive social idealism that dictated the depictions of Hood, Scawthorne and Reardon, Gissing refocused his attention on exploiting the counterparts of these earlier clerks for comic or ironic purposes. Whereas the former types had tended to embody Gissing’s personal sensitivity towards iniquitous aspects of modern society, the subsequent clerk characters were markedly distanced from their author. This separation permitted Gissing to invest the new characterisations with a lightness, and tendency towards mocking satire, which starkly contrasted with the qualities of gravity and earnestness that had previously prevailed. Employing this new perspective, Gissing revisited several of those themes that he had solemnly discussed in the earlier phase of his writing, often refiguring them with remarkably different inflections. Gissing’s facility in effecting this considerable and swift change is discussed by Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society*. Here, Williams plausibly argues that the novelist’s apparently passionate desire to expose social injustice (and implicitly to demand its eradication) was in fact a precariously held one, and one that could not withstand a more rigorous examination. It was particularly precarious, Williams suggested, because Gissing’s advocacy was the product of a personal rather than an altruistic attachment:

He [Gissing] came to be disillusioned, but the process of this, as one follows it in the novels, is less a discovery of reality than a document of a particular category of feeling, which we can call “negative identification.”

Williams then offers a long quotation from Osmond Waymark (taken from Gissing’s novel *The Unclassed* (1884)), whom he considers offers an

accurate self-diagnosis of the existence of this phenomenon: “That zeal on behalf of the suffering masses [I felt] was nothing more nor less than disguised zeal on behalf of my own starved passions.... I identified myself with the poor and ignorant ; I did not make their cause my own, but my own cause theirs.” Williams then returns to his argument:

This is the negative identification which has been responsible for a great deal of adolescent socialism and radicalism, in particular in the adolescent who is breaking away from (or, as in Gissing’s personal history, has fallen foul of) the social standards of his own class. The rebel (or, as in Gissing, the outcast.[...]) finds available to him an apparent cause, on behalf of the outcast of society, in a mood of rebellion. He identifies himself with this, often passionately. But the identification will involve an actual relationship, and, at this stage, the rebel faces his new crisis. It is not only that he will normally be reluctant to accept the discipline of the cause ; it is also, and more essentially, that the outcast class, whom he has thought of as noble (outcast = himself = noble) are in fact nothing of the kind, but are very mixed in character, containing very good and very bad, and in any case living in ways that differ from his own. I do not say that it is not then possible for him to go on ; there have been some useful rebels who began in this way. But clearly in the ordinary case there will be disillusion. The cause will not be precisely his cause ; the oppressed will have intentions and attachments and faults of their own. The rebel will react within his own terms: either violently – these people are a menace – ‘the brute domination of the quarter-educated mob’ ; or soberly – these people cannot be helped – reform is useless, we need a deep, underlying change.³¹

While Williams intended this argument to apply to the generalised poor in Gissing’s early fiction, it can be more specifically applied to his relationship with the “decently ignoble”³² of the clerk class. The extent to which Williams’ ideas are applicable to this group is evidenced in the changing nature of Gissing’s work after 1893.³³ Increasingly, after this time, Gissing’s clerks cease reflecting the image of what their author might have become, and are seen instead in the more detached manner that Williams predicted, as either pitiful or contemptible specimens.

In terms of Gissing’s changing position as it applies to this issue, we might see his novel *The Odd Women* (1893)³⁴ as representing a pivotal work. This text presents us with one character, Widdowson, who looks back to the social concern invested in the Gissing alter egos of the earlier novels ; and another, Newdick, who anticipates the later more cynical view of this group. Widdowson’s position in an identity parade that particularly embraces Hood (and before him Besant’s “hopeless clerks” and Mark Rutherford), is announced in a passage in which he (following his liberation via a legacy from office work) evokes Gissing’s now familiar bleak impression of the clerk’s life:

I have always hated office work, and business of every kind ; yet I could never see an opening in any other direction. I have been all my life a clerk – like so many

thousands of other men. Nowadays, if I happen to be in the City when all the clerks are coming away from business, I feel an inexpressible pity for them. I feel I should like to find two or three of the hardest driven, and just divide my superfluous income between them. A clerk's life – a life of the office without any hope of rising – that is a hideous fate! (p. 65)

But this show of general sympathy and fidelity to the clerk's cause is modified when refocused on the person of Newdick. Here, perfectly illustrated, is the conflict described by Williams in relation to Gissing's generalised sympathy for an oppressed group, and its infection and eventual dissolution through its concentration on a specific and disillusioning case. Newdick, although a distinctly minor character, manages to demonstrate Gissing's capacity to conform to, and augment, the stereotype of the ineffectual clerk: he is described as both "trembling and bloodless" and "musty and nervous" (pp. 179-80). It must be admitted that Newdick is more a comic than a tragic character, owing something to Dickens in his warning to Widdowson regarding a proposed visit to Nice and Cannes: "An immoral lot there. [...] Queer goings on [...] You have to eat at public tables, and you'd have all sorts of people trying to make acquaintance with Mrs. Widdowson" (p. 235). But even in his mild mockery of Newdick's provincial narrow-mindedness, Gissing's disdain for the provincial clerk is evident. And it is also demonstrably present in Gissing's establishment of Newdick's capacity to bore his company by holding forth "by the hour on the history of the business firm which he had served for a quarter of a century" (p. 232). This tedious subject, which "alone could animate him," was, the superior narrative voice announces, "the oddest [idea] of talk suitable to a drawing-room" (p. 232). Clearly Newdick, although apparently "a good, simple, unselfish fellow" (p. 232), is an individual incompatible with a more cultured society.

While Newdick's character is a mere sketch, occupying only a few pages of a three-volume novel, it appears to have alerted Gissing to the potential for characterisation of this type. Gissing realised, after writing Newdick, that the comic and/or pathetic clerk would be ideally suited to the requirements of the lucrative magazine market, which, in recognition of his growing reputation, had then begun to request his fiction. The reasons why the humble clerk was perfect for this format were twofold: firstly, the demand from editors for these tales favoured subject matter that concerned the lower middle class,³⁵ and secondly, clerks such as Newdick seemed well placed to provide the sort of comic or ironic twist with which these pieces conventionally concluded. For Gissing the completion of these new commissions was a strict matter of business,³⁶ and he undertook the writing

of them at speed: he completed more than thirty stories in the years 1895-96. This rapid output necessitated the employment of a writing formula which, in relation to his clerk characters, meant a division into two stock types: the pathetic, doomed victim, or the pretentious encroacher ; this division again complements Williams' "negative identification" theory. In the first category the clerk was required to be little more than underbred and inert, providing, like the "trembling and bloodless" Newdick, a physical embodiment of their unenviable lives: Thomas Bird in "The Salt of the Earth" (1894)³⁷ possesses the gait "of a man who takes no exercise beyond the daily walk to and from his desk" (p. 266) ; the man who "seemed to be some species of clerk" in "The Tout of Yarmouth Bridge" (1895)³⁸ presents a "bloodless face and a tired, anxious expression" (p. 212) ; while Robert Winter ("A Well-Meaning Man" (1895)),³⁹ has a "pallid, amiable countenance, [and an] air of nervous conscientiousness" (p. 219). Typical also of these characters (and a quality which distinguishes them from their earlier counterparts) is their weakness in using aspirates (their use of the collocation "'ig and 'at" – for high hat – is understandably familiar), and the fact that like the clerks in "Simple Simon" (1894),⁴⁰ they are "not unimpeachable in the article of grammar." This tendency, verbally as well as physically, to caricature the pitiable clerk is demonstrated to good effect in the portrayal of Jonas Warbrick in "Under an Umbrella" (1893)⁴¹ ; Warbrick's role in this story can be posited as a representative example of this category of character. Warbrick, a "young City clerk of small personal attractions" accentuated by his "defective stature," is possessed of a keen ambition "to be a man" (pp. 115, 117). The need to prove his manhood is, for the clerk, combined with a desire to find a suitable wife, and one evening while walking on the Embankment, he perceives the opportunity to achieve both aims simultaneously. Warbrick senses this chance when he re-encounters a Holborn waitress, Milly, with whom he had earlier become enamoured. During this antecedent period, Warbrick's wage of a pound a week had made the "possibility of marriage seem remote," but now that his wage has risen to thirty shillings he feels emboldened to renew his pursuit of the girl. His plan is, however, complicated by Milly's prior engagement to another man whose aggressive demeanour has compelled the waitress to accept his suit. The clerk, who had initially "quaked with ecstasy" at the thought of confronting and triumphing over his rival, finds his courage evaporating as the encounter looms: "Jonas quaked [without ecstasy] ... but fought his tremors, and strutted like a bantam" (p. 123). And having decided that his potentially violent adversary is "decidedly not one to be trifled with," he feels "himself shrink into contemptible littleness ... [with] his mouth ... dry,

his heart beat[ing] painfully” (p. 124). The conclusion of this affair, which takes place on Lambeth Bridge, subverts the expected conclusion to the uneven contest between meek clerk and angry brewer’s drayman. Rather than providing the anticipated music-hall finale to the contest, Gissing instead offers a pathetic one:

Jonas stood on the spot for two minutes, motionless. Then he began to move slowly forward, across the foot of the bridge. When he was on the Embankment again, in dark and solitude, he shed tears. (p. 125)

This image of the “good little soul” being bettered by a member of the adjacent class (either above or below), and in the process being forced to confront his weakness, following a period of evidently unrealistic ambition, typifies this strain of Gissing’s short fiction.

