

The Gissing Journal

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

2007 : Another Landmark in Gissing’s Posthumous Life

PIERRE COUSTILLAS

In families anniversaries and birthdays are often regarded privately as a boon or a bane by the persons concerned and their familiars, but the anniversaries of cult writers’ births and deaths are rarely thought unwelcome. It is customary for literary periodicals to trumpet such forthcoming events weeks or months ahead.¹ Sometimes publishers like to confront potential buyers of a reprint with an announcement that the book is an Anniversary Edition—the front cover of the dust jacket and the title page are appropriate places. But as time passes other forms of homage can materialize, as has just been the case with Gissing.

To the best of our knowledge, if one leaves apart (perhaps unfairly) the publication of two editions of his best known novel, *New Grub Street*, in Canada and Spain (for details see “Recent Publications”), which were not intended to be commemorative, the two most significant celebrations of the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his birth were “lived” most intensely in Wakefield and—unsurprisingly for readers conscious of his reputation abroad, Japan. Of the worthy efforts that have been made in the writer’s native town, Anthony Petyt, the Honorary Secretary of the Gissing Trust, has written the following account, which is naturally silent about the part which he himself played in the organization of the commemoration in what used to be the elder Gissing’s home and Back Lane School. The success of the commemoration is largely due to him, to Ros Stinton and her companion Michael Compton, to the nationally known journalist Paul Routledge and last but not least to the local authorities and to the Wakefield Civic Society.

George Gissing Remembered

November 22nd 2007 was the 150th anniversary of the birth of George Gissing and the Tourism Department of the City of Wakefield, Wakefield

Civic Society and the Gissing Trust came together to celebrate the occasion in a quite significant way.

In fact the celebrations to honour the memory of George Gissing began a few weeks earlier on the 25th October. On that day Councillor Denise Jeffery, Deputy Leader of Wakefield Council, officially opened the newly refurbished Crown Court Yard to the public. The yard, which is behind and to the side of Wakefield Mechanics' Institution, would have been well known to George Gissing, who would have passed through it every time he attended lectures or used the library there. The yard has been refurbished to a very high standard using the best materials. Set into granite blocks in six-inch high steel letters is the quotation ‘.. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS BAD WEATHER; EVERY SKY HAS ITS BEAUTY..’ from the winter section of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*. Gissing's name has been added at the end of the quotation.

There were two events held on the 22 November. At 1pm the Deputy Mayor of Wakefield, Councillor Jacqui Williams, unveiled a blue plaque on the front of T. W. Gissing's chemist's shop in Westgate. It reads: CHEMIST T.W. GISSING (1829-1870) OWNED THIS SHOP FROM 1856 UNTIL HIS DEATH. HIS ELDEST SON, NOVELIST GEORGE GISSING (1857-1903), WAS BORN IN THE FAMILY HOME TO THE REAR. The Gissing Trust is delighted to see T. W. Gissing commemorated in this way as he played a prominent part in the public life of the town. It is also interesting to recall that the premises were used as a chemist's shop for 125 years. After the unveiling the visitors were invited into the Gissing Centre for refreshments and a chance to see the displays.

On the evening of the 22 November an event was held at the Orangery in Back Lane. It was in this building that George Gissing and his brothers received their early education. This event had two main speakers and a display about the life and work of George Gissing mounted by the Gissing Trust. The first speaker was Paul Routledge, a writer of non-fiction—chiefly political biography—and a columnist with the *Daily Mirror*. His talk, which was entitled “New Grub Street to Fleet Street,” asked the question whether George Gissing would recognise the scribbling scene of today and whether he would approve. The second speaker was Ros Stinton who with her partner, Michael Compton, is well known to many readers of this Journal as a bookseller specialising in the works of George Gissing. She is also one of the Gissing Trustees. Her talk “Selling George Gissing” was about how her interest in Gissing led her to becoming a bookseller. Ros brought along a large selection of books by Gissing. Both talks were

very well received and were followed by a general discussion about George Gissing and his importance to the town.

Gissing was also remembered at the Wakefield Local Studies Library in Balne Lane. Library assistant Jan Croft, who is responsible for the exhibitions there, mounted an excellent display about Gissing in the foyer of the library. It should not be forgotten that the library holds an extensive collection of books by and about Gissing with many first editions including a number of three volume sets. Deborah Scriven, the Local Studies Librarian, takes a great interest in this collection and she ensures that any new books are added to the shelves as they are published.

The local newspapers gave the events good coverage. In the *Yorkshire Post Magazine* for 17 November there was a long article about Gissing covering three and a half pages by Paul Routledge which was accompanied by no less than seven colour photographs. The *Wakefield Express* reported the events in two issues, 16 and 23 November, the latter had six photographs, although it must be admitted that four of them were of members of the general public who had been asked if they had ever heard of George Gissing.

Wakefield has often been accused of not giving George Gissing the recognition that he deserves. Now the City can boast five memorials to our hero. These are, Gissing Road (a street on the Lupset housing estate), a bronze plaque on the family home in Thompson's Yard, a blue plaque on the front of the chemist's shop in Westgate, a quotation from one of Gissing's books in Crown Court Yard and the Gissing Centre. Wakefield's citizens cannot be forced to read George Gissing's books but they now have no excuse for not knowing who and what he was.— Anthony Petyt

The exemplary attachment to Gissing of an honourable section of the Japanese intelligentsia is eloquently demonstrated in a volume which is sure to remain a landmark in Gissing studies in Japan for years. Professor Mitsuharu Matsuoka, of Nagoya University, whose name and professional affiliation are on the masthead of this journal, is the friend but for whose altruistic and disinterested initiative the volume would never have achieved publication. It deserves to stand by the side of the Japanese volume which commemorated the centenary of Gissing's death. Touchingly Mitsu, as he always modestly calls himself, wrote in a personal letter inserted in the beautifully produced book of which he sent a copy: "It is a great pity that we could not publish it in English. All I can say is that the Japanese can understand the nature of Gissing's life and works better than any other people [...]. Gissing and I are congenial spirits."

Literally translated, the title of the book, we are told, is “Society and Culture in the Late Victorian Age with Special Reference to Gissing: In the Year of His Sesquicentennial,” and the jacket can be seen on the site of the publisher, Keisuisha, a Hiroshima firm: <http://www.keisui.co.jp/> It combines a photograph of Queen Victoria at the time of her Golden Jubilee (1887), one of Gissing’s two portraits by Alfred Ellis (1893), and a view of London by Niels Moeller Lund entitled “The Heart of Empire,” showing St. Paul’s Cathedral in the middle distance. On the back of the jacket is the portrait of Gissing (from photographs) by Lily Waldron. The book, 550 pages long, is divided into 25 chapters preceded by an introduction. Four foreign contributors, Jacob Korg, Bouwe Postmus, Graham Law and the present writer have joined their twenty-two Japanese colleagues. Particularly useful to all readers will be the list of illustrations, the introduction and each chapter containing a frontispiece and four or five figures, which range from photographs of Gissing taken at different periods of his life to famous paintings and cartoons from *Punch*. Only full references could do justice to the judicious selection made by the editor. He has certainly done his best to help those of his readers who have never been in Gissing’s footsteps in England, France and Italy to imagine some of the writer’s homes and haunts. For instance Mitsu enables us to visualize the Temple of Ceres at Paestum, Owens College in 1874, Gissing’s home at 70 Huntley Street, the Blue Plaque in Oakley Crescent, Exeter Cathedral and dozens of other Gissing sites, from his youth in Wakefield to his grave in Saint-Jean-de-Luz as it was in 1904. Some of the illustrations of the works are borrowed straight from the original periodicals, those of *Eve’s Ransom* in the *Illustrated London News* and of “The Justice and the Vagabond” in the *English Illustrated Magazine* among others. Anyone who has never seen Gissing’s handwriting will have an opportunity to see it in a facsimile of the first page of *New Grub Street*.

Such homages to his achievement as were paid in Wakefield and by a group of devoted scholars of various universities in far-off Japan Gissing would have thought pleasantly gratifying. He would also have seen them as sweet revenges of time, a subject on which he once wrote with contagious passion. If his attitude to his native town, as we can study it in his correspondence, was for a number of reasons markedly ambiguous, he never denied that, all things considered, he had a weakness for it, perhaps because in his mind Wakefield was ineffaceably connected with his father; in later years he would never think of it without being reminded of the thirteen years during which Thomas Waller Gissing was by his side. The

mark of renewed esteem occasioned by the commemoration that has just taken place would—we may venture to imagine—have appealed to his sense of fairness and justice, which he so often showed.

As for the distinction and strong specificity of his work being recognized and honoured in Japan so many years after his short life, both his brain and his heart would doubtless have responded to them unreservedly. Any item of news he received from abroad which apprised him that he had intelligent readers beyond his sea-girt native island invariably rejoiced him. It is a source of intellectual chagrin to some of his foreign admirers that he never had a chance to hear of a number of translations of his novels and short stories published for instance in Russia, Poland and Denmark. Recognition of his literary merits outside Britain would somehow have reconciled him to human capacity for sound artistic judgment. He certainly never expected that some day in the distant future a number of his works would be highly appreciated in Japan, China and Korea.

So once more Gissing's prediction, made on his deathbed, that his work would not be forgotten to-morrow has proved true.

¹A hitherto unrecorded example is offered by an article by Frank Swinnerton, "Word from London," in the American trade journal *Publishers' Weekly* for 30 September 1957, pp. 27-28. Swinnerton announced the publication of a new edition of *The Private Life of Henry Maitland*, edited by Morchard Bishop. The article is striking on account of the change in the author's attitude towards Gissing that had occurred since the publication of *George Gissing, a Critical Study*, a book which has often been considered a stab in the back by Gissing's fairer critics. He now regretted that the centenary of his predecessor might not be celebrated with *éclat*, for economic reasons: "It is lamentable that one so sincere and individual should be forced by high production costs into the limited secondhand market. There his first editions fetch good prices, and the scarcest of them, 'Isabel Clarendon,' runs as high as £16."

²The variety of the subjects dealt with is apparent in the Table of Contents:

Preface, by Mitsuharu Matsuoka

Introduction: "A Short Biography of Gissing," by Pierre Coustillas

Part One: Society

Ch. 1, Shigeru Koike, "Education: Its form and substance"

Ch. 2, Takao Tomiyama, "Religion: Why didn't Gissing write?"