Similarly typical amongst these pathetic clerks is a continuation of the hellish imagery that Gissing had earlier used in his portrayal of Hood. In these later impressions, however, Gissing seems to establish a new distance between narrator and subject matter. This quality is particularly evident in the 1894 tale “The Salt of the Earth”⁴² which begins with a memorable image of a mass of clerks walking across Blackfriars’ Bridge on their way to work. The initial tableau posits a legion of lost souls – described by Gissing as forming a “morning tide of humanity” – who remain blind to their surroundings:

Many had walked such a distance that they plodded wearily, looking neither to right nor left. The more vigorous strode briskly on, elbowing their way, or nimbly skipping into the road to gain advance ; yet these also had a fixed gaze, preoccupied or vacant, seldom cheerful. [...] for the most part lips were mute amid the clang and roar of heavy-laden wheels. (p. 265)

Gissing’s detached observation of the scene, with its doleful figures in their urban environment, offers a distinct anticipation of the images found in the first section of T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. Gissing’s clerks, like Eliot’s, are beyond redemption, and the equivalent images from Eliot’s poem confirm this correspondence of thought:

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.⁴³

Although no link between these distinctive images was acknowledged by Eliot, it appears reasonable to suggest, at the very least, that Gissing's imaginative engagement with the modern cityscape would have attracted the interest of the poet.⁴⁴ And indeed "The Waste Land" might have offered an alternative title for Gissing's story of the sterility brought about by modern commerce. Here the earlier feelings of sympathy evoked by Gissing are subsumed by the knowledge of the utter uselessness of this pity. The clerks themselves now appear to have little consciousness of their own degradation ; this is an idea that Gissing was to pursue further in a later work: "Here no man was a human being, but each merely a portion of an inconceivably complicated mechanism."⁴⁵

The other clerk genus cast by Gissing in this latter phase of his work is typified by those individuals of more pretentious nature, whose existence was already familiar to the late Victorian music-hall audience. John Sloan notes that the pompous office worker was, by the 1890s, a recognised stock amongst "comic singers who began to poke fun at the social pretensions of the clerks and other desk-men who made up a large part of the audience."⁴⁶ In the group of stories that dealt with this subsection of clerkdom, Gissing clearly relished the chance to mock his subjects' affectations: in "Simple Simon," for example, the devotion of a clerk to abstinent ideals is joyfully exposed as hypocrisy ; while "A Capitalist" (1893)⁴⁷ tells the story of Ireton, a pound-a-week clerk, whose wounded pride prompts him to buy a picture beyond his means, after he is told that it is "too much money for [him]" (p. 37). Similarly in "The Scrupulous Father" (1899),⁴⁸ a snobbish clerk who wishes his daughter to make a good marriage, and attempts to fend off the advances of a "small clerk, or something of the sort...[who] had no business whatever to address us," is eventually forced by his daughter's guile into allowing the "small clerk's" suit. And "A Freak of Nature" (1895) witnesses a clerk visiting the countryside and finding himself impersonating his employer to impress a local clergyman ; the clerk escapes later that evening from his new acquaintance's house by jumping through a window, farcically landing in the process on top of, and crushing, his silk hat.⁴⁹

But Gissing's mocking irony, as employed in these tales, is tame in comparison to that which he employs in a story which attacks what for him was a cardinal vice of intellectual charlatanism. In "The Pessimist of Plato Road" (1893),⁵⁰ Gissing focuses on the life of Philip Dolamore, a clerk who, while holding a "'mercantile post' in the Borough," cultivates the image of one whose brilliant mind is thwarted by circumstances outside his control. To the suburban family with whom he lodges, Dolamore displays his

“simulated knowledge” and bewails the irony of his existence: “I sit all day at a desk. I do the work that might be done by any washerwoman’s boy fresh from a board-school. This is what Matthew Arnold calls ‘the fitness of things’” (p. 171). For Gissing, Dolamore embodies some of the worst aspects of late Victorian life, which the narrative voice suggests are being brought about by “sham education, and the poisonous atmosphere of sham culture everywhere diffused by newspapers, books, and lectures” (p. 176). As E. M. Forster would later do in his depiction of Leonard Bast, Gissing took malicious delight in bringing the clerk to a realisation of his folly. This occurs in Gissing’s tale after Dolamore has willingly engineered his dismissal from his “unsuitable” office job and plans to martyr himself in a suicide which he pompously announces in a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* :

Sir, - I am about to take a step which to me is of some importance, and also, I cannot help thinking, to the world at large. [...] Is it, Sir, or is it not, a matter of any account to a civilised nation, that the most intellectual of its sons should be enabled to lead a life distinguished in outward respects from that of the meanest and the most ignorant? I should have thought so ; yet here am I, a highly educated and thoughtful man, unable to find any means of supporting myself save by that office-slavery which even the vulgar shrink from. [...] Under these circumstances, I cannot hesitate how to act ; in a world so basely ordered, I refuse to live longer. As a student of philosophy, I claim the right to put an end to my life ; and when you receive this letter, my being will be dispersed into its elements. (pp.179-80)

Following the botched suicide, which he attempts with his landlady’s daughter, Dolamore – in fear of prosecution – runs away to the country, where he earns “a wretched living in ways unspecified” and (in a final knife thrust from Gissing), “no longer felt the thrills of vanity” (p.183). This story, better than any other, illustrates Gissing’s capacity ironically to invert a subject – here that of the intellectual exile – that he had previously treated with great sensitivity and seriousness. Dolamore’s thwarted desire to “associate with the leading minds of the day” appears little removed from the aspirations of Scawthorne (and by extension those of Gissing himself), but the story in no way suggests Gissing’s desire to satirise himself. It instead unambiguously represents the writer’s fear of and irritation at those individuals he perceived as assuming his intellectual position without sharing his intelligence.⁵¹ Education reforms, Gissing felt, were churning out a generation of “quarter-educated” young men – like Dolamore – who considered themselves above the work for which their limited intellect should naturally have made them suitable. Dolamore’s unrealistic yearning for a place in the Academy is foreshadowed by Bennett’s Richard Larch, another character who offers an imaginary reading of the fate of his creator had he been devoid of artistic and intellectual capabilities. Gissing in particular

(arguably in the full flood of Williams' second stage of "negative identification") is content to attack "a menace," and this attack is perhaps more vehement because of the proximity of the target.

IV

The climax of the satirical phase of Gissing's representation of clerk characters was reached with the depiction of Christopher Parish in his 1898 novel *The Town Traveller*.⁵² This work, although considered by Gissing to be "poor rubbish,"⁵³ was financially amongst his most successful works, and the reason for its impressive sales figures was in some measure due to the presence of Parish. A link between the character and the book's financial profit can be established if one takes into account the media attention focused on a correspondence, relating to the characterisation of Parish, that appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*. These letters, which offered welcome publicity for *The Town Traveller* over a number of weeks following its publication, were generated by a review of the work. The reviewer, who included "with intense delight" (according to one of the letter writers) a quotation of the episode in which the gauche clerk is overawed by a waiter in a restaurant, seemed to touch a raw nerve with the *Chronicle's* black-coated readers, galvanising them into defensive action. Before going on to discuss the correspondence which ensued, it is important first to examine Parish's place in the novel. This examination suggests that Parish represents something of an amalgam of the features that Gissing had utilised in creating the sizable reservoir of pathetic and pompous clerks identified in his short fiction. To illustrate Parish's position as a representative figure we can point towards his unheroic physique – "slim, narrow-shouldered [...] with the commonest of well meaning faces" (p. 34), and his tendency to perspire when he is placed under pressure, "making his collar limp" (p. 138); also notable are his cockney weakness in grammar and aspirates – "It never came into my 'ead" (p. 132), and his place, like Thomas Bird before him, as "one of myriads exactly like him" in "the great morning procession" to the City (p. 38). Further, in exhibiting his more pompous aspect, Parish, like his progenitor Newdick, will "talk ceaselessly," at the least opportunity, of his firm, "the great house of Swettenham Brothers, tea merchants" (p. 35). Gissing also evinces in Parish his now recognisable capacity to rework a previously serious theme in a satirical vein. In *The Town Traveller* we observe this in the manner in which Gissing handles Parish's sensitivity towards his limited finances. Whereas the clerk's lack of money had proved a potentially tragic agent in the earlier novels, here it

is engineered simply for comic purposes. This is evident both in the conclusion of the controversial restaurant scene, in which Parish pays the bill “right bravely,” adding a sixpence tip for the overbearing waiter, “though it cost him as great a pang as the wrenching of a double tooth” (p. 36), and also in another episode where Parish is reluctantly involved in a clandestine chase in a hansom carriage. The latter incident, which concludes with Parish being forced to hand over to the driver a precious half-sovereign in payment for a less expensive fare (another instance of a clerk being bettered by a member of a proximate class), once again makes the reader complicit in a sense of amusement at the clerk’s obvious discomfort:

So grievously did he feel for the loss of that half-sovereign that for some moments he could think of nothing else [...] to pay ten shillings for a half-crown drive! A whole blessed half-sovereign. [...] On he plodded, heavily, angrily. [...] Unaccustomed to express himself with violence, Christopher at about half-past twelve found some relief in a timid phrase or two of swearing. (pp. 141-42)

These accounts of Parish’s distraction are continued when he is reunited with Polly (the girl with whom he has fallen in love, and for whom he undertook the mission), ensuring that because of his preoccupation he misses the longed-for opportunity to kiss her: “Alas! He did not look into Polly’s face, which in the dusk of the doorway had turned towards his” (p. 144). The snobbish tone Gissing had earlier used in his characterisation of Newdick is again witnessed in his narrator’s admonition of the clerk who is distracted by his lost cash: “It did not occur to Mr. Parish that such a detail might be left unmentioned. In these little matters there is a difference between class and class” (p. 143). Gissing plays to the gallery at these moments in ways that unmistakably anticipate the supercilious tone of Forster’s narrator in *Howards End*. Leonard Bast’s distraction over his umbrella, lost during the Queen’s Hall concert, is worth retrieving here, to emphasise the proximity in design of the two characters:

... he could not quite forget about his stolen umbrella. Yes, the umbrella was the real trouble. Behind Monet and Debussy the umbrella persisted, with the steady beat of a drum. “I suppose my umbrella will be all right,” he was thinking. “I don’t really mind about it. I will think about the music instead. I suppose my umbrella will be all right.” Earlier in the afternoon he had worried about seats. Ought he to have paid as much as two shillings? Earlier still he had wondered, “Shall I try to do without a programme?” There had always been something to worry him ever since he could remember, always something that distracted him in the pursuit of beauty.⁵⁴

The snobbish mockery of the clerk’s inability to surmount the loss of his umbrella might perhaps be anticipated from an individual with Forster’s lofty social pedigree, but Gissing’s contrasting background and experience

arguably make his anticipation of Forster's patronising attitude towards Bast somewhat unexpected and certainly more complicated. The absence of fellow-feeling for Parish's plight, and the willingness to sacrifice his anxiety to comedy, demonstrate Gissing's feelings of removal from a sphere that he had, albeit briefly, once felt destined to join. That Gissing's relationship with the clerk is, by the late nineties, complementary to (and able to inspire the superiority of) the liberal intelligentsia of the Edwardian era (Forster, Rose Macaulay, J. D. Beresford, May Sinclair, *et al*), is indicative of the mental journey he had made in a relatively short space of time.⁵⁵

V

A dim anticipation of the potential power of Gissing's caricature of the modern clerk formed the subtext to the *Daily Chronicle* letters.⁵⁶ The similarity in tone of these communications, largely submitted by clerk correspondents, is revealing in the way in which it offers their sense of frustration at the emergence of another caricature (on this occasion from a respected and influential author) representing their class as servile and ineffectual. One gains a sense, from the letters, of a diffuse group of individuals, who by turns echo both the pompous Mr Pooter and the articulate and unjustly excluded Charles Scawthorne. Across this wide spectrum, however, attitudes coalesce regarding the insistent tendency of literature to reflect their existence as anything other than dull or clownish. The initial correspondent, who signed himself "A Minor Clerk" (in ironic response to Gissing's sarcastic description of Parish as belonging to "the great order of minor clerks" (p.35)), acknowledged a similarity of income with his fictional counterpart (two pounds a week), but claimed that he was "utterly unable to find [amongst his friends and acquaintances] any one resembling in any way 'Christopher Parish.'" He offered to take Gissing on "a tour of inspection round our homes," to show the novelist that his fellow clerks "are not in the habit of dropping our aitches" and furthermore, lived in "a standard of refinement and culture which, though he [Gissing] might very probably style it suburban, never the less is certainly not the environment which breeds a 'Parish.'" In conclusion, the admittedly Pooterish "Minor Clerk" communicated the entirely understandable frustration he shared with his fellow clerks, as Mudie's Library subscribers, at finding "ourselves the objective of the glib pens of almost the whole noble army of 'new humorists,' in whose ranks Mr. Gissing is apparently the latest recruit." Another correspondent, styling himself "Eighty Pounds a Year," and taking up this point, argued (in line with Besant's assessment of the "hopeless

clerk” almost twenty years earlier) that it was the “helpless, unorganised, and downtrodden” nature of the class that left them “so liable to the cheap sneers of any and every pen bent for satire.” Continuing with this grievance more specifically, another clerk (“G.S.B.”) wrote:

The “Order” [of minor clerks] is a numerous one ; in it are gathered together men of every sort and suburb, but the Christopher Parishes are only a part. [...] It is rather a pity that the clerk of fiction should be always – or nearly always – drawn from what I call the “bar parlor” type, and it is easy to understand your correspondent’s resentment at being lumped with this immature product of an imperfect system of education.

He goes on optimistically to project the emergence of a literature that would better reflect his section of society:

We possess our souls in patience [...] and hope that another writer will arise who will do us justice. Then the world will know there are clerks *and* clerks, that some at least of those who sit “perched like a crow, upon a three legged stool” have minds as wide, manners as good, and reading as extensive as any of their fellows.

The reasonable plea made here and in many of the other letters was for variety in representation. Whilst some readers recognised the existence of Parish’s type in their offices, the majority understood him to be a mere fraction of the whole clerky community. But this was a fraction, the correspondents recognised and argued, that contemporary literature (as epitomised by Gissing) had succeeded in amplifying into apparent predominance.

We know from his diary that Gissing avidly tracked the publication of these letters, and his close attention was also evidently shared by other influential observers. This is confirmed by the publication in the *Speaker* of an article that, sensing the newsworthy nature of the correspondence, offered a review of and commentary on its contents. Here the anonymous journalist, employing a heavily sarcastic style, observed that Gissing had “caused a serious commotion amongst the Minor Clerks,” adding that “sooner or later somebody in Brixton or Kennington was bound to turn upon the man who writes the small-beer chronicle of those districts.” With the arrival of the *Daily Chronicle* letters, the observer archly asserted, “the worm has turned at last, and Kennington is angry.” Following a summary of the complaints against the novelist, the article went on to satirise the clerks’ over-sensitivity, and suggested that this misplaced delicacy was to be expected from such a lamentable band. The Mudie’s subscription, proudly admitted by the original clerk, became a particular target for mockery, with the article contending that “the wisdom of a circulating library does not always educate,” and indeed noting:

that it may leave a man narrow, dogmatic, and incapable of drawing elementary distinctions. When a reader finds in a novel a character from the class to which he himself belongs, and exclaims, "This must be a libel, because it is not in the least like me!" he merely shows that his educational process is incomplete. There is no obvious reason why the portrait should be like *him*, whether he be a Minor Clerk or a much more exalted member of society. [...] It is not the duty of a novelist when he lights upon a remarkably original piece of character, to say to himself: "No, I must not reproduce this, for few people will recognise the truth of it, and many would say I was libelling a respectable and very distinguished body of citizens." His duty is to be no respecter of persons, whether they belong to county families or to the Order of Minor Clerks.⁵⁷

These final comments are, of course, unarguable, used here only for their rhetorical weight. Their significance lies more in the fact that they imply the commentator's blithe assumption of the existence of a body of literature that might be capable of offering a balanced view of the lower middle class; in the same way, for example, that there then existed a relatively extensive body of literature depicting the landed classes. If a more panoramic and inclusive vision in relation to the clerk class had developed in the nine-teenth century, there would be little ground for the Parish protests to be respected. But, in contrast to Thackeray's characterisation of Sir Pitt Craw-ey, cited in the article as "unlike any other baronet in fiction" ("To say that Thackeray intended [him] to represent the whole baronetage of England would be nonsense"), Parish lacked a wider literary landscape in which he might be located. The protest was therefore not really about Parish *per se* (indeed, the majority of the correspondents had clearly not yet read Gis-sing's novel) ; it was much more about the frustration of the nature of the stereotype to which they felt themselves to be inescapably associated. This narrowness of focus, overlooked by the *Speaker's* correspondent, but not by the *Daily Chronicle's* clerk readers, had been greatly augmented by the formulaic characterisation latterly undertaken by Gissing. In one of the shrewder comments included in the *Speaker* article, the writer suggested that Gissing might seize upon the defensive claims of the clerks to provide material for a later work⁵⁸ ; in which case, "a united front [by the clerks] ought to be offered to the enemy [Gissing]." Gissing's position as the "enemy" of the hopeless clerk, so unexpected a role for him to assume in the context of his earlier career, was not perhaps such a hyperbolic term when tested against Christopher Parish. Although this character was for Gissing an insignificant comic caricature in an ephemeral novel written purely for profit, Parish becomes symbolic of the prevailing attitude of his author, and of a substantial section of society, towards a now established section of the urban community.

Gissing had therefore proved himself to be far from the “novelist of their own” that the *Spectator* journalist, quoted in my introduction, had earlier suggested that Gissing might be considered in relation to the disenfranchised lower middle class. The recognition of this failure, as it emerges in the *Daily Chronicle* letters, was, in fact, anticipated later in that same *Spectator* article. Thus, prior to the emergence of Parish and the bulk of the clerk characters in the tales, the reviewer had shrewdly predicted the growth of tension in the relationship between the subject and the artist:

we think it very probable, indeed almost certain, that though the portrait-painter [Gissing] has come, the sitters (at any rate those of them who subscribe to a circulating library) will turn away from the finished work “as if dissatisfied.” They will not be able to dispute [his] knowledge or deny [his] skill [...] they will only feel in a vague, uncomfortable, resentful sort of way that the general effect is false, misleading, even libellous ; that it is in essence caricature.⁵⁹