Ch. 3, Megumi Arai, "Social class: The rise of the lower middle class"

Ch. 4, Hiroko Ishizuka, "Poverty: How to relieve the poor"

Ch. 5, Mitsuharu Matsuoka, "City: Paradise is always for him where he is not"

Part Two: The Age

Ch. 6, Toshikatsu Murayama, "Science: Against evolution"

Ch. 7, Fumie Tamai, "Crime: Crime and violence transgressing the border"

Ch. 8, Graham Law, "Publishing: Gissing and serials"

Ch. 9, Ryota Kanayama, "Influence: Lonesome the floating swan must be"

Ch. 10, Mihoko Ishida, “Englishness: Aspects of nostalgia for ‘the south’”

Part Three: Gender

Ch. 11, Ryoko Ota, “Feminism: Gissing and the ‘new woman’”

Ch. 12, Motoko Nakada, “Sexuality: In the age of ‘sexual anarchy’”

Ch. 13, Mihoko Takeda, “Body: The ‘degenerate’ body of the fin de siècle”

Ch. 14, Akiko Kimura, “Marriage: A contradictory relationship in the late Victorian age”

Ch. 15, Takanobu Tanaka, “Misogyny: Male confusion and resistance”

Part Four: The Author

Ch. 16, Midori Niino, “Self: Reading, writing, and the body”

Ch. 17, Ayaka Komiya, “Exile: In search of lost home”

Ch. 18, Bouwe Postmus, “Travel: An exile’s homecoming”

Ch. 19, Yumiko Hirono, “Art of Fiction: Gissing’s narrative technique and characterization”

Ch. 20, Yuji Miyamaru, “Autobiographical elements: Separation of the writing self and the written self”

Part Five: Ideologies

Ch. 21, Hideo Kajiyama, “Realism: The unnaturalness of being naturalistic”

Ch. 22, Jacob Korg, “Humanism: An exile from the age”

Ch. 23, Akemi Yoshida, “Aestheticism: The pursuit of ideals through beauty”

Ch. 24, Yukimitsu Namiki, “Classicism: A portrait of a classicist”

Ch. 25, Pierre Coustillas, “Pacifism: A temperament in the light of history”

Postface by Mitsuharu Matsuoka

The book also includes a Chronology by Akiko Takei, a Bibliography and a List of Illustrations, the latter two in English, Notes on contributors and an Index.

The Admirable Kate Boughton: George Gissing’s Housekeeper in Dorking¹

MARKUS NEACEY
Sandwich, Kent

In April 1898, upon his return to England from a winter tour of Southern Italy, and a short stay in Potsdam with Eduard Bertz, George Gissing found himself in worrying straits. Estranged from his second wife, Edith, separated from his two children, and bereft of nearly all financial means, he had immediately to set about finding a new home and, according to his own estimate, to earn £500 to support body and soul. Within a month he had established himself in a house at 7 Clifton Terrace in Dorking, a small market town in Surrey lying about ten miles to the south of the Greater London boundary. Here he intended to hide away from Edith, who was

7 Clifton Terrace, Dorking as it is to-day (Markus Neacey)

determined to discover his whereabouts, so that he could devote himself to his work.

But before Gissing could settle down to any writing, there was the little matter of finding a housekeeper to be seen to. So he advertised – possibly in the *Dorking Advertiser* – and on Tuesday, 17 May, he received a letter of application from a Mrs. Kate Boughton, a widow with four children, who lived at 19 Effingham Road in nearby Reigate, an address Gissing recorded in his *Memorandum Book*.² He also made a note of a Mr Wilson’s address in Watford – this was William Charles Wilson, a relative of Mrs. Boughton’s, who may have provided a reference.³ The same day Gissing posted a letter to Eliza Orme, to whom it seems Mrs. Boughton had referred him. Miss Orme, a friend of several years’ standing, had valiantly allowed Edith to share her home at Tulse Hill, Lambeth during part of the time he was away in Italy, and she may have known Mrs. Boughton when the latter had formerly lived in Lambeth. On the Thursday, probably owing to Miss Orme’s recommendation, and despite thinking the applicant “too respectable,” as his diary informs us, he “decided to engage” her.⁴ Then on the Saturday afternoon Mrs. Boughton came to Dorking to be interviewed, and Gissing, finding her “a very decent woman,” told her of his decision.⁵ Thereupon it was duly arranged that she would live in and receive a yearly £18 in wages, and would start work the following Wednesday, 25 May.

Gissing, who had no great regard for the domestic class, an opinion born of painful experiences in Exeter and Epsom, did not at first take too kindly to Mrs. Boughton. The day after she took up her employment in his house, he writes in his diary, “My housekeeper dry and distasteful. Strikes the note so hateful to me – sneering at country things in comparison with London. But she cooks well and seems fairly clean.”⁶ These comments are a little harsh, for Kate Boughton was a Londoner through and through and merely reflecting the superiority the born city dweller often feels in comparison with country folk. But Gissing stuck with her, and over the next few months his original opinion of her underwent a major sea change. Just three months later, in the middle of August 1898, upon the occasion of a rare visit by his mother, he writes to Gabrielle Fleury, who had only recently entered his life, “My mother made the journey without difficulty, in spite of the great heat, & is now very comfortable here. She seems to enjoy herself, & my excellent housekeeper does everything necessary.”⁷ Hence Kate Boughton’s refined abilities had quickly gained Gissing’s trust and appreciation.

Third International George Gissing Conference
Lille, France
27-28 March 2008

Conference information and registration forms can be obtained

- **at the conference website** (for online registration):
evenements.univ-lille3.fr/recherche/colloque-george-gissing

- **by contacting:**
Christine Huguet
477, rue du milieu
62610 Balinghem, FRANCE
Phone: (00 33) 321 36 08 58

e-mail: christine.huguet-meriaux@univ-lille3.fr

Over the course of the eleven months Kate was employed by Gissing she remained a constant presence in his everyday life as the occasional references to her in his diary and letters reveal. Though often neutral, his comments about her are never less than respectful and at times reveal a certain solicitude. For example, in a letter to H. G. Wells towards the end of June, he makes mention that his “housekeeper objects to being left alone in the house for even a single night, & it isn’t yet clear how this obstacle is to be got over. However, she has a female relative at Reigate, who may possibly be induced to come & stay with her.”⁸ Gissing was planning to visit the Wellses for a week in early July and so it was arranged that Mrs. Boughton’s maternal aunt, Charlotte Mckibbin, who lived at Reigate, would come to stay with her in the house. In a diary entry on his return from Worcester Park, he writes, “Found Mrs. Boughton all right.”⁹ So all had gone off well. Next a letter to Gabrielle on 9 September, tells us in passing that, when at length Edith discovered Gissing’s address and had made the dreaded visit two days previously with Alfred in tow, it is Mrs.

Boughton who answered the door. And once Edith had left without making a scene, one can imagine Gissing confiding in this trustworthy woman, whom he knew to be a widow and mother of four, if he had not already done so. Two days later he writes to Gabrielle, "I must tell you something. I mentioned to my housekeeper the other day that 'Mlle Fleury' would probably be my guest early in October for a few days. Her reply was: 'I am so glad. It will be so delightful to hear *her voice* again.'"¹⁰ Gabrielle and Mrs. Boughton, who had in common the fact that they had entered Gissing's life at around the same time, developed a strong regard for each other; and as her words make plain she, who like Gissing knew life's burdens and sorrows, could value the Frenchwoman's importance to him.

Now and then Kate had a day off work. Upon these days she was in the habit of visiting Charlotte Mckibbin in Reigate, who, a long-standing widow herself, may have cared for her children. In early December, after Gissing had suffered a prolonged spell of illness, she was at hand to help him with the vegetarian diet his doctor had recommended. To Ellen, his sister, he writes, "As for vegetarianism, the report is only half satisfactory. Mrs. Boughton has made me all the dishes & excellently."¹¹ A few weeks later there is a "little present" for her from Gabrielle. But her joy of this and Christmas was overshadowed eleven days later by the sudden death at the age of thirty-eight of her sister, Harriet Huntington, whose funeral, the fourth she had been to in the past two years, she attended on the 28 December 1898 – as Gissing noted in his diary.¹² This unhappy occurrence must have come as a shocking and dispiriting reminder to her of her own recent misfortune.

The new year found Gissing preparing the way for a new life in France. In early April after months of illness, longing now only to be away from Dorking and together with Gabrielle in a healthier climate, he writes, "I am getting stronger, but there is no doubt whatever that my progress has been delayed by the warm, moist wind. Even Mrs. Boughton has complained day after day of feeling so languid & depressed."¹³ Considering the circumstances, it would be understandable and not at all surprising if Mrs. Boughton's depression actually stemmed both from the fact that her time with Gissing, a period of restful and happy employment, was fast approaching its end, and concerns about the future. And so on 22 April 1899, after just under a year's occupancy, Gissing "said good-bye to Dorking" and took his leave of Mrs. Boughton. One of her last duties was to remain "to see the furniture removed to [the] warehouse."¹⁴ What a heavy and desolate hour

that must have been for her as she waited alone in the house with Gissing gone forever, her employment at an end, and her prospects so uncertain.

Just over five months later, in October 1899, Gissing wrote to her from Paris, where he was presently living, “asking her to go to Dorking and sell furniture at the warehouse.”¹⁵ A week later he sent a cheque on to her to cover her expenses, and so ended Kate Boughton’s professional relationship with Gissing. That she had made an enduring impression on him, and won his high regard as well as his sympathy is confirmed by a letter addressed to Clara Collet on 22 October 1899, in which he writes,

I want to speak to you about Mrs. Boughton. She has taken a house at Harrow (8 Ferndale Villas, Station Road) & hopes to make her living by letting rooms. Now you know that she is an admirable housekeeper, & really a very honest woman, so, if ever you have the chance, I feel sure you would recommend her to anyone in search of decent lodgings. With her four children, she will have a hardish struggle to live. Unfortunately, I don’t know who else to write to on the subject. I wish I could be of use.¹⁶

Clearly, as one gathers from this, Gissing was keeping in touch with Mrs. Boughton and informed of her changing situation. One wonders if Clara Collet was able to help her in any way, although as we shall see, whatever she may have done could not prevent further misfortune from befalling her.

After saying goodbye to Gissing on 22 April 1899, one must assume that Kate Boughton never saw him again. They appear, however, to have exchanged some letters over the few years that remained to Gissing. Were the letters to be located, what might they not tell us about the fortunes of this remarkable woman, or, of no less fascination, her view of Gissing himself and of Gabrielle Fleury? Is it not often those who play a lesser part in Gissing’s life, like Brian Ború Dunne, who afford us the most revealing and surprising insights into his character – because more impartial? As it happens, the last word in their relationship, and the only letter of Kate Boughton’s that has come down to us is the following letter of condolence, addressed to Mrs. Gissing, that is Gabrielle, on 31 December 1903, just three days after her husband’s untimely death:

8 Ferndale Villas,
Station Rd,
Harrow/Midsex.
December 31, 1903.

Dear Mrs. Gissing,

How can I express to you my great sorrow at seeing the sad news of Mr. Gissing’s death.