The reviewer, again anticipating the ensuing debate, pleaded for the more democratic frame of reference in contemporary literature which Gissing had failed to provide: “even in a cheap suburb life may be lived well, – certainly not less well in the main than in any other civilised human sphere.” Gissing, having read the review, was somewhat piqued by what he considered to be a “careful and well-written attack,” and he answered it in the letter of 10 February 1895 to his friend Morley Roberts.⁶⁰ Here he contested the *Spectator*’s claim that he was “an idealist of the new school” (defined in the article as one who “consciously or instinctively, selects the facts, and confers upon them a value of his own for the sake of achieving a certain effect or impression”), and allied himself more with the article’s definition of the realist (one who “endeavours to present all the facts, and to preserve in his presentation their true proportionate values”). The novelist’s defence against the claim that he was an “idealist of the new school” was, stated simply, twofold: firstly that his work did in fact include abundant evidence of individuals who reflected “good feeling and right thinking,” attributes that his critic had considered absent from the lower middle class characters in his texts ; and secondly, that where his work did show the suburban lower middle class as a depressed and depressing group, this was because “on its worst side, [it] represents a degradation of which the critic has obviously no idea.” The first section of Gissing’s claim now appears difficult to reconcile with our readings of his novels, and particularly with *In the Year of Jubilee*, which was under review here ; and the second, taking into account Gissing’s concentration, abundantly evident from my research, with the “worst side” of the class, appears to confirm the reviewer’s (and the *Daily Chronicle* reader’s) charge of partiality. Gissing’s argument

also leads one inexorably back to the presence of “negative identification” in his work. His acknowledgement in the same letter that “the most characteristic, the most important part of my work is that which deals with a class of young men distinctive of our time – well educated, fairly bred, *but without money*,” looks back again to his earlier fictional *alter ego*, cited by Raymond Williams, who in identifying with the poor, “did not make their cause my own, but my own cause theirs.” This self-knowledge remains the most satisfactory approach to understanding and attempting to reconcile the apparently antagonistic attitudes that the writer communicates in relation to the clerk. At once the novelist who focused much welcome sympathetic attention on a neglected group, Gissing was equally their adversary, capable of misrepresenting them by glibly employing a patronising stereotype. It would be stretching my argument too far to suggest that Gissing was primarily responsible for the prevailing prejudice against the clerk class as evidenced in British print culture in the period up until 1914 ; this was more the product of a complex set of social circumstances beyond the scope of the present article. But, it is reasonable to claim that the remarkable esteem in which Gissing was justifiably held by his contemporaries and the ensuing generation of writers, ensured that the cumulative effect of his post-1892 clerk depictions impacted and resounded upon fictional depictions of this class throughout the period before the Great War.

³¹Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1790-1950*, Penguin Books, 1984 (1958), pp. 178-79.

³²The phrase “decently ignoble” and its counterpart “ignobly decent,” are both used by Harold Biffen to locate the social milieu of his novel, “Mr. Bailey, Grocer” (*New Grub Street*, pp. 173, 244).

³³Gissing’s understanding of his own “negative identification” in the mid-1880s might appear to invalidate the argument that his early clerk characters – all created after *The Unclassed* – are products of this relationship. I would answer this by arguing that, although Gissing recognised this phenomenon early in his career, it continued to affect his work. Throughout his novels and stories there are examples of Gissing continuing to demonstrate traits that he had earlier presciently identified and implicitly criticised. This is evident, for example, in the forceful argument he offers against exogamous marriage prior to his own wedding to Edith Underwood in 1891.

³⁴Quotations from the Nelson edition, [1907].

³⁵C. K. Shorter, the editor of various prominent journals, commissioned Gissing in March 1893 to write short fiction that would mirror the scene of the Bank Holiday crowds in his earlier novel, *The Nether World* (1889). See Gissing’s Diary, p. 300.

³⁶Writing to his friend Eduard Bertz on 29 September 1893, he confirmed that by undertaking short story commissions he had “entered upon the commercial path, alas!” but he offered as a palliative the promise to try “not to write rubbish.” *The Collected Letters of George Gissing*, Vol. V, 1994, p. 149.

³⁷Quotations from *The House of Cobwebs*, Constable, 1931 (1906).

³⁸Quotations from the 1911 Sidgwick and Jackson edition of *Human Odds and Ends*.

³⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁰The *Idler*, May 1896, p. 509.

⁴¹Quotations from *Stories and Sketches*, Michael Joseph, 1938.

⁴²Other examples of this type of clerk in Gissing's shorter fiction may be found in "The Tout of Yarmouth Bridge" (1895), "A Well-Meaning Man" (1895), and "Humblebee" (1899).

⁴³*Collected Poems: 1909-1962*, Faber and Faber, 1974 (1963), p. 65, I. "The Burial of the Dead," ll. 60-68.

⁴⁴The claim of influence might be supported by Eliot's acknowledged borrowings from the work of Gissing's friend John Davidson.

⁴⁵*The Crown of Life*, Methuen, 1899, p. 164.

⁴⁶In his *John Davidson, First of the Moderns* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, p. 112) John Sloan cites Nellie Power's song "The City Toff" as a prime example of this form.

⁴⁷Quotation from *The House of Cobwebs*.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹Although my reading suggests that Gissing employs the characterisation of Brogden for broadly comic purposes, I also find persuasive Pierre Coustillas' alternative reading of the story and character. This interpretation suggests that Brogden's impersonation of his employer is a symptom of a form of temporary insanity brought about by acute stress. Coustillas argues that "A Freak of Nature" is indicative of Gissing's desire "to explore the darker corners of the mind in conjunction with the major political, social and cultural problems of the day." Pierre Coustillas, ed., *A Freak of Nature or Mr. Brogden, City Clerk: An Uncollected Short Story*, Edinburgh: The Tragara Press, 1990, p. 17. The story was also included by Coustillas in *The Day of Silence and Other Stories*, Everyman's Library, 1993.

⁵⁰Quotations from *A Victim of Circumstances*, Constable, 1927.

⁵¹That Gissing's ire rather than his desire for self-parody is the determining motivation behind the tale is particularly emphasised in Dolamore's laughable attempts to affect a knowledge of philosophy. Dolamore's choice of Schopenhauer (pronounced "Shoppenhaw" by the charlatan clerk), to whose ideas Gissing was particularly attracted, seems highly significant in this respect. A measure of Gissing's contempt is evident in his response, as narrator, to Dolamore's disingenuous claim that he has had to read the philosopher's work in English, because the original was too expensive: "Of course he knew no language ; what it is to be intellectual and at the same time poor!" (p. 170).

⁵²Quotations from the Nelson edition, [1919].

⁵³Diary entry for 10 May 1898, p. 492.

⁵⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁵⁵Elsewhere in my research I have traced more extensively the attitude of Forster and his ilk to the figure of the lower middle class clerk.

⁵⁶The three letters that I have quoted from were printed in the *Daily Chronicle*, the first two on 29 September and 1 October, the third on 30 September 1898. Seventeen in all appeared in the paper from 29 September to 8 October.

⁵⁷*Gissing: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 349-51, *Speaker*, 8 October 1898.

⁵⁸"Mr. Gissing will note the pink shade as an emblem of social arrogance in Kenning-ton, and he may devote a whole chapter to the topographical distinction between the hall and the back passage." *Ibid.*, p. 350.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 239. Unsigned review, *Spectator*, 9 February 1895.

⁶⁰*Collected Letters*, Vol. V, pp. 294-97.

Obituary Alan Clodd (1918-2002)

[We are reprinting, by kind permission from Mr. Stuart-Smith, the obituary he published in the *Independent* for 26 December 2002 and the *Bookdealer* for 9 January 2003. Another obituary appeared anonymously in *The Times* for 30 December 2003, with a portrait.]

Alan Clodd was perhaps the last surviving example of a bookman in the nineteenth-century mould whose abilities and accomplishments extended into every area of the literary world – collecting, dealing, publishing and bibliographical research. He was no dilettante, however. His professionalism was absolute and was made public when in 1967 he founded the Enitharmon Press, one of the most distinctive of English private presses, which he was to run single-handedly until his retirement from publishing in 1987. In an age of conglomerates he represented a vanishing breed of publishers whose care with the text and dedication to their authors was more important than the balance sheet. His insistence on quality in every area of book production was central to his operation, and in his dealings with authors he was invariably gentlemanly, discreet and encouraging. In the other areas of his life, book collecting and dealing, he became legendary for his discernment, skill and fairness. His knowledge of nineteenth- and twentieth-century English literature was phenomenal, and with that expertise went an equally scholarly familiarity with variant editions, differentiations in bindings, curiosities and ‘ghosts.’

In his appreciation of literature Clodd emulated his grandfather, the Victorian rationalist, banker and writer Edward Clodd, a close friend of Meredith, Gissing and particularly Thomas Hardy, who frequently stayed with the Clodds at their Suffolk retreat, Strafford House in Aldeburgh. Alan Clodd’s memories of this remarkable patriarch centred on visits to his seafront house, where the astonishing collection of inscribed books and manuscripts made a lasting impression and helped to define the course of his life.

Alan Clodd was born in Dublin, where his mother’s family, the Alexanders, kept a shop in Blackrock. His father was a rubber broker who had spent some years in the Malay States, returning in 1918 to seek work first in Ireland and then in England. The family settled in Welwyn Garden City and Clodd and his elder brother Denis were educated at Bishop Stortford College. After leaving school, Clodd started working for the insurance company Scottish Widows. During the war he was a conscientious objector, serving with the Friends Ambulance Unit in Egypt and with UNRA in Italy. Back in London he worked for an Oxford Street bookshop and then

for five years on the issue desk at the London Library, where he was answerable to the irascible Mr Cox. He regarded his time at the library as an invaluable education and regretted giving in his notice, all the more so as it led to a series of unsuitable clerical jobs with firms exporting luxury cars.

By the 1960s Clodd had decided to take the plunge and to become a full-time publisher and bookseller—the latter activity supporting the former. The dealing grew naturally out of his collecting, which had begun in the 1950s with volumes by Christopher Isherwood, the first of many celebrated writers with whom he corresponded. At the beginning of the twenty-first century it is hard to appreciate what finds and bargains were possible in the post-war period, particularly of books by the unfashionable and the neglected. Clodd's personal collection was breathtaking in its extent, quality and scope. It was especially strong in the

Victorian and Edwardian authors who were contemporaries of his grandfather, in First World War poets (he was passionate about Edward Thomas, Ivor Gurney, Siegfried Sassoon and David Jones), and in writers who came to prominence in the 1930s, principally W. H. Auden, Isherwood, Edward Upward and Evelyn Waugh. Almost every publication of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound graced his bookshelves. James Joyce, Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney were among his favourites and were comprehensively represented. Very many books were inscribed or were intriguing association copies and the collection also included fascinating ephemera, manuscripts and an extensive correspondence. It was scarcely credible that a private collection of such distinction could be created with relatively modest means in the second half of the twentieth century.