I can only say I deeply sympathize with you dear Mrs. Gissing in your great loss, but I feel truly thankful that *you* were with *him* to the end.

I knew by his cheerful letters that you had made the last few years of his life so very happy. Thank God for that; he well deserved *all* to have been as such. His great regret must always have been, that he had not met you sooner.

I knew how well he loved you, by his way of speaking of you.

I tried to make the few months I had the privilege of knowing him a little more cheerful for oh! it was a sad lonely time for him: until *you* came into his life.

If I can do anything at any time, do ask me. At such a time as this one is so utterly helpless.

I can only pray that God will help you thro' this severe & terrible sorrow, for only He can. I know this from experience, I too lost one, many years ago, dearer to me than life, but have not got over it yet (as people say). So I know that yours will be an ever present sorrow, but think dear Mrs. Gissing what his life would have been without *you*, & look forward to that meeting we are promised, no more *parting tears* or *sorrow then*.

I have been wondering dare I ask you if you have a photo to spare of him? I should keep it as a sacred gift, or anything of his. I do not need anything to remind me of his kindness to myself & children, but should like something to keep of his.

Will you take this letter as I write it, & not think I am taking a liberty. I mean it to be one of sympathy, from one lonely sorrowing woman, to another. God bless & keep you in this sad sorrow.

Yours Sincerely,
K. Boughton¹⁷

This letter from the heart bespeaks Mrs. Boughton's regard for Gissing and her understanding of his unhappy situation during the short time she knew him. Aside from that of Eduard Bertz, it is surely the most affecting of the condolence letters Gabrielle received. After reading it, one regrets that she had not been his housekeeper sooner. For, besides creating an atmosphere of domestic warmth in his house, she clearly brought stability to his life by means of her highly competent handling of her household duties. Following the writing of this letter, Mrs. Boughton disappears from sight. In Gissing studies she remains an invisible woman, receiving no mention by name in any of the Gissing biographies, despite her positive encouragement of his relationship with Gabrielle, as it were, from behind the scenes. Fortunately the notes to *The Collected Letters of George Gissing* tell us that she was born in 1860, was the widow of Frederick Boughton, "an examiner in Her Majesty's patent office", who had died in 1896, leaving her to support four children, three boys and a girl, and that she had died in 1922.¹⁸ But these plain facts are as nothing to the brief glimpse one has of Kate Boughton in her own words.

More than a century after Mrs. Boughton wrote to Gabrielle could one hope to learn anything more about her, to trace her descendants, and to discover the whereabouts of the letters she exchanged with Gissing and Gabrielle? As any genealogist knows, tracing families forward in time is like following different paths through a dense forest only to find each path leads to a dead end. Would it be any different in the search for Mrs. Boughton's descendants? The answer is yes, it would, and more so than one could ever have hoped at the outset! Because, after all the searching through census records and official records, the path taken has led the author to none other than Kate's granddaughter, who to his utter surprise is still alive and living in Wales. And if that was not enough, to cap all, a letter hastily sent off to her resulted in the prompt and unexpected reply that she would readily and kindly pass on to the author all the personal papers she still had relating to her grandmother – so that he could use them for this article and then eventually arrange to have them placed in a suitable archive. The said archival material duly arrived over a period of three weeks in two separate parcels. And what a treasure trove the contents of these parcels proved to be: for they contain numerous original photographs and documents of especial value to the social historian. Yet more valuable even than these parcels, are the fond reminiscences Kate's granddaughter sent the author in answer to his many queries about her family and her grandmother. Consequently, it is now possible to see what Gissing's housekeeper looked like at different times in her life (even how she looked when Gissing knew her), to give a fuller picture of her family situation, and to correct a few inaccuracies in *The Collected Letters*.

Kate Boughton came into the world on 15 July 1860 as Kate Huntington at 25 Cuthbert Street in Paddington, which is, at a mile distance from each, about half way between addresses Gissing occupied in Westbourne Park and Marylebone some twenty years later. Her paternal grandparents were Henry Huntington (1798-1881), a clerk receiver at the Inland Revenue, and Emma Venden (1806-1876). Kate was the daughter of Leonard Venden Huntington (1824-1900), a railway clerk, and Donna Maria Victoria Huntington, née Gibson (1835-1911). She was the fourth in line of eight children: Leonard (b. 1855), Albert (b. 1858), Harriet (b. 1859), Charlotte (b. 1862), Harry (b. 1864), Mary (b. 1868), and Laura (b. 1870).

In the 1860s the family moved down the road to number 44 Cuthbert Street, where they remained into the 1880s. It is here, just off the Edgware Road and around the corner from Little Venice, that Kate was brought up. She does not appear with the family in the 1871 census, so she may have

Kate and Frederick Boughton and three of their children, Olive, Winifred and Leonard, c. 1891 (Mimi Hatton)

been sent away to boarding school, a common fate in those days for lower middle-class children. Then, in the summer of 1879 at the age of nineteen, she got married in Wandsworth to a remarkable young fellow, by name Frederick Edward Boughton. The son of the well-known architect, Frederick Charles Boughton (1830-1897) and Matilda Boughton, née Dobson (1835-1868), Frederick junior was born in Newington, Surrey, on Christmas Day in 1856. Like Gissing, he was an exceptional student, carrying all before him in his studies. Most notable among the many awards he won during his education was the Queen's Prize in the examination of science classes held at the Birkbeck Institute in May 1877. A biography of him from the September 1887 edition of *Science and Art* provides a fuller description of his career and his brilliant abilities:

He selected, and was educated for, the mechanical engineering profession. During the time he was working in the drawing-office he attended the evening classes at the Birkbeck Institution, with such extraordinary success that he gained the three Scholarships of the Institution, first-class honours (first place) in *each* of the physics examinations of the Science and Art Department, and the silver medal in electrical engineering of the City and Guilds of London Institute. He also obtained several studentships in training at the Normal School of Science in physics, and again took first place (first class) at the examination; in consequence of which the late Prof. Guthrie selected him as his assistant, in which capacity he acted for two years.

He was afterwards employed at the Science and Art Department, and subsequently at the City and Guilds of London Institute; occupying his evenings in acting as Demonstrator to the physics classes at the Birkbeck, and private coaching in physics, mechanics, &c.

Subsequently he obtained an Assistant Examinership at the Patent Office, where so many of our best scientific men go. He was also appointed Lecturer on Physics and Electrical Technology at the Birkbeck Institution, succeeding Mr. W. J. Wilson, for many years the Principal Demonstrator in Physics at South Kensington.¹⁹

The occasion of this piece was to celebrate Boughton's astounding teaching success at the Birkbeck Institute. Undoubtedly he was a gifted and inspirational teacher as the article goes on to elucidate:

Allowing a little for the fact that he draws perhaps the best raw material, his successes in the past and present years are phenomenal, for at the Science and Art Department examinations during the last three years 403 first class, and 187 second class certificates were gained, including 6 in honours. The proportion of first and second is certainly unparalleled in our experience... 29 passed in physics out of 30 competed. Patent Office Examinations (for Assistant Examinerships), 16 qualified in electricity out of 17 competed. Oxford and Cambridge Universities: open Scholarships in Physical Science. Royal University, Ireland: several "specially commended" successes.²⁰

The success of his classes is put down to “the thoroughly ‘objective’ method adopted in teaching” and the “informal (conversational) classes which are frequently held.”²¹ Below a fine portrait of Frederick Boughton, which dominates the page and reveals a handsome, well-kempt Victorian gentleman with a kindly, yet absorbed gaze, the article ends with the statement: “We congratulate the Birkbeck Institute on again having the advantage of Mr. Boughton’s services for the coming session. His splendid abilities, coupled with a genial and happy manner, cannot but draw to the Institute year after year a still greater number of the young people of scientific London.”²²

Among Kate Boughton’s personal papers is the following poem about her husband, dated 20 May 1890, which was probably written by a colleague or student of his:

Father Boughton

You are old Mister Boughton, the young man said
And you know a great deal about light
With Co² also you’ve fill’d up your head
But really I don’t think it right.
“In the days of my youth,” Mister Boughton replied,
“Most young fellows went on the loose
But my evenings to science I always applied
And I find it a great deal of use!”

You are old Mister B— said the youngster, quite bold
Yet you don’t care a fig about art,
You never go out on the booze I am told
And you never have games with a “tart”!
“In the days of my youth,” Mister Boughton replied,
“I’m afraid I was not very straight
But solace I get, it cannot be denied
From the rollicking subject of viii!”

You are old, said the youth, and learn’d in the law
Of magnetic attraction they say,
And you to your students incessantly jaw
Now tell me the reason I pray!
“In the days of my youth I could talk like a bird.
But now that I’ve taken a wife,
It’s seldom if ever I get in a word,
Thank Goodness! it’s only for life!”

I’ve heard, said the youth, when you send up your claim,
The clerks at S.K. dont go through it!

You'll excuse me I hope, if once more I exclaim
Pray how do you manage to do it.
"When a youth," replied Freddy, "I work'd at S.K.
and small was the work I did.
So when for any teaching I'm wanting the pay
I send all the clerks there a 'quid'!"

You've a wife and three children I see, said the youth,
(whilst coming to see you I met 'em).
I should like you to tell me the whole of the truth
Pray how do you manage to get 'em.
"Excuse me, my friend," Freddy Boughton replied,
"Such a question as that I must baffle
For children to get I have never yet tried
For I won my three kids in a raffle!"²³

For the 1892-93 session at the Birkbeck Institute, Boughton himself offered several prizes for experimental physics, one amounting to twelve guineas and to be called "The Boughton Prize", and the others "prizes of books of the value of Three Guineas, Two Guineas, and One Guinea."²⁴ Perhaps it was a tradition at the institute for lecturers to offer prizes as a form of incentive to their students.

Married life for the young couple had started at 12 Talma Road in Brixton. But there were many moves over the years. During the 1880s and early 1890s, whilst Frederick established and enhanced his professional reputation, Kate gave birth to two boys and two girls (not three boys and one girl as previously thought): Leonard (b. 1882) at 88 Stockwell Park Road in Lambeth, Olive (b. 1884) at 30 Alfred Place West in Kensington, Winifred (b. 1889) at Holborn, and Frederick (b. 1892) at 2 Park Villas, Lower Downs Road in Epsom. A large photograph from 1891 shows a handsome family group in a tranquil garden setting. Seated, with Olive standing next to her and Winifred on her lap, Kate is seen to be an attractive, smiling young woman, whilst Leonard clearly takes after his father in looks. During these early years of marriage and motherhood, Kate cultivated a passion for opera. She actually named Winifred Olga after her favourite singer, possibly Olga Pouskowa, a member of the Russian Opera Company, who sang at the Albert Hall on Monday, 8 October 1888. In turn Winifred would pass her middle name on to her daughter. Kate was "also quite religious and a Wesleyan."²⁵

Around 1890 Frederick Boughton copied out a poem, which, in retrospect, seems as strangely and poignantly prophetic as the novels in which Gissing sometimes prefigures events which occurred later in his life.

Because of its relevance to Kate's marriage, I cite the poem by Saxe Holm (Helen Hunt Jackson) in full:

Three Kisses of Farewell

“Three, only three my darling,
Separate, solemn, slow;
Not like the swift and joyous ones
We used to know
When we kissed because we loved each other
Simply to taste love's sweet,
And lavished our kisses as the summer
Lavishes heat, –
But as they kiss whose hearts are wrong,
When hope and fear are spent,
And nothing is left to give, except
A sacrament!

“First of the three, my darling,
Is sacred unto pain;
We have hurt each other often;
We shall again,
When we pine because we miss each other,
And do not understand
How the written words are so much colder
Than eye and hand.
I kiss thee, dear, for all such pain
Which we may give or take;
Buried, forgiven, before it comes
For our love's sake!

“The second kiss, my darling,
Is full of joy's sweet thrill;
We have blessed each other always;
We always will.
We shall reach until we feel each other,
Past all of time and space;
We shall listen till we hear each other,
In every place;
The earth is full of messengers,
Which love sends to and fro;
I kiss thee, darling, for all joy
Which we shall know!

“The last kiss, my darling,
My love – I cannot see
Through my tears, as I remember
What it may be.

We may die and never see each other,
Die with no time to give
Any sign that our hearts are faithful
To die, as live.
Token of what they will not see
Who see our parting breath,
This one last kiss, my darling, seals
The seal of death!"²⁶

To his handwritten copy of the poem Frederick Boughton appended the words, "I know these lines right thro' by heart, little pet: I have taken a liking to them."²⁷ Kate kept and cherished this copy until the end of her days. And how sadly and presciently the words of the last stanza must have resonated in later years, whenever she came to read them.

By late September 1896 the new semester was fast approaching. Already a *syllabus* of lectures had been published detailing the courses in "Experimental Physics" to be given by "Mr. Frederick E. Boughton" for the 1896-97 session at the Birkbeck Institute.²⁸ The syllabus ends with the announcement that "Mr. Boughton will attend at the Institution from 6 to 8 p.m., on September 28th, 29th, and 30th, and on October 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, to give any further information which may be required."²⁹ Scarcely four weeks later, after seventeen years of married bliss, "Freddy" as he liked to be called, this bear of a man, this ambitious and superlative scientist, this fine teacher, but above all this beloved father and husband, was cut down in his prime. And so it was that on 24 October 1896, after fighting for his life for eight days, Frederick finally succumbed to enteritis and peritonitis. Following heart failure and a sixteen hour operation, he died in his home at 20 Gubyon Avenue, Herne Hill, with Kate at his side, just two months short of his fortieth birthday.

In his will Frederick left his wife all his personal effects and an estate valued at £1139.10.0 but worth in net terms a mere £147.5.10. Suddenly, with four children to care for, Kate found herself, amidst her despair, in distressing circumstances. At some time in 1897, compelled to give up their home in Herne Hill, she and her children moved to 19 Effingham Road, Reigate, in close vicinity to her aunt, Charlotte Mckibbin, at number 33. But misfortune soon came Kate's way again, when, on 21 December, her father-in-law, Frederick Charles Boughton, passed away. Unfortunately, in his will, which dates from 1884, he left nothing to her and the children – since the will was not changed after his son's death, one supposes that he died of an enduring illness. It is five months after this date that Kate

eventually found work as Gissing's housekeeper, and for the time being was able to support her family.

After she ceased working for Gissing in April 1899, Kate moved her family to 8 Ferndale Villas in Harrow. In the meantime Leonard, her elder boy, now sixteen, had entered into business and was able to contribute to the family income. Six months later we learn from Gissing that she was intending to take in boarders. Sadly times were hard for Kate Boughton, and life must have been a tremendous struggle during the winter of 1899. In the event by 1900 her situation had worsened to such an extent that she found she was no longer able to support her family. It would seem that the lodging-house venture had come to nothing, and because the only work she was suited to, that of a governess or housekeeper, was nearly always a living-in job, small children were obviously an impediment to such prospects. Although desperate to keep together what was hers, she was left with no choice but to put her two daughters, Olive and Winifred, into an orphanage. Unfortunately, there were no widows' pensions in those days, so the girls were given over to the London Orphan Asylum in Watford. Originally based in Clapton, East London, the orphanage, which housed 450 children, moved to a beautiful rural setting in Watford in 1871 after an outbreak of typhoid fever (in the 1980s the site, which has since been encroached upon and swallowed up by dense housing and shopping arcades, was converted into residential apartments). The institution, which was under the patronage of the Prince and Princess of Wales, provided all of its children with a good education, and was a fairly decent place compared to many other contemporary establishments of a similar nature. All the same, the parting from their mother, coming so soon after the death of their father, affected the girls for the rest of their lives. As Kate's granddaughter explains, "Although I am sure my grandmother loved her 4 children, circumstances meant she had to part with them at an early age. I feel that this affected all 4 of them in later life and made it difficult for them to make good sound relationships."³⁰ Soon after her daughters entered the orphanage, Kate's father, Leonard Huntington, died at the age of seventy-six. One wonders whether Gissing was still corresponding with Mrs. Boughton at this time, and if he knew of the calamity that had befallen her. The 1901 census shows her still living at 8 Ferndale Villas in Harrow with her two boys and one boarder, a bar student. Two years later Leonard took advantage of a government scheme and emigrated to Canada, where he trained as a lumberjack. Thus, in the space of a mere seven years, that picture of family bliss from 1891 had been torn asunder by the hand of merciless fate, and all that remained

to Kate was her last born, Frederick. By 1911, aged only nineteen, he too was gone, having emigrated to Australia, where he remained to the end of his days.

How Kate Boughton must have suffered during these early years of the new century. The one photo that survives from this time, taken in 1900, shows a pensive, bespectacled woman with a proud, upright bearing, but what a contrast to that young, smiling and vivacious face of just a decade before! And how unfortunate is her fate when contrasted with that of the family of her husband's younger brother. By the turn of the century Robert Boughton, three years Frederick's junior, was an established architect, like his father before him, had been married for fifteen years, and was already parent to eleven children, the oldest of whom was fourteen.

Little is known of how Kate Boughton came through the years leading up to the First World War. In 1904, according to her letter to Gabrielle, she was still living at Harrow. Her granddaughter believes that she may well have been employed as a housekeeper in Ireland to her cousin, the aforementioned William Charles Wilson (1868-1935), who worked as a lawyer or barrister and "lived in a large house backing onto the seashore at Merrion Gates, Dublin."³¹ His father, William John Wilson (1838-1916), "an inventor in the field of plate glass photography," had preceded Frederick Boughton in his post at Birkbeck College.³² Mrs. Boughton's absence from historical directories from 1904 onwards would seem to confirm her granddaughter's surmise. Yet it is more likely that she assumed the role of housekeeper to Mrs. Olivia Wilson, née Gibson (1838-1910), her maternal aunt and William's mother – "to whom he was devoted" – that is, at Pagett House in Watford.³³ Kate had named her elder daughter after her. Certainly, in this capacity, as we shall shortly see, she earned great appreciation from William Charles Wilson. Though living apart from their mother, her daughters were well prepared for life by the London Orphan Asylum. Whilst there Winifred "won a prize for French (a French dictionary)".³⁴ Upon leaving the institution the girls were helped into good jobs: Olive went to work in the Civil Service, where she remained all her working life, and Winifred got employment as a Morse code telegraphist at the Finchley Road Post Office. Kate's mother, Donna Huntington, recently widowed, was also living in North West London, at a Willesden address, with two of her younger daughters. Charlotte and Laura, aged 31 and 38, were still unmarried, and working respectively as a saleswoman in a fancy goods shop and a manageress in a bar. Of Kate's other siblings, Leonard,

Albert, Harry, and Mary had all married. Her mother died in 1911 at the age of seventy-six.

Mrs. Boughton in 1900
(Mimi Hatton)

During the first years of the Great War Kate Boughton lived in Golders Green. In November 1914 her younger daughter, Winifred, married Sydney Frank Hatton, the son of an engraver. Nine months later, Kate became a grandmother, when their only child, Mimi Olga Hatton, was born on 2 July 1915 at Sydney's parents' home at 12 Well Walk, Hampstead. By this time Sydney had joined the Middlesex Imperial Yeomanry, in which he attained the rank of sergeant and was to spend four years fighting on battlefronts in Egypt, Gallipoli, Salonika, and Palestine. After the war he trained to be a teacher at Birkbeck College and "later managed 2 evening institutes in the slums of London" near York Road and in Blundell Street.³⁵ He was also a keen writer, composing "many articles and 2 books":³⁶ *The Yarn of the Yeoman* is a memoir of his war years with the Middlesex Imperial Yeomanry, detailing in a vivid narrative how he survived some of the most ferocious and treacherous battles of the First World War, and *London's Bad Boys*, one of the earliest studies of teenage delinquency.³⁷ In view of his interest in and devotion to social concerns in the London slums, one wonders if he ever read any of Gissing's works. Meanwhile, in 1916 or

thereabouts, whilst he was away in Palestine, his family had to remove to “grotty rooms” at 39 Chetwin Road in Highgate.³⁸ It also became necessary for Winifred to seek employment, and it seems that she went back to working in the post office in Finchley Road. As a result Kate began to “mind” her granddaughter, Mimi, at her home in Golders Green.³⁹ Her elder daughter, Olive, was also living in the area, at 48 Woodstock Avenue. From this time Mimi remembers her grandmother as “a very kind lady dressed always in navy blue serge or black gowns, skirts to the floor, long sleeves, high neck and many covered buttons down the front, wearing spectacles (steel-rimmed?).”⁴⁰

At the war’s end Mrs. Boughton was living at 72 Hanover Road in Willesden. This was to be her last address. By June 1921, already diagnosed with arterio-sclerosis, her health had begun to deteriorate. As Mimi explains,

One day I was there with her, alone, probably only about 4 years old [perhaps almost six years old] – very young, and she fell down on the floor and couldn’t get up. I was very frightened and ran next door, probably screaming. The neighbour came in and I don’t think I saw my grandmother again. She had had a stroke, so I imagine she died soon after this.⁴¹

She had had a cerebral haemorrhage. Kate Boughton died just under a year later on 4 April 1922 at St John and St Elizabeth Hospital, Grove End Road in St John’s Wood, less than two miles away from where she started life. She was sixty-one. As she died intestate, her estate, the gross value of which was £270.11.11 but net value nil, and all her personal effects were made over to her elder daughter, Olive Kate Boughton. Since Kate’s letters to Gissing and Gabrielle have not been located, it would seem that they were destroyed or lost because Olive was unaware of their significance. When Olive died in Brighton on 1 September 1951, the main recipient of her will was her niece, Mimi Hatton, who after settling all her financial affairs found that there was no inheritance left. Neither did Mimi come into possession of any letters from Gissing to her grandmother. Moreover, since she knew nothing of her grandmother’s connection with Gissing in any case, one must conclude that they are lost forever.