Clodd was a generous source of information for researchers and curators and readily lent to exhibitions, most recently to Richard Hamilton's *Imaging Ulysses* at the British Museum. He became a much respected figure at book fairs, auction houses and bookshops. Well into his eighties he could be seen on the Charing Cross Road in his checkered overcoat making for the tube with another cache of his finds. He had the keenest of eyes, though with typical modesty he ascribed his greatest discoveries to luck. An Ezra Pound rarity was plucked from a Farringdon barrow ; other gems were discovered in mixed lots at auctions. His catalogues, irregularly produced and enticingly varied, were models of accuracy.

It seemed entirely natural that Clodd, with his bibliographical knowledge and love of fine printing, should venture into publishing. In the 1950s and early 1960s he tested the water by issuing poem pamphlets by Christopher Logue, Ronald Firbank and Kathleen Raine. In 1967, with Raine's encouragement, he established the Enitharmon Press. It was significant that he should take its name from William Blake's prophetic works, for he was always to regard the truest poetry as romantic and visionary. Enitharmon quickly became known for its fine quality editions. Its first printers were Caspar and Juliet Standing of the Dedalus Press. From 1974 to 1987 Christopher Skelton, Eric Gill's nephew, designed and printed many of the publications. He described Clodd as the ideal customer: copy was meticulously presented, a typeface and size suggested, and then Skelton was given free rein to produce the book in whatever format and design he thought appropriate. Clodd's discernment and the creativity of his printers account for the variations in size, shape, papers, cladding and design which were to make Enitharmon's products so admired and collectable.

The Enitharmon books were not only well produced. They also brought to readers a remarkable series of texts by poets and novelists who in many cases were overlooked by more commercial houses. Side by side with the familiar names of Beckett, Borges, Lorca, Pinter, Raine and Vernon Watkins were newcomers such as Frances Horovitz, Jeremy Hooker and Jeremy Reed. Clodd delighted in finding new talent but he was also dedicated to writers he felt were ignored by the literary establishment. He began the renaissance of interest in Frances Bellerby and Hugo Manning and with the publication in 1973 of *Artorius*, one of the greatest long poems of the century, revived the reputation of John Heath-Stubbs. Above all he was the champion and close friend of David Gascoyne, publishing his sequence of aphorisms *The Sun at Midnight* and two 1930s' journals, as well as co-editing his *Collected Verse Translations* for OUP and, after his retirement

from publishing, helping Roger Scott to compile Gascoyne's monumental *Selected Prose 1934-1996*.

By the mid-1980s Clodd, with almost 150 titles behind him, had grown weary of balancing the books – not only financially but also physically, since his home doubled as an office and warehouse. For some years he had received Arts Council backing, but this ceased in 1985 and at around that time he asked me if I would be his successor. He was endlessly encouraging and supportive, though he never interfered in the subsequent running of the Press and only occasionally and with great diffidence offered advice.

Diffidence and discretion defined him. Only his closest friends knew of his 33-year partnership with George McLean, whose death in 1989 was a severe blow. He was extraordinarily self-effacing, with a kind-heartedness which often led to discreet philanthropy and the support of deserving causes and charities. He regarded it as much a duty as a pleasure to subscribe to literary societies and appeals, and his was a familiar name in subscription lists and on acknowledgements pages. Infinitely polite, he was rarely moved to indignation unless discussing social injustices, the deterioration in the book trade or the antics of 'artocrats' in the Eighties. His speech, rather measured, had *fin de siècle* inflections which seemed curiously to connect him to a vanished world of literary salons. For any bibliophile, conversations with him were a many-layered education.

STEPHEN STUART-SMITH

Alan Clodd, publisher, book collector and dealer: born Dublin 22 May 1918 ; Director, Enitharmon Press 1967-87 ; died London 24 December 2002.

Alan Clodd: A Personal Recollection

The death of Alan Clodd was a severe blow to his many friends. Although his health had been declining in the last ten years, those of us who kept in touch with him had recently become more hopeful. In a central London antiquarian bookshop where he was well-known I had been told that he was in better condition, and this friendly testimony had been confirmed last time I spoke to him. That was when he telephoned last September to let me know that a dramatization of *New Grub Street* was being serialized on BBC Radio 4. He was in fine form that day and we discussed

our activities with great gusto, but letter writing cost him efforts he was no longer equal to.

His life was in books and I was aware right from my first contact with him in the mid-sixties that his literary interests lay in two main directions: that of Victorian writers whom his grandfather, Edward Clodd, the genial rationalist, had befriended, that is Meredith, Hardy and Gissing among many others, and modern poetry. I had heard of Alan, whose cultural leanings were well-known, before he became a publisher. I remember John D. Gordan, the Conrad critic and distinguished curator of the Berg Collection, telling me in 1961 when I enquired whether Alan Clodd, whom he had met in England, had any Gissing material that I might profitably consult, that all the valuable relics once accumulated by Edward Clodd had been sold. It was largely true, but as Gordan was at the time looking for any documents of literary interest that could grace the shelves of the Berg Collection, Alan doubtless played down the importance of anything he was not prepared to part with. The sort of man he was had become fairly clear to me before I first met him on my return from the University of Madagascar. To say that he never disappointed me in anything connected with books would be a radically wrong approach to matters that were as vital to him as to me. He was one of my mentors. He lived for literature, but had ideals regarding many other domains of life. Although he was rarely eloquent on such subjects, politics for instance, his ethical code was not very difficult to decipher. There was in him a respect and practice of decency which, over the years, was bound to be recognised by and to impress anyone who came to have a solid knowledge of him, of his persona in daily life.

He had so vast a collection of books, periodicals and miscellaneous literary mementoes that it would have been impossible for him to remember all he had concerning a certain author or subject. So he would occasionally make discoveries in his own archive. Some of them concerning Gissing were made in the nick of time for use in my own writings. A copy of his grandfather's *Memories* (1916), in which many autograph letters from valued correspondents had been pasted, emerged only a few years ago. Besides the letters, it contained annotations in the author's hand, and one of them gave precious information on the circumstances of the tragic death of Henry Butler Clarke, the Spanish scholar known to Gissing in his Ciboure days. Edward Clodd's informant was, of all unlikely people, Eden Phillpotts. On another occasion, aware that I was translating *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, Alan produced conjuror-like a French periodical of the interwar period in which a translation of the same book was announced ; one, however, which never appeared. A visit to him, that is whenever I

undertook a new research campaign in the London libraries and similar establishments, was sure to be rewarded with some exciting finds—his latest Gissing acquisitions, which could range from, say, a first English edition of *Denzil Quarrier* with some photographs and press-cuttings of Gissing interest pasted in, to proofs of Wells's rejected preface to *Veranilda*, more or less the same text as that subsequently published in the August 1904 number of the *Monthly Review*, or from a fragile sixpenny reprint of *New Grub Street* or *The Crown of Life* to Gissing's copy of Joseph Knight's *Life of Rossetti*. Of anything he saw in the press that might be unknown to me, he would gladly let me have a cutting or a photocopy. That he should forget some of his own treasures was inevitable, but it was always a pleasure to him that occasionally a visitor should remember having seen on his shelves some extraordinary item, purchased by him possibly twenty years before, that had slipped from his memory. I recollect his Petherick edition of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which I casually mentioned during his last visit to us in September 1995. No, he said, his memory would not serve him in the present case. My remark, triggered by the sight on my shelves of the four Gissing editions published by Petherick, must have greatly puzzled him for as soon as he was back home in East Finchley, he rang me up to say I was right, he did have the Petherick edition of *Tess*, paying me an extraordinary compliment on my knowledge of his books.

This being said, it should be added that his flair for scarce editions, uncommon bindings, out-of-the-way reprints was invariably a subject for admiration. It almost seemed that he was not interested in anything that was not sufficiently scarce. The new editions of Gissing's books that began to appear in the early 1960s I do not think he purchased when they came out ; seasoning was not a negligible factor to him. Also a volume with a jacket in a secondhand bookshop did not fail to catch his eye. His copy of the Nelson edition of *The Town Traveller* (a blue cloth volume with a black cross on the front cover much like a swastika) with a pictorial dust-jacket in pristine condition must have very few if any equivalents in point of preservation. For limited editions and presentation copies he had a pardonable passion. Short of owning one or two of Gissing's (even in the sixties they were outrageously priced) he snapped up some second best items like a copy of the 1927 volume of Gissing's *Letters to His Family* with a mysterious inscription that reads "JRG from ACG Jan^y 1927" or a presentation copy of Frank Swinnerton's book on Gissing inscribed to Laurence H. Sinclair. When Alan Anderson, whose professional honesty he praised, produced my edition of *A Freak of Nature or Mr. Brogden, City Clerk* at his Tragara Press, Alan came down all the way from East Finchley to central London

with copies of the book in the two main binding variants as he wanted me to sign them. More than once his expert knowledge and keen appreciation of binders' oddities proved vital factors in the long awaited solution to some bibliographical problems like the existence of three different garbs for the five Gissing titles reissued by Nash and Grayson in the late 1920s.