She does however recall visiting her grandmother’s grave. She writes, “Later, I remember doing long bus journeys from Highgate to the terminus, somewhere near the Crystal Palace (was it a 27 bus). The cemetery was called Elmers End, so I think this is where she was buried, presumably with my grandfather, whom I never knew.”⁴² A visit I made to the cemetery brought confirmation of Mimi’s details. According to cemetery records

Kate Boughton was buried next to her husband on 7 April 1922 at Beckenham Cemetery (formerly Crystal Palace Cemetery) in Bromley in the county of Kent. The nearest train station just around the corner from the main entrance to the cemetery is called Birkbeck. Sadly, as the cemetery officer informed me, the plot of ground surrounding the chapel, where the Boughtons were buried, was destroyed by a bomb during the Second World War. The ground has since been replotted.

Not long after Kate's death, her former employer and cousin, William Charles Wilson, became the family's benefactor. To cite Mimi again,

When I was 7 years old this cousin Willy came to England and rescued us from the grotty apartments we were living in at 39 Chetwin Road, Kentish Town, London. He bought a 14 room house in the next road, 71 Dartmouth Park Road. He put us into it and lived there himself. He had his own rooms. My cousin Willy was a rather eccentric bachelor. Subsequently, he paid for my education (from 8-18) at an excellent school – North London Collegiate (then in Camden Town) and later for my college fees at Bishop Otter College, Chichester. He bought me a bicycle and took me on cycling holidays. Now I could never understand why he did this for us, but it could have been due to my grandmother.⁴³

William Charles Wilson was a former student of St John's College at the University of Cambridge, where he obtained second class honours in the Classical Tripos in 1889 and an M.A. in Law in 1897. Upon his death in December 1935 aged sixty-seven, he bequeathed sums of £15,000 each to his former university, King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, the Cancer Research Fund, and £500 to the London Orphan Asylum. In addition he gave ownership of the house at 71 Dartmouth Park Road to Winifred, bequeathed £5000 to Olive, and included a clause which runs as follows:

I bequeath to my executors the sum of two thousand pounds, the income thereof to be used for the maintenance, education and benefit of Mimi Hatton until she attain the age of twenty four years and I direct that on her attaining such age the capital sum shall be transferred to her.⁴⁴

William Charles Wilson was buried at Beckenham Cemetery alongside Frederick and Kate Boughton.

Except for Olive, who died at the age of 67, Kate's children were blessed with long lives. Her first-born, Leonard, died in Canada in 1962 aged 80; Frederick died in Brisbane in 1968 aged 76; Winifred and her husband Sydney died within a fortnight of each other in April 1975, aged 85 and 84 respectively. Winifred's brothers and sister remained unmarried all their lives. Mimi Olga Hatton, now in her 93rd year, Kate's sole grandchild, is the last link in the family.

Mimi Hatton, modest though she is about her career, is deserving of special mention in her own right. Having received her teacher training at Bishop Otter Memorial School at Chichester, she went on to work at an infant school in Rhyl Street, Kentish Town. But after only one month, upon failing the medical examination, demanded by the London County Council, because of her poor eyesight, she became unemployed. From time to time relief from unemployment came with the occasional menial job or a teaching supply post as an assistant mistress at Rokesley Avenue Infants School in Hornsey. Eventually, in 1937, Mimi gained permanent employment at St. Mary Cray Council School in Kent, where a medical examination was not required. It is there that she achieved her official registration as a teacher on 1 September 1938, and where she was based at the outset of the Second World War. She writes,

At the beginning of the war I had a class in a gypsy camp, then worked in a village school in Kent with a class of 55 entrant infants under a very progressive headmaster. Subsequently there came a headmaster I could not work with, who walked around with a little cane under his arm. It was a question of – read – whack! whack! This one reported me to the office for insubordination! I don't think it did him much good as I was already notorious for doing things my way.⁴⁵

These latter incidents occurred whilst Mimi was still teaching at St. Mary Cray School. In 1944, when fear of bombing gripped the school authorities, she was sent to organise evacuees of the Orpington area, St. Mary Cray and Petts Wood, who were already in North Wales. There she arranged classes in “tabernacle vestries, a disused sawmill and a disused science laboratory”,⁴⁶ and “taught children of all ages, often without equipment.”⁴⁷ This experience was to prepare her for her greatest challenge, the one for which she is now remembered and commemorated at the Institute of Education. But first, upon cessation of the Second World War, she returned with the school to St. Mary Cray. Her next school was Swanley Secondary Modern where she was in charge of a group of children who could not read and with whom she successfully practised her own pioneering teaching methods.

In 1946, whilst still in Kent, she read about the work of the BFES (British Families Education Service) in Germany and applied to join the organisation. After passing an interview in September 1946 and being accepted, she immediately readied herself for departure to Germany. The journey to her initial destination on 18 December was by no means straightforward, as the following report on the Institute of Education website reveals:

Miss Hatton travelled to Germany by steamer from Harwich to the Hook of Holland. The journey then continued by road – in a small, canvas-backed lorry. Mimi spent Christmas 1946 at the Herford female transit camp. When the weather improved and the roads became passable Mimi travelled by Volkswagen beetle to Bad Zwischenahn.⁴⁸

Bad Zwischenahn is a small lakeside resort in Lower Saxony about halfway between Oldenburg to the East and the Dutch border to the west. On her arrival there “she found a group of children in an undisciplined state abusing the Germans charged with looking after them.” Mimi set up a school at the Brigade Headquarters of “The Desert Rats” in a villa by the lake and made it a rule that “all adults would be treated with respect.”⁴⁹ The following is an extract from her log,

Playground is at present 2 miles long and 1 mile wide – the lake being frozen ... Having begged soap, soda etc., gave the boiler man a demonstration of scrubbing English housewife style ... Great joy. In the cellar I found hundreds of Canadian Army Regulations on green card, foolscap size ... One side blank so my German assistants brought some of these to the school and I directed the making of reading cards and sum cards. – Have no printed books at all ... My hair and quills from swans on the lake, and twigs = paint brushes.⁵⁰

Owing to Mimi’s ingenuity under primitive conditions, her school was a tremendous success in Germany. She remained at Bad Zwischenahn until 1949, and then was posted to Oldenburg School, where she became the headmistress. Finally, in 1950 she was sent to the BFES Nursery, Infant and Junior School at Bad Oeynhausen at Rhine Army Headquarters, where she stayed until her six-year secondment ended in August 1952. A thorough record of Mimi’s time in Germany, including a number of photographs of her and her pupils in the various schools, a detailed personal log, an archive of authentic material and realia she donated to the Institute of Education in 2001, and related information about the BFES organisation, can be found on the Institute of Education website at

<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/is/archives/austausche/Index.htm>.

Back in England, after experiencing the freedom “to educate children in her own way” in Germany, “she was appalled by the hidebound attitudes of most teachers and what she called ‘the board and chalk’ classroom.”⁵¹ As a result “she very nearly gave up teaching.”⁵² Fortunately, because the authorities remembered her previous success at Swanley, she was asked to become a “troubleshooter” (acting head) at a residential school for girls with special needs in Kent, and decided to accept the temporary post. Then, in 1954, she moved to Plymouth. “The last 22 years of my teaching career,” she writes, “were spent as headmistress at a residential school in Dartmoor

for 90 educationally subnormal children.”⁵³ Mimi started this school “for Devon County Council in an empty 90-roomed mansion.”⁵⁴ She ran the school from 1954 until 1976, when at the age of sixty-one she retired. More recently, having become housebound and dependant on day carers, she left Plymouth to make a new home in Wales.

Like Gissing, Kate Boughton died relatively early. Had she lived a decade longer, Mimi, her granddaughter, would certainly have been able to tell us more about her. But what she has been able to pass on to us is a fitting memorial to the woman, who, though compelled to work below her true station in life, nonetheless enabled Gissing to enjoy an interlude of homely calm and comfort and mental stability during his time in Dorking. It is for this reason that Kate Boughton will be remembered by the Gissing faithful.

¹ I should like to give special thanks to the following persons: above all, Mimi Hatton for making this essay possible, providing the archival material, and contributing her personal memories; June Parry, her friend, for collecting the archival material and ensuring that it was packaged and posted safely; Barbara Herring for writing the letters dictated by Mimi; and Natalie Zara, the Institute of Education archivist, for responding to my enquiry about the “Mimi Hatton archive,” and sending me information about the collection, its scope, and Mimi’s career in post-war Germany.

² Bouwe Postmus, ed., *George Gissing’s Memorandum Book: A Novelist’s Notebook, 1895-1902* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1997), p. 24.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁴ Pierre Coustillas, ed., *London and the Life of Literature in Late Victorian England: The Diary of George Gissing, Novelist* (Hassocks, Sussex: Harvester Press Ltd, 1978), p. 493.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas, eds., *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume Seven, 1897-1899* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1995), p. 151.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁹ *Diary*, p. 497.

¹⁰ *Letters*, vol. VII, p. 181.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

¹² *Diary*, p. 509. The diary entry is for Wednesday, 28 December 1898.

¹³ *Letters*, vol. VII, p. 335.

¹⁴ *Diary*, pp. 512-513.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 519.

¹⁶ *Letters*, vol. VII, p. 387.

¹⁷ Paul F. Mattheisen, Arthur C. Young, and Pierre Coustillas, eds., *The Collected Letters of George Gissing, Volume Nine, 1902-1903* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1995), pp. 191-192.

- ¹⁸ *Letters*, vol. VII, p. 93.
- ¹⁹ Anon, "Mr. Frederick E. Boughton" in *Science and Art*, Vol. 1. No. 6, September 1887, pp. 87.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 88.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ A manuscript copy of a poem from Kate Boughton's personal papers.
- ²⁴ Birkbeck Literary & Scientific Institution, Session 1892-93, *Syllabus*, p. 7.
- ²⁵ Quoted from a letter by Mimi Hatton to the author dated 25.10.2007.
- ²⁶ A manuscript copy of a poem from Kate Boughton's personal papers.
- ²⁷ Appending statement is to be found on the same manuscript of poem as in Note 26.
- ²⁸ Birkbeck Literary & Scientific Institution, Session 1896-97, *Syllabus*, p. 1.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- ³⁰ Quoted from a letter by Mimi Hatton to the author dated 28.6.2007.
- ³¹ Quoted from a letter by Mimi Hatton to the author dated 25.10.2007.
- ³² *Ibid.*
- ³³ *Ibid.*
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ Quoted from a letter by Mimi Hatton to the author dated 13.6.2007.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*
- ³⁷ S. F. Hatton, *The Yarn of the Yeoman* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd, 1930), and *London's Bad Boys* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1931).
- ³⁸ Quoted from a letter by Mimi Hatton to the author dated 13.6.2007.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ Quoted from a letter by Mimi Hatton to the author dated 28.6.2007.
- ⁴⁴ Quoted from the will of William Charles Wilson.
- ⁴⁵ Quoted from a letter by Mimi Hatton to the author dated 23.7.2007.
- ⁴⁶ Quoted from an e-mail by Natalie Zara, archivist at the Institute of Education, to the author dated 15.10.2007.
- ⁴⁷ Quoted from a letter by Mimi Hatton to the author dated 23.7.2007.
- ⁴⁸ Quoted from <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/is/archives/austausche/Index.htm>.
- ⁴⁹ Roshi Naidoo, "Exploring Archives: The Institute of Education Citizenship Key Stage 3-4" in *The Institute of Education Resource Pack* (London: Museums, Libraries, Archives Council, 2006), p. 23.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23-24.
- ⁵¹ Quoted from <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/is/archives/austausche/Index.htm>.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*
- ⁵³ Quoted from a letter by Mimi Hatton to the author dated 23.7.2007.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

Gissing's Presentation Copies of his Works to Eduard Bertz: New Considerations and Fresh Confusions

PIERRE COUSTILLAS

The history of Gissing's presentation copies to his German friend Eduard Bertz has been known for decades. Bertz died in 1931, at which time his pre-World War I work was largely forgotten, and it would seem that he did not keep in touch with Gissing's familiars after the first decade of the twentieth century. His bad health and straitened circumstances made his situation a tragically silent one. At the time of his death, he had been staying for years with a family whose surname was Dreising, Frau Anna Dreising being the eldest daughter of his old friend Dr. Rehfeldt, a medical practitioner whose activities are occasionally mentioned in what remains of the correspondence between Gissing and Bertz.

We owe most of this information to Arthur C. Young, whose pioneering work on the two men appeared as long ago as 1961, and it has become increasingly obvious that, because he was more directly concerned with Bertz's correspondence in his capacity as editor, he paid little enough attention to what became of the presentation copies that had been sent to him by Gissing from 1880 to 1903. Until the publication by the present writer of his *George Gissing; The Definitive Bibliography* (Rivendale Press) in 2005, the subject remained untouched in England and America—the present location of seventeen presented books is available in the chapter devoted to each. The *Gissing Newsletter* for October 1985 gave new information about the seven titles in the Dartmouth College Library, especially corrections suggested by Bertz which were made or overlooked in the subsequent one-volume editions. But an informative document has since emerged from oblivion—a five-page typewritten list of the precious presentation copies, with details of the inscriptions, at the time they had passed from the hands of a German bookdealer shortly to be named to those of the English dealer who acquired them, H. M. Fletcher, 49 Cecil Road, Enfield, Middlesex, later of 27 Cecil Court, London. This document, which is held by the East Sussex Record Office, shows that some of the books Bertz had received—Gissing himself said Bertz was the only person to have received them all—had not been kept by him or were lost at the time of his death. H. M. Fletcher's list consisted of 26 items, the last being Swinnerton's notorious critical study of Gissing in its first English edition, which was preceded by the three posthumous works, *Veranilda*, *Will*

Warburton and *The House of Cobwebs* (second impression). But of *Isabel Clarendon*, *The Town Traveller*, *Our Friend the Charlatan* (of which an unsigned copy is known to have been dispatched on publication) and *Forster's Life of Dickens* abridged and revised by Gissing, no copy is listed. Also noticeable is the absence of the second revised edition of *The Unclassed*, of which a copy was sent to Bertz on 12 November 1895.

The existence of this collection was first made public in 1934 when a German bookseller writing from Berlin-Friedenau sent a letter to the editor of *The Clique*, the well-known book trade weekly. The letter was published on 26 May, and told how its author had “discovered and secured by accident a most unique collection of first editions of George Gissing, all dedication copies by the author, to one of his most intimate friends.” In its next issue, 2 June 1934, *The Clique* reported that H. M. Fletcher, of Enfield, had gone to Germany and purchased the books. But the story can be read in the words of Bill Fletcher, H. M. Fletcher’s son, who worked with his father, in the Summer 2007 number of *The Private Library* (Fifth Series, Vol. 10, no. 2), of which Cyril Wyatt has kindly sent us a copy. A passage in “Book Buying by a Bookseller, Bill Fletcher 1906-1996,” an edited version of four talks given in the 1960s and 1970s, relates the deal thus:

Before I go too far, I must tell the story of my best coup. It has been surpassed in actual cash but is still the best I ever had. One day in 1932 [actually in 1934] *The Clique* arrived as usual. In it was a letter from a German bookseller in Berlin stating that he had a collection of George Gissing first editions, all presentation copies, for sale, and asking for anyone interested to write for details. My brother telephoned Hugh Walpole [the writer, 1884-1941, was an admirer and collector of Gissing’s works], who was a client in those days, asking if he would be interested. We estimated them as worth about £1,000. Walpole said he would, and we wrote Air Mail to Germany. On the following Tuesday morning we had the reply, also by Air Mail, giving a full description and the price of £75 for the lot, and I can still quote precisely the closing words of his letter, “As you are the only booksellers to take advantage of the amenities of civilization by using Air Mail, I am also using this more rapid method for your letter and shall post the other enquiries by ordinary mail in the morning.” You can imagine the flurry that the price put us into. Our first call was to the bank, where we found we had £80. This we withdrew, the next was to find the cost of a flight to Berlin and back. This was £19, so then we borrowed £20 from a friend, and I flew from Croydon to Berlin with an empty suitcase, and collected the books. Hugh Walpole got cold feet and we finally sold them in 1935 to a dealer in Chicago for £800. My father, brother and I had £150 each and we left the rest in the business. This was the most money I had ever had, it was also the most useful and most valuable amount I ever had, because with it I got married.

Strangely enough, shortly before the Summer number of *The Private Library* became available, another account, by Wolf Mueller, the German bookseller who sold the books to H. M. Fletcher, was discovered by Dr. Björn Biester, editor-in-chief of *Antiquariat* and this account in the organ of the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, Frankfurt edition, reached the *Gissing Journal* via Wulffhard Stahl, who also supplied a translation:

Aus dem *Antiquariat*, Beilage zum Börsenblatt—Frankfurter Ausgabe, 1950/22

[From the Antiquarian Book Trade, Supplement to the Börsenblatt—Frankfurt edition]

“Aus der Krabbelkiste” [Section “From the dustbin”], page A222, by Wolf Mueller

[...]

It was an especially fine discovery I made in the dustbin of a bookshop in the West [of Berlin]. There I picked out for only 10 Pfennige a thin volume of the English writer George Gissing, with an autograph inscription to his friend Bertz. “Why are you buying this?” the salesman asked. “Are you also interested in other books by this author?” Upon my affirmation, he then sold me, little by little, Gissing’s works complete but for a few gaps, in first editions, most of them with autograph inscriptions, and in pristine condition. Colleagues in Berlin who, I thought, might have heard of Gissing, shook their heads when I told them of my find. A short notice in the *Clique*, however, resulted in many replies from the Anglo-American world proving a strong interest. The Anderson Galleries in New York even sent me a telegram asking me to let them have the lot for auction, by any means. Before I managed to answer all this, I was surprised, one morning, by the visit of a colleague from London whom I had known only by name. “Please do pay the driver. I don’t have any German money with me and I’ve just arrived from Tempelhof Airport. You still have the Gissing collection, I hope?” Thereby he introduced himself to me and pointed to the taxi driver who, somewhat mistrustful, stood behind him. The news of my find had induced him to risk the flight in order to forestall all competitors. Soon we reached an agreement and drove to the bank where, with his letter of credit, he cashed a bundle of five-pound notes which he handed over to me. The next morning, he returned with his treasures to London by plane.

The Gissing volumes came from the estate of E. Bertz, the author of the *Philosophy of Cycling* [sic]. The heirs had sold his books and manuscripts as waste paper, and it was only through the intervention of a bookdealer that some of the books were saved. Gissing’s precious letters to his friend, however, had already gone into the papermill, and an irreplaceable treasure was lost to posterity by ignorance.

[...]

The discrepancy between this version of the treasures once owned by Bertz and the facts established by Arthur C. Young is so considerable that a detailed discussion seems useless. True, it is vain to hope that Gissing’s early letters to Bertz, which were once read by Thomas Seccombe and which Constable contemplated publishing in 1905, will some day be resur-

rected. Bertz very likely destroyed them, as Arthur Young argues in his 1961 edition. It is also probably vain to imagine that a presentation copy of *Isabel Clarendon* may have been preserved, considering that—Gissing having destroyed his diary, and Bertz his friend's letters, for the year concerned—we have no evidence that a copy was sent, though in all likelihood it was. We know that Bertz only received unsigned copies of *Human Odds and Ends*, *Our Friend the Charlatan* and *By the Ionian Sea*. So of what titles are signed copies to Bertz likely to emerge from nothingness in the next few decades, if ever? The revised edition of *The Unclassed, Denzil Quarrier* (which carries an inscription on the verso of the title page: "Eduard Bertz from his friend the Author Feb. 1892"), *Sleeping Fires* (inscribed on the verso of the half-title page: "Eduard Bertz from G. G. Dec '95"), *The Paying Guest* (with its inscription: "Eduard Bertz from G. G. Jan. 1896"). *Human Odds and Ends* and *By the Ionian Sea* had an inserted slip "From the Author," and so, we assume, had *Our Friend the Charlatan*. There remains the case of *Forster's Life of Dickens* of which, as is testified by Gissing's letter to Bertz of 16 November 1902 a (doubtless signed) copy reached Bertz.