To his grandfather, of whom we often talked, he was greatly attached. Still a lad of barely twelve when the Grand Old Man died in March 1930, he had no recollections of him worth mentioning—only the contact of his prickly beard. Of the greatly respected G.O.M.'s second wife, Phyllis, he did not speak much except to say how sad her last few years were. Like his friend Thomas Hardy, the Evolutionist (as he sometimes signed himself in the press) had remarried at an advanced age and his widow found her loneliness a great burden. Alan preserved his grandfather's diaries and managed to rebuild a sizeable collection of his works that had been published in volume form. (It is characteristic of his generosity to me that he would not let Edward Clodd's diaries go to the Brotherton Library until he was quite sure I would no longer need to consult them for the edition of Gissing's *Collected Letters*.) With great pleasure and some emotion I remember how delighted he was when I sent him copies of the two long letters, owned by Xavier Pétremand (Gissing's great-grandson), of E. C. to G. G. which must have greatly comforted the recipient at Ciboure, then at Ispoure. Although Alan was far too discreet ever to use the epithet, I think he was proud of his grandfather's achievements. Most of the pictorial and other material of which I have copies and which I used in Gissing's *Collected Letters* and, several decades before, in *The Letters of George Gissing to Edward Clodd*, came from him. The two of us did our best to pay homage to his grandfather, a generous man if any. In those days he and I were still looking for whatever letters Gissing had sent his friend in Aldeburgh or London. I also recall his quiet jubilation when he told us during a visit how he had acquired—accidentally seems to be the appropriate qualifier—Gissing's letter of 29 November 1901, unfortunately incomplete and with the signature cut off, to his grandfather. Chancing to see a copy of the *Memories* in a bookshop he took it without a moment's hesitation and lo and behold, it contained a, to him, precious autograph letter. The book was promptly paid for and browsing in the shop terminated instantly.

Of his generosity and willingness to help dozens of examples could be given. In the early 1970s, on an occasion when he stopped to stay with us on his way back from Paris, he insisted on my accepting a copy of Clara Collet's extremely scarce and useful book, *Educated Working Women* (1902), which he had found in a well-known secondhand bookshop in the

Latin Quarter. Knowing that genealogical research on English subjects is not easy to undertake for scholars living abroad, he settled more than one of my recurrent problems by visits to St. Catherine's House, the Census Room in Portugal Street or Somerset House. His efficiency was enviable, and his disinterestedness a reproach to all petty self-seekers. Only once did I see him express vehement indignation—at the selfishness of a man who refused to allow me to publish a letter from Gissing to Edward Clodd. “How dare you...” began his protest to the objectionable fellow. He knew there was no other case on record of a manuscript owner sitting so rudely on his documents while the nine volumes of Gissing's *Collected Letters* were being edited. Indignation at injustice and its milder variety unfairness may well have dictated his political choices on days of general election. Honesty was a principle he could never have brought himself to violate. I recall a conversation I had with the affable Cecil Court bookseller Robert Chris in which the word gentleman had been pronounced by either of us, and Chris explaining for my benefit that Alan Clodd was the paragon of the English gentleman. Conversely he expected other people or societies or institutions to behave fairly to him. When he realised that the splendid presentation table that had been offered his grandfather for his sixtieth birthday in 1900 had somehow drifted into the premises of the Rationalist Press Association, he took measures to recover an object which he rightly considered to be his own property.

The apostle of decency that he was in all circumstances of life was perhaps nowhere more in evidence than in his activities as a publisher. Had he been a wealthier man, he would have liked to expand his business, to publish more volumes of modern verse, more monographs of Gissing interest. In the 1970s more projects of the latter kind were discussed—only in writing if I remember right. A study of Gissing in Manchester, another of Gissing and the Gausson family, yet another of Gissing and Gosse would have been easy to write on account of the relative abundance of valuable material, largely unpublished, that was and remains available. But time and money were commodities not exactly superabundant. The sales of the Enitharmon books never rose very high. The records of the Press are now held by the Brotherton Library, where much Edward Clodd material found its way between the 1930s and the 1950s. Two volumes on Alan and his work as a dedicated publisher were issued in the 1990s by the Enitharmon Press and they are a rich, stimulating source of information: *An Enitharmon Anthology* (1990), compiled and edited by Stephen Stuart-Smith, who had taken over the Press, and *Alan Clodd and the Enitharmon Press* (1998), compiled by Steven Halliwell. In these are to be found quite a few pen-portraits of

him by his friends in the literary world. Jeremy Reed in the second title concludes his reminiscential essay with a double vision of Alan: “I think of him with his shock of white hair, in the fitness of age, sitting at his desk beneath a photographic portrait of Samuel Beckett. Or out in the West End in the late afternoon, on his untiring circuit of bookshops, and hope that the evening light touches him with gold.” Many images of him are vivid in my mind. I see him with my wife and daughter strolling on a lawn in Bruges in the late 1960s when we had left my books for a few hours. I see him sitting by me here in France as we were going through the four essays that were to find a home in *Gissing East and West*. I see him standing on the library steps in my study, inspecting meticulously rows of old Gissing editions ranging from the original three deckers through the many printings of the Smith, Elder and Lawrence & Bullen/A. H. Bullen titles to early American editions. I see him in front of me at meal times commenting on all the work involved in the editing of the *Collected Letters* and discussing the soothing part played by his grandfather in Gissing’s life. I see him in London as we took him for dinner to some Finchley restaurant after long hours spent among his books. And I believe the world will always need more people like him. The pains of life would be greatly reduced if all men and women were possessed of the same estimable qualities as those that made the personality of Alan Clodd such a quietly radiant one. Did he realize, I wonder, how greatly esteemed he was ?

PIERRE COUSTILLAS

Calabrian Update

PIERRE COUSTILLAS

There have been recent developments in the vast field of research about Gissing and the people he met in Calabria. Until the latter part of the twentieth century most local natives thought that official records were of little if any value and the consequence was that many documents which would now be of capital interest perished at the hands of illiterate vandals. Besides national mentalities concerning what may or may not be of interest in daily life vary a good deal. Anyone who has attempted research in Spanish or southern Italian libraries is sure to have often, physically or metaphorically, thrown up his hands in despair – why wasn’t a newspaper for this or that day kept in the proper file ? Why wasn’t a minor event in local life, which turns out to be retrospectively of interest, recorded in the

local paper ? Why wasn't the death of this or that local worthy mentioned in the column of obituaries ? South of Naples, wrote a French traveller in the early nineteenth century, you are in Africa. This blunt statement was largely true, as is confirmed by a travel narrative like that of Craufurd Tait Ramage. Still optimism is not always synonymous with naivety, and discoveries may be made at most unexpected moments. Francesco Badolato, our permanent correspondent in or rather about his native Calabria, while discussing with a friend of his living in Bovalino some of the unsolved editorial problems raised by the forthcoming English critical edition of *By the Ionian Sea* (Oxford: Signal Books), found a new track that proved worth following. The Bovalino friend, Signorina Francesca Ammendolia, got in touch with a friend of hers in Catanzaro who might throw some light on two enigmatic local figures mentioned by Gissing in both his diary and his book, the hotel keeper Coriolano Paparazzo and the British Vice-Consul Pasquale Cricelli. The Catanzaro lady, Signora Maruca Varano Vega, sent us a diminutive photograph of Pasquale Cricelli, son of Alfonso Cricelli (also spelt Alphonso elsewhere) and Caterina Bianchi, who was born in February 1863 and died in October 1905. An enlargement of the photograph, which must have been taken a little later than that visible inside the mortuary chapel in the Catanzaro cemetery, is reproduced on the opposite page. From other sources, we already knew, besides his life dates, that the Vice-Consul, Baron Cricelli, had in 1893 succeeded his father, who had held the post for some forty years. Signora Varano Vega added that Pasquale Cricelli, a native of Catanzaro, belonged to a very wealthy family, so that his main activity consisted in managing his landed property in the Province of Catanzaro, more precisely in the neighbourhood of Alli and Ruggero and in the commune of Staletti, noted for their important production of olive oil. Cricelli's big warehouses for foodstuffs were situated on the small square where the offices of the Banca d'Italia now stand in Catanzaro. Cricelli had eight children: Alfonso, Tommaso, Luigi, Teresina (who became signora Cricelli), Caterina (later signora Raffaelli), Beatrice (later signora De Lieto), Emma (later signora Vitale) and Elena, who remained single.

Very few facts about the hotel-keeper Coriolano Paparazzo have been discovered. Yet they are a valuable starting-point for further research. Signora Varano Vega confirms that he managed the Albergo Centrale for many years. His must have been a sad life. When still very young, he became a widower, his wife having died in childbirth in 1872, that is twenty-five years before Gissing's visit to Catanzaro. As is fairly common in that part of Italy, he has no grave of his own. He is buried in the

municipal cemetery of Catanzaro in the mortuary chapel of the Figliolo family. Only his forename and surname are carved on the wall of the chapel, and the dates of his birth and death remain so far unknown.

For all this factual information and the photograph we are very grateful to Francesca Ammendolia and her sister Tita Monoriti, as well as to Maruca Varano Vega.

Will a bridge over the Straits of Messina be built? The question has been asked many times in Italy in recent years. The debate goes on in the press and other media. Professor Teresa Liguori and the association of which she is President, Italia Nostra, have repeatedly expressed their hostility to what she called in an article she published last summer (9 July 2002) “un’opera faraonica,” arguing that there are more urgent problems to solve in the deep Italian south, notably the much needed renovation of the

old railway line from Reggio to the heel of the boot, which is hardly different in the early twenty-first century from what it used to be in Gissing's time. Signora Liguori has tackled the subject again in an article entitled "Italia Nostra ricorda il viaggio di Gissing. Un solo binario per la ferrovia, come cent'anni fa!" [Italia Nostra remembers Gissing's journey. A single track for the railway, like a hundred years ago !]