Here the updated investigation must of necessity stop.

Book Reviews

Bouwe Postmus (ed.), *George Gissing's Scrapbook* (Amsterdam: Twizle Press, 2007).

In January 1991, for the first issue of the *Gissing Journal*, I published an article on Gissing's scrapbook, a collection of notes and press cuttings then held in the Pforzheimer Library in New York. After analysing its contents and discussing their significance, I concluded:

Now that Gissing's letters are being published in a multi-volume collected edition, I would maintain that the Pforzheimer Scrapbook is the single most important manuscript source that might be made available to Gissing scholars. Clearly what we need is a convenient edition, with notes, annotation and critical analysis. The task would not be an easy one. Who will rise to the challenge?

The answer was Dr Bouwe Postmus, who in 1993 began work on preparing an edition of the scrapbook, by then transferred to the Lilly Library at the

University of Indiana in Bloomington, Ind., USA. This massive project has, understandably, taken many years to complete – a point rather poignantly emphasised by a reference in the first paragraph of the introduction to “the mid-twenties of this century,” where clearly the twentieth century is meant. But the result is a splendid volume that not only accurately transcribes the contents of the scrapbook but offers detailed annotation on people and places mentioned in it and identifies passages in Gissing’s fiction that appear to be indebted to it.

In his introduction, “Into the Author’s Workshop,” Postmus shows that the scrapbook was assembled over a period of 23 years, from 1880 to 1903. He argues that its contents “formed the indispensable raw material of Gissing’s art” in two ways. First, the collection is proof of Gissing’s need to “introduce verifiable, realistic details” into the products of his imagination. Secondly, it invites analysis of “certain recurring structural and thematic concerns” detectable in his fiction. The first contention is indisputable and is extensively explored in this volume. As Postmus points out, Gissing’s secluded life meant that acquiring raw material for his books was no easy matter. Hence from the mid-1880s “he made determined efforts to go in search of locations, people, vocabulary and language, situations and trades that he needed for the construction of the works of his imagination.” The scrapbook contains sections on names and surnames, various forms of slang, the world of art, high society and working-class life, education, occupations, the “Trade of Letters,” crime, science, and many other topics. For each section, as Postmus explains, “Whenever it has proved possible to identify the novel or short story in which Gissing used an idea, suggestion or phrase,” he has specified the relevant passage. This task is performed with vigilance throughout but particularly helpful are the passages identified in the sections “Subjects for Essays” and “Occupations”.

Since the editor has scoured Gissing’s works so thoroughly, it is not easy to point to oversights in this process, let alone positive errors. A rare example of the latter occurs on p. 139, where Postmus suggests that a lecture on Christian Socialism that Gissing attended at the Bermondsey Gladstone Club was subsequently used in both *Demos* and *Thyrza*. Since *Demos* was published in 1886 and *Thyrza* in 1887, while the lecture was on 17 June 1888, this is clearly impossible. (Gissing’s account of this lecture, incidentally, or at least of the audience’s response to it, is, like similar accounts in this collection, witheringly amusing.) Oversights are easier to find than errors, though much will depend on a reader’s judgment of

whether a link between scrapbook and fiction is significant enough to be cited. On p. 114 there is a list of locations that Gissing prepared for possible use in fiction. Postmus indicates where some of them were used, but overlooks Camden Road, which is mentioned in *New Grub Street* (Marian walks from there to her house). Likewise Chiswick figures not only (as Postmus notes) in the story “Two Collectors,” but also in *Born in Exile*, Part the Fourth, chapter 2. One might make similar minor suggestions regarding the lists of potential names for characters, which Postmus very helpfully prints twice – first in the form Gissing wrote them, and then (in appendices) in alphabetical order. When he used a name, Gissing normally, but not always, crossed it out. Postmus is punctilious in specifying where the names were used, but enters nothing against “Dabb,” which is crossed out: perhaps it was used for Daniel Dabbs in *Demos*. Perhaps too “Swettenham” was crossed out because of the reference in chapter 4 of *The Town Traveller* to “Swettenham Brothers, tea merchants,” where Christopher Parish is so delighted to work (“Had his own name been Swettenham he could hardly have shown more pride in these figures”).

Normally, however, the editor’s tendency is not to err on the side of omission but rather of inclusion. He constantly spots parallels in Gissing’s fiction, though sometimes readers may find the links tenuous. One might illustrate the issue by reference to *New Grub Street*. Often, it is true, the scrapbook is indubitably the source of something in Gissing’s text. An example is the note on p. 458, “Cigar. – the convoluted weed,” appropriately cited by Postmus as the source of Jasper’s comment about filling a column (“You call a cigar a ‘convoluted weed,’ and so on, you know; that passes for facetiousness”). But Postmus also links a note under “Ideas” – “Man whose supreme ambition it is: ‘To marry someone who can play the piano’” – to two moments in *New Grub Street*: one where Jasper remarks of Marian, “it’s a pity she doesn’t play the piano,” the other where he asks Amy at the end, “Go to the piano, dear, and play me something.” It is hard to know how useful these connections are. Do we have here an almost random overlap between scrapbook jottings and the text of *New Grub Street* or a pattern that genuinely highlights one aspect of Jasper’s superficiality?

No such doubts arise about the footnotes in this edition, which are consistently informative about people and places that crop up in the scrapbook. These notes are invariably precise and lucid and sometimes discreetly witty as well (of A. L. Smith, the Balliol tutor whom Gissing met

when visiting Oxford, he remarks: “As a tutor, i.e. someone who prepared students for beating the examiners, he was unequalled in his day and generation”). Helped by the editor’s annotations, readers of the scrapbook will be able to assess the creative significance of this “evidential goldmine,” as one catalogue aptly described it. If you want to know in precisely which article Gissing found the statistic, crucial to *The Odd Women*, that in the United Kingdom there was “a surplus of nearly half a million women over men,” the answer can be found in this edition (on p. 384). But the value of the scrapbook goes far beyond such particular identifications. It casts intensive light on Gissing’s working methods, shows how he modified his initial conceptions, and maps out his characteristic concerns. On 5 March 1891 Gissing wrote to Bertz: “Yesterday I was looking all through my bundles of ‘notes.’ Heavens! I have material for all the rest of my life.” This handsome edition makes that material available in a form that is hugely helpful to scholars. Its publication is a landmark in the serious study of Gissing.— David Grylls, Kellogg College, Oxford

Paul Giles, *Atlantic Republic: The American Tradition in English Literature*, Oxford University Press, 2006.

This is a very ambitious book, the blurb of which tells us that it “traces the legacy of the United States as a place and as an idea in the work of English writers from 1776 to the present day.” It is largely a discussion of general ideas through which the many writers whose works are taken into account are placed within a vast framework ranging from the Reformation to latter-day disputes in which P. G. Wodehouse and Salman Rushdie were involved. The fear one has before starting to read such an extensive enquiry is that Gissing, to whom some 20 pages are devoted, might well be placed on a Procrustean bed and his works submitted to distortion, that he might be viewed as an illustration of beliefs or credos, political, spiritual or economic, which his most knowledgeable readers will find unsupported by any statement of his traceable in his articles, essays and correspondence. Gissing, as we all know, spent about a year in the United States after his expulsion from Owens College. He made friends there whose names appear in his correspondence, though never prominently, from the mid-1890s onwards. He also sent some of his characters across the Atlantic, not for ideological reasons, and made scattered allusions to transatlantic manners,

turns of mind and culture: writers like Hawthorne and Henry James occur in his writings.

Readers in quest of positive appreciations or assessments of what may be called American civilization will be more often disappointed than those looking for confirmation that, after the first few months he spent in New England, he was frequently critical of American manners. Thus American publishers were almost systematically a source of reprobation to him and he could have been more vehement in his criticisms had he been as well informed as some present-day Gissing scholars are. But on Anglo-American relations, as far back as Reformation days, on American romanticism and transcendentalism, Gissing has nothing to say and no plausible connections can possibly be established between them and Gissing's world. Indeed in Paul Giles's discussion of Gissing's major fiction, America is noticeably absent, except from *In the Year of Jubilee* where Tarrant, after spending some time in the Bahamas, crosses over to the United States and is known to have lived in Washington and New York.

One senses the coming of serious problems in the subtitle of the chapter devoted to Gissing: *The Local and the Global*. Gissing was a man of his day, not of the early twenty-first century, and the two and a half pages of abstractions with which the chapter begins do not prepare us to discover a Gissing we had not thought of and who might be worth exploring. Robert Selig's volume, *Lost Stories from America*, which is listed among "Works cited," and even Gissing's earliest story might have offered an opportunity for discussing the theme of exile, external as opposed to internal, which Morley Roberts was the first critic to analyse although with an ulterior motive. In the few places where the critic tries to break new ground, on the subject, also tackled by Morley Roberts, of Gissing and Walt Whitman, we may doubt whether Gissing was really yielding, however temporarily, to the charms of a new American ethos. He had seen American life at close quarters and did not admire any more than Egremont did "the stiff, awkward, pretentious Anglicism." But if some readers think that this is a matter of opinion, Paul Giles will find no careful reader of *The Unclassed* prepared to agree with him when, after misreading the phrase "Julian reddened like a girl" out of its innocent Victorian context, he adds again out of context that Waymark talks of how he feels "quite ready" to marry Julian (in fact, Waymark is telling Julian Casti about a hypothetical young lady to whom he might propose). Not for a split second did Gissing introduce this totally anachronistic notion into his narrative. Can it be imagined that

Gissing, writing about the “Wilde business” as he did in a letter to his friend Roberts in 1895, wrote such a thing? Can it be imagined that Gissing’s publishers, Chapman and Hall in 1884, Lawrence and Bullen in 1895, would have allowed such a deviation from current practice to reach the public uncensored? That no editor at Oxford University Press should have raised his eyebrows at the passage concerned (p. 161 of the book) can only be accounted for by the fallibility of competent readers.