Dr. Domenico Marino, the great-grandson of the gardener of the Crotone municipal cemetery whom Gissing mentioned with great delight in his travel narrative, recently discovered in his private papers a cutting from the *Economist* for 6 December 1997, p. 100. It is an anonymous commemoration of Gissing's stay in Cotrone/Crotone a hundred years before. It is entitled "Letter from Magna Graecia: Dear George," a well-informed article on Gissing's dramatic stay in the town whose army destroyed its rival of Sybaris in 510 B.C., and an entertaining report on the ceremonies, both pagan and Catholic, which take place every year in May on Capo Colonna. "It would perhaps be of some comfort to [Gissing]," the author writes, "to know that his travelogue is on sale, in an excellent Italian translation, at the newsagent across the street from the hotel where he stayed. The hotel [...] houses the local branch of Italy's neo-communist party, whose red flag flies from a window." This article, Dr. Marino tells me, was written by a freelance correspondent of the *Economist*, John Lane, who attended the first festival of what is known locally as the Maggio Pitagorico, a few years before the publication of this article, which is well worth saving from oblivion.

Also supplied by Dr. Marino is an account of and leaflet about an exhibition of old photographs showing life in Crotone from the late nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, "Crotone in bianco e nero," held at the Bastione Toledo from 1 to 29 March. A number of photographs were lent by Dr. Marino, among them one of his ancestor Giulio.

Our attention has been drawn to the similarities between the oft-quoted last lines of *By the Ionian Sea* and those of H. V. Morton's excellent book, *A Traveller in Southern Italy* (1969), which has long been out of print. The resemblances in tone and sentence rhythm are so striking that detailed comment would be superfluous: "Seated alone in the scented night, I watched the lights come out upon the Sicilian shore and hoped that perhaps someday I might be fortunate enough to cross those tempting waters."

Book Review

Anthony Curtis, ed., *Before Bloomsbury: The 1890s Diaries of Three Kensington Ladies, Margaret Lushington, Stella Duckworth and Mildred Massingberd*. Lost Chords No. 2, London: The Eighteen Nineties Society, 2002. Pp. 107.

This is a book which enables us to go and live for a while in the late Victorian upper-class world in London, a world which Gissing knew very well, even though at no period of his chequered life did he see it at close quarters for more than a few days or weeks in succession. It was a world which in some ways he envied, but which his acute observation of Society enabled him to depict unsparingly. His discovery of it cannot be dated with great accuracy, yet it is clear that it was his activities as a private tutor that enabled him to explore those social strata of which we first catch a few glimpses in *Workers in the Dawn*, *Isabel Clarendon* and *A Life's Morning*.

It was through the Frederic Harrisons that he became acquainted with Vernon Lushington, Q. C., and his family. He began to give lessons to the three girls (Catherine, always called Kitty or Kit, Margaret and Susan) in January 1881, at which time they ranged from thirteen to ten years of age. The period covered by the three diaries of Margaret Lushington (who married Stephen Massingberd in 1895), Stella Duckworth (who was the same age as Margaret) and Mildred Massingberd (born 1868 and who became Margaret's sister-in-law) is the mid-nineties, and the young women are seen essentially in daily life, apparently unconcerned with national or international events. The even tenor of their existence passed in a closed world, punctuated by social gatherings, stays in their country residences, and alas bereavement, the doctors being more often than not in vain. Still the editor tells us that Stella Duckworth worked for a time as an assistant to Octavia Hill, the philanthropist, and that Margaret Lushington "taught music to pupil teachers for the London School Board and gave recitals in workhouses, missions, hospitals and schools." The diaries are the work of somewhat lazy brains. Wealthy women in those days were obviously not expected to *think* in the full sense of the term and they rarely did except when expressing their likes and dislikes. Admiration for a thing or a person is a feeling one often comes across in the book, but perhaps because the feeling is expressed in rather colourless words the present-day reader promptly convinces himself that if the diarists could occasionally show some sign of will, they were generally content to be passive; husbands would earn the money that was not procured by interest on capital in an apparently stable

world. One finds oneself miles away from Gissing's friend Clara Collet, about whose printed work he said that it contained "a great deal of brain to the square inch." Concerts (attended, or in Margaret's case, given as a gifted amateur) were the main bright spots in the unrolling of a humdrum daily life. We come across a good many purely factual entries like the following in Mildred's diary for 12 January 1895: "Sue [Susan Lushington] came over in the morning to say that dear Margaret was in bed with Influenza, so I went over to see her and found her aching all over having had a wretched night. Of course she stayed in bed all day and the next." Traces of class-consciousness are not uncommon; dogs and servants are apt to be "delightful." Punctuation, as Anthony Curtis rightly yet charitably notes, is often haphazard, syntax loose and, off and on, spelling is decidedly faulty ("I layed down," p. 49, is an example).

Up to the publication of this book, comparatively little was known in Gissing's studies about the Lushington sisters that was not recorded in his and Virginia Woolf's papers (Leslie Stephen, his second wife Julia Duckworth and their large family were close friends of the Lushingtons). Now, thanks to the three capably edited diaries printed in this small volume, we see Margaret, Kitty and Susan much more clearly as they were in adult life. Their mother, whom Gissing also knew quite well during the years of his tutorship, gets a couple of mentions. More remarkably perhaps a number of upper-class people who are mentioned in Gissing's diary and correspondence turn out to have been in touch with the Lushington family, for instance the Crackanthonpes, Leo Maxse, who married Kitty and edited the right-wing monthly, the *National Review*, in which three of Gissing's short stories appeared in 1893-1895, Lucy Clifford whom he once met at Blackheath in the home of George Whale, or the Warre-Cornishes of Eton.

The amount of editorial work required by these diaries must have been considerable. Few of the people we meet can be said to have had a national dimension—at the time or later—and those who had, Leo Maxse, Leslie Stephen and his daughter Virginia, strike us as living only marginally in the world of the three diarists. Only men with superior talents like Gissing and Saki could make it live, but they were outsiders, and consequently much more interesting than the average people, however wealthy they were, who populate the scene. Were they worth knowing? Perhaps the troubled relationship between Kitty Lushington (the acknowledged model for Mrs. Dalloway) and Virginia Stephen, later Woolf, would supply a few elements for an answer to such a question.

PIERRE COUSTILLAS

Notes and News

With regret we announce the death of Adeline Tintner (Mrs. Janowitz) on 20 January. The *New York Times* defined her as a noted Henry James scholar and book-collector. She published hundreds of articles on literary subjects and contributed on several occasions to the *Gissing Newsletter*. So did Sandra Enzer-Solotaroff, who died on 26 January. The *New York Times* reported that her doctoral dissertation was on Gissing's short stories about women.

It has been rumoured for about a year that one of the books that are to be published on the occasion of the centenary of Gissing's death will be a collection of critical essays edited by Martin Ryle and Jenny Bourne Taylor, both of the University of Sussex. Practically all the contributors (eight of them apparently) are academics who teach in the south of England, and some of them are known by their essays in *A Garland for Gissing*. Some time ago the provisional title was "George Gissing, 1903-2003: Voices of the Unclassed." No contact has been established with the editors or with the likely publishers.

Anthony Petyt, the Honorary Secretary of the Gissing Trust, Wakefield, has sent us the programme for the 2003 season at the Gissing Centre: 1.– 25 June at 7 p.m.: An "Open Evening" with a walk in the centre of Wakefield to look at places associated with the Gissing family. 2.– An exhibition at the Centre of first and scarce editions of Gissing's works. This exhibition will be on display for the entire summer. 3.– Plans to publish a Centenary Edition of *A Life's Morning*. 4.– Special openings on 13 and 14 September in conjunction with the "Heritage Open Days 2003" organised by the Civic Trust.

Dr. Simon James of Durham University has drawn our attention to a welcome, but rather puzzling, announcement on Amazon.com of a new edition of *The House of Cobwebs* in the Short Story Reprint Series. The list price is \$20.00. A hardcover book to be published by Ayer Co Pub in June 2006. ISBN 0836939115. It will be remembered that the publishers were the successors of Books for Libraries, a firm which published beautifully bound, moderately priced reprints of *A Victim of Circumstances* and *The House of Cobwebs* in the 1970s. The Internet entry on the book has a question for the reader: "Is there an item you'd recommend instead of or in addition to this one?" We recommend in addition all those Gissing titles

which are not currently in print, in particular the working-class novels and the collections of short stories which are practically impossible to obtain secondhand, *Human Odds and Ends* (1898), *A Victim of Circumstances* (1927) and *Stories and Sketches* (1938).

A hitherto unknown Japanese collection of short stories has been discovered on the net by Cyril Wyatt, *The Schoolboy's Story and Other Tales: A Selection from Dickens, Hardy, and Gissing*, edited with an introduction by Eiji Hattori (Kyoto: Chūōtoshō, 1958). The Gissing short story is "The Poet's Portmanteau." The booklet has brown paper covers with reddish brown and black titling.

The Presses Universitaires du Septentrion in Lille have most unexpectedly published a book (see "Recent Publications") about one of the few Frenchmen, Charles Bonnier (1863-1926), who wrote on Gissing and occasionally appears in modern bibliographies. An essay of his on Gissing was included in a privately printed, undated volume, *Milieux d'Art*, which was actually published in 1910. He may also have expressed his views elsewhere at least half-a-dozen years before for a reason which has long been known. In his solid assessment of Gissing's work, which first assumed the form of a lecture delivered at the Manchester Literary Club, Allan Noble Monkhouse said in April 1905 (*The Critical Heritage*, p. 468): "A French critic, Dr. Bonnier, of Liverpool University, has suggested a luminous comparison between Gissing and Zola. The English writer has not all the calmness of the scientific observer ; he knows a bitter pleasure, an exquisite pain of revulsion. Zola observes but Gissing lives, and Gissing, says Dr. Bonnier, in his pictures of brutal squalor, is Zola's superior in force."

Particularly striking in this volume published by the University of Lille is the fact that Bonnier appears to have met or been acquainted with a number of people known to Gissing at different periods of his life. Thus, Walter Raleigh, who like Bonnier taught English at the University of Liverpool at the turn of the century and whom Gissing had met in the 1880s at Miss Crum's and at Dean Bradley's, then at a literary gathering in the summer of 1897 before he left for the shores of the Ionian Sea. Or Butler Clarke, whom Bonnier came to know in Saint-Jean-de-Luz through York Powell, a friend of Edward Clodd, and, although no name is given by the editor of those Recollections, it is clear that the English clergyman to whom he alludes on p. 182 was Wentworth Webster, whose daughter Stella corresponded with Gabrielle Fleury about the *Chanson de Roland*. Or again,

Margaret L. Woods, the author of *A Village Tragedy*, whom Gissing had met in London in 1887.

As recently promised, we offer herebelow a list of novels first published in the last hundred years or so in which Gissing and/or his works are mentioned, and in which he sometimes appears as a character. Of course it does not claim to be exhaustive, and the editor will go on relying on chance and on his friends and correspondents to make it more substantial.

- Ackroyd, Peter, *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, 1994. Gissing is one of the characters.
- Bennett, Arnold, *A Man from the North*, 1898
- Berger, Thomas, *Who is Teddy Villanova?*, 1977
- Creswick, Paul, *The Beaten Path*, 1924
- Deeping, Warwick, *The Bridge of Desire*, 1931 (mention of *The Odd Women*)
- Douglas, Norman, *South Wind*, 1917
- Evans, B. Ifor, *The Shop on the King's Road*, 1946
- Gilbert, Henry, *The Captain of His Soul*, 1902
- Godwin, Gail, *The Odd Woman*, 1975 (*The Odd Women* plays a part in it)
- Howath, Susan, *Glittering Images*, 1988
- Huth, Angela, *Land Girls*, 2000
- Lewis, Sinclair, *Arrowsmith*, 1925
- Lurie, Alison, *Foreign Affairs*, 1984
- Marroni, Francesco, *Silverdale*, 2000 (contains a short story entitled "George e Nell")
- Meijsing, Geerten, *De grachtengordel*, 1992
- Moore, Doris Langley, *My Caravaggio Style*, 1959
- Orwell, George, *A Clergyman's Daughter*, 1935 (mention of *The Odd Women*)
- Powell, Anthony, *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant*, 1960
- Richardson, Dorothy, *Revolving Lights*, 1923, the seventh novel of the 12-novel sequence *Pilgrimage*.
- Riposte, A. [Elinor Mordaunt], *Gin and Bitters*, 1931
- Sims, George, *The Terrible Door*, 1964
- Walpole, Hugh, *John Cornelius*, 1937
- —, *The Killer and the Slain*, 1942
- Wells, H. G., *The Wheels of Chance*, 1896
- Williamson, C. N. and A. M., *The Lightning Conductor*, 1903
- Wodehouse, P. G., *Ice in the Bedroom*, 1961

Besides novels, and needless to say literary histories and studies, Gissing and his works are mentioned in a considerable number of books, of which we are giving some examples. Librarians would classify them under such headings as:

Anthologies: scores of them have appeared containing short or long quotations from the works or complete short stories, from Hesba Stretton's *Thoughts on Old Age* (quoting *Ryecroft*, 1906) to Keith Thomas's *The Oxford Book of Work* (2 extracts from letters and 2 from *The Nether World*, 1999), from Harold Blodgett's *The Story Survey* ("The Pig and Whistle," 1939) to Robert Lynd's *Great Love Stories of All Nations* ("The Scrupulous Father," 1970).

Books about Books: for instance John T. Winterich's *Collector's Choice* (1928) ; Christopher Morley's *Off the Deep End* (1928) ; Holbrook Jackson's *Bookman's Holiday* (1945) and *The Reading of Books* (1946); or John Maxwell Hamilton, *Casanova Was a Booklover* (2001).

Autobiographies and Memoirs (of people who knew or did not know Gissing personally): *Twenty Years of my Life*, by Douglas Sladen (1915) ; *My Life and Time*, by Jerome K. Jerome (1926) ; *Frederic Harrison: Thoughts and Memories*, by Austin Harrison (1926) ; *C.K.S. An Autobiography*, by C. K. Shorter (1927) ; *A Bachelor's London*, by Frederic Whyte (1931) ; *The Old Century & Seven More Years*, by Siegfried Sassoon (1931) ; *The Testament of a Victorian Youth: An Autobiography*, by William Kent (1938) ; *I Liked the Life I Lived*, by Eveleigh Nash (1941) ; or Herbert Van Thal's *The Top of the Mulberry Trees*, 1971.

Biographies (of writers he knew personally): Meredith, Hardy, W. H. Hudson, Frederic Harrison, H. G. Wells, Henry James, John Davidson, Hubert Crackanthorpe.

Books on the Victorian Age: *The Victorian Conscience*, by Clarence R. Decker (1952) ; *Search your soul, Eustace. A Survey of the Religious Novel in the Victorian Age*, by Margaret Maison (1961 ; quotations from *Workers in the Dawn* and *Born in Exile*) ; *Victorian Cities*, by Asa Briggs (1968) ; *Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction* (1976) and *The Victorian Home* (1977), by Jenni Calder ; *The Garden in Victorian Literature*, by Michael Waters (1988).

Travel narratives: of course *Old Calabria* by Norman Douglas (1915), but also H. V. Morton's *A Traveller in Southern Italy* (1969), or by Paul

Theroux *The Great Railway Bazaar* (1976) and *The Pillars of Hercules* (1996).

Topographical works on London or various parts of England: by William Kent, *London for Everyman* (1931) and *An Encyclopaedia of London* (1937) ; by Andrew Davies, *Literary London* (1988) and Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (2000) ; by Augustus J. C. Hare, *Sussex* (quoting from *Thyrza*), 1896 ; by R. Thurston Hopkins, *The Lure of Sussex* (also quoting *Thyrza*), 1931 ; by John Betjeman, *English Cities and Small Towns* (1943) ; by W. G. Hoskins, *Devon* (1954) ; by Grevel Lindop, *A Literary Guide to the Lake District* (1993) ; by Robert M. Cooper, *The Literary Guide and Companion to Southern England* (1985) and *The Literary Guide and Companion to Northern England* (1995) ; ed. by Kate Taylor, *Aspects of Wakefield*, 2 and 3 (1999, and 2001).

Recent Publications

Volumes

The following Gissing titles were all issued in 2002 by Adamant Media Corporation (Elibron Classics) at \$16.95, except for *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study*, which is priced at \$15.95. No ISBN numbers are given in these volumes. The publishers' postal address is 50 Cutler Lane, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467.

New Grub Street, 517 pages. Pictorial pink and red card covers with fancy titling.

In the Year of Jubilee, 404 pages. This Elibron Classics Replica Edition is an unabridged facsimile of the edition published by D. Appleton and Co., New York, in 1895. But the new publishers fail to mention the fact that Appleton bowdlerized Gissing's narrative. After the text of the novel, the ten pages of advertisements to be found in one of the variants of the first American edition have been preserved and, like the text of the novel, slightly enlarged. Blue and white card covers with fancy titling.

Charles Dickens: A Critical Study, 244 pages. This Elibron Classics Replica Edition is an unabridged facsimile of the edition published by Blackie and Son in 1898. Pictorial card covers with small inkpots, a candle and a quill.

The Crown of Life, 360 pages. This Elibron Classics Replica Edition is an unabridged facsimile of the edition published by Frederick A. Stokes Co., New York, in 1899. Orange, green and pink card covers with brown titling.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Gilles Candar (ed.), *Les souvenirs de Charles Bonnier: Un intellectuel socialiste européen à la belle époque*, Villeneuve d'Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2001. See "Notes and News."

Anthony Curtis (ed.), *Before Bloomsbury: The 1890s Diaries of Three Kensington Ladies, Margaret Lushington, Stella Duckworth and Mildred Massingberd*. Lost Chords No. 2, London: The Eighteen Nineties Society, 2002. A valuable, well-edited volume in which Gissing appears a number of times in context. He gave lessons to the three daughters of Vernon and Jane Lushington: Catherine, Margaret and Susan. See the short review in the present number.

Anon., "Author, Author 1,144," *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 January 2003, p. 35. The second quotation ("Reardon had never been to Brighton [...] a trial to his temper") came from ch. 32 of *New Grub Street*. The solution was given on 21 February, again on p. 35.

Ruth Halldén, "Smickra och imitera. George Gissings 'Brödskrivargaten' är en högaktuell 'lärobok' för unga författare" [Flatter and imitate. George Gissing's *New Grub Street* is a highly topical "manual" for young writers], *Dagens Nyheter* (the biggest Swedish morning paper), 29 January 2003, Culture Section, p. 9.

John Sloan, *Oscar Wilde* (Oxford World's Classics: Authors in Context), Oxford: O. U. P., 2003. The background chapters will be particularly useful for Gissing in his context. He is mentioned significantly about a dozen times. Authors in Context is a new collection; the other two volumes, published on 10 April, are on Dickens and Hardy.

Patricia Ingham, *Thomas Hardy* (Oxford World's Classics: Authors in Context), Oxford: O. U. P., 2003. Gissing appears on pp. 16 (quotation on Mrs. Hardy), 43-44 (on Gissing's preoccupation with social and linguistic borderlines), 65 (Gissing in a list of name of writers who engaged in the creation debate).