A valuable passage among others in the book is that on *In the Year of Jubilee* and the Americanization of the British Empire as commented upon by Tarrant who remarks to his friend Harvey Munden (a name which recurs intriguingly in two short stories, be it said in passing): “If I were condemned for life to the United States, I should go mad, and perish in an attempt to swim the Atlantic,” and a little further on: “Go and live for a month in a cheap New York boarding-house, and you’ll come back with a wholesome taste for English refinement.” In this couple of paragraphs on *In the Year of Jubilee*, the subject promised by the title of the book is brilliantly handled and we feel the author’s empathy with it in an exhilarating manner. A fine example of America remembered by Gissing in middle age.

It is a pity the present book pays next to no attention to the contacts Gissing had with Americans. Such women as Marie Zakrzewska and Julia Sprague, and men like Joseph Anderson (the brother of the once famous actress Mary), Louis Elson the musician, and doubtless a few others should be remembered by any biographer or critic who is bent on assessing Gissing’s intercourse with the country to which he was exiled in 1876. But were all these people typical Americans? Surely not. If ever a more ambitious list is compiled, it would be mere justice to place at the top two names which, in the opinion of this reviewer, deserve a prominent place: (1) the man whom Whelpdale in *New Grub Street* feelingly mentions as one of his benefactors and whose real identity will probably never be discovered, namely the itinerant photographer Freeman Sterling; (2) the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, Samuel Medill, who, by “remunerating” Gissing punctually for a number of juvenile short stories, literally saved him from starvation. Yet another candidate might be added to that list: Brian Ború Dunne, the future journalist, whom Gissing met in a Siena pension and came to know better in Rome. But for such congenial American figures, Paul Giles has no use in his book. Some of his readers whom fate has led into the highways and byways of Gissing’s biography will perhaps think it is a pity.— Pierre Coustillas

John S. Partington, ed., *H. G. Wells's Fin-de-Siècle*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2007.

This is volume 2 of a new series published by Peter Lang, “Alph,” subtitled *Arbeiten zur Literarischen Phantastik*, and it contains selections from the *Wellsian*, the journal of the H. G. Wells Society. Part One consists of four articles on *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* and *The War of the Worlds*, works by the early Wells which testify to his youthful ingenuity and which Gissing admired to a large extent, although it was on the social novels that his personal interest focused. Part Two is devoted to three major novels: *The Wheels of Chance*, in which Gissing found a mention of himself; *Tono-Bungay*, probably the author’s masterpiece, whose leading character dies in the Basque country under conditions patterned on the circumstances of Gissing’s death; and *The History of Mr. Polly* in which Wells shows his obsession with respectability. Part Three offers twin studies of Wells’s relations with Gissing and Conrad which will greatly help readers who have not yet fully understood how “difficult” a friend Wells could prove. In the first of these two absorbing pieces, Simon J. James writes that “with the solitary exception of Arnold Bennett, Wells fell out with every writer whom he befriended,” and if no open quarrelling can be traced between Wells and Gissing until the latter’s death, there is superabundant evidence in the papers of the two writers and their friends and descendants that Wells was at loggerheads with the deceased friend’s relatives and acquaintances until he published his often mendacious autobiography. A fuller account than Simon James felt justified in giving would show how indelicate and tactless the younger writer was. The first occasion occurred when Wells wrote an appreciation of Gissing’s works after the publication of *The Whirlpool* and, misinterpreting Harvey Rolfe’s words in the novel, thought he had detected signs of an authorial allegiance to imperialism, a statement which deeply offended Gissing, who had been an anti-imperialist from his youngest days. The next serious offence was committed when Wells, who never met Edith Gissing, blamed her husband in a shockingly gratuitous way for mismanaging his difficult matrimonial ties. There is no doubt that, had Gissing lived a few more years, he would have been led to break with his fellow writer. One guesses as much when reading the recollections of his common-law wife. As early as 1901, according to her, Gissing admitted his fear that Wells was getting spoilt by success. He had already seen many signs of it and predicted that things

could only get worse and that, being morally weak, as numberless episodes in his life would prove, his sudden access to fortune could not fail to trigger further moral deterioration. His disloyalty to Gissing is an unmistakable sign of it, as implicitly appears in Dr. James's thoughtful essay, which, it is to be hoped, will condemn to oblivion the various discussions of the subject published in England since the Second World War, in particular those by J. Kagarlitski, Anthony West and Lovat Dickson.

The relations between Wells and Conrad also ended negatively, as Linda Dryden easily demonstrates. It would have been something of a miracle if two men so sharply different could have remained friends after showing keen mutual appreciation of each other's works in the first few years of their friendship. Conrad's poor spoken English was an obstacle to smooth communication with a typical, largely self-educated younger man like Wells. They had little enough in common besides their devotion to literature. Linda Dryden rightly observes that they were both free of the shackles of the tradition of the three-volume novel, but this could not bring them closer to each other. The two kinds of fiction they wrote revealed irreconcilable forms of literary tastes and cultures. In 1906 they—doubtless wisely—considered they could not exchange views on literature with any real artistic profit. A modernist and an adept at science fiction could not look in the same direction.

This volume, which John Partington has edited very creditably, is well printed and deserves a place on the shelves of all readers interested in the turn of the nineteenth century. The 14-page bibliography will prove useful.— Pierre Coustillas

Notes and News

Special attention must be drawn to the ground-breaking chapter on *By the Ionian Sea* in Maria Teresa Chialant's book on *Literary Landscapes* (see references under "Recent Publications"). It is a thorough discussion of Gissing's travel narrative from the literary point of view essentially, as distinct from the historical, topographical and geographical approaches which have hitherto prevailed in studies of the book. A journey in time and space, *By the Ionian Sea* is one of the most touching of the author's works, and Maria Teresa Chialant's thoughtful appreciation of it deserves to be placed beside the most significant and illuminating that have appeared in the last

half-century. It should be bracketed with the inspired criticism by Patrick Leigh Fermor, who summed up his impressions in a memorable appraisal: “The journey is spellbound delight. It vibrates with a romantic scholar’s ecstasy.”

Totally forgotten articles on Gissing and his works continue to be offered for sale on the internet. The latest to be discovered (by C. M. Wyatt, to whom the Gissing confraternity owes many such disclosures) appeared in a New York weekly entitled *The Popular Educator*, a journal edited by John Daniels, on 19 June 1940, pp. 4253-59. The article consists in a seven-page presentation of *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*, “A Writer Finds Happiness,” with some twenty long, well-chosen quotations from the book.

The French Society for Victorian and Edwardian Studies (SFEVE) will meet on 18 and 19 January 2008 at the Université de Provence (Aix-Marseille 1) and papers will be read on Victorian and Edwardian representations of the four elements. One of them, read by Fabienne Gaspari of the University of Pau, will be entitled “‘This is Hell—Hell—Hell!’”: the elements in Gissing’s novel *The Nether World*.”

Hazel Bell goes on exhuming allusions to Gissing and his work from twentieth-century literature. Her two latest offerings are from novels by Alison Lurie. From *Love and Friendship* (Heinemann, 1982): “It’s a shame failure isn’t fashionable now,” he said ... “Webster, Marlowe, Keats, Gissing, Beddoes, of course, all that is out.” From *Foreign Affairs* (Michael Joseph, 1985): “Slag heaps reminded him [an American in England] of Lawrence, pawnshops of Gissing.” In January Hazel Bell will have an article in the *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, “Editors in fiction,” and that will include much more on Gissing.

Ken and Joss Bigley of Opuā, Bay of Islands, New Zealand shared their surprise with us when they found in a local paper, the Auckland *Sunday Star*Times* for 22 July 2007, an article entitled “Bean Bohemian,” in which John Wood Shortridge and his daughter Jessie are mentioned apropos of a cooking recipe offered by Jan Calder-Bennett, Jessie’s grand-daughter, as Grandma Jessie’s bacon and bean soup.

Cindy Chopoidaló of Victorian Database informs us that the latter has launched Victorian Fiction Online, an electronic resource, to tackle the vast flood of materials that have appeared since 1978. This new site:

www.victorianfiction.com

comes in the wake of *Victorian Fiction: A Guide to Research*, ed. Lionel Stevenson (1964), *Victorian Fiction: A Second Guide to Research*, ed. George H. Ford (1978) and *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, Volume 4, 1880-1900, Third Edition, ed. Joanne Shattock (1999).

Perhaps short of inspiration J. C. in his weekly *TLS* chronicle recycles one of his remarks on the delivery of letters over a hundred years ago: "In 1898, George Gissing and H. G. Wells darted missives back and forth from Rome to Surrey, with a speed that matches Federal Express" ("Turban terrorist," 7 december 2007, p. 32.

Recent Publications

Volumes

George Gissing, *La Nueva Grub Street*, Spanish translation by Miguel Temprano García, Barcelona: Alba Editorial, 2007. 556 pages. Pictorial hardback with pictorial dust-jacket. 32 euros. Spanish is the twelfth language into which *New Grub Street* has been translated to date.

Mitsuharu Matsuoka, ed., *Society and Culture in the Late Victorian Age, with Special Reference to Gissing: In the Year of His Sesquicentennial*, Hiroshima: Keisuisha, 2007. 550 pages. Blue hardback with pictorial dustjacket. Yen 8,400.

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, edited by Stephen Arata, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, 2007. Pictorial paperback. 559 pages. Besides the text and an introduction, the book includes a Note on Victorian Publishing, a Note on Incomes, a Brief Chronology of Gissing's life, a Note on the Text, Four Appendices, a Selected Bibliography and Recommended Reading. It will be reviewed in a forthcoming number of the *Journal*.

George Gissing, *The Nether World*, edited with an introduction and notes by Stephen Gill, Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, [c. 2007], sixth impression. £8.99.

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, edited with an introduction and notes by John Goode, Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, [2007], ninth impression, (the seventh and eighth have not been seen). £8.99.

George Gissing, *The Odd Women*, edited with an introduction and notes by Patricia Ingham, Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, [2007], fifth impression. £7.99.

George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, edited with an introduction by Bernard Bergonzi, London: Penguin Classics, [c. 2006], twenty-sixth impression, but the twenty-seventh was already available earlier in 2007. £11.99.

Articles, reviews, etc.

Nikil Saval, "Outside in the Literature Machine: George Gissing's *New Grub Street*," *Columbia Journal of Literary Criticism*, Spring 2005, pp. 31-39.

Francesco Marroni, "Recensioni: Gli scritti di George Gissing su Charles Dickens," *Rivista di Studi Vittoriani*, January 2006, no. 21, pp. 168-73. Review article of the Grayswood Press 3-vol. edition.

Graham Poucher, "Care Home Plans for Hotel," *Wakefield Express*, 20 July 2007, p. 15. Photograph of the house in Stoneleigh Terrace which was the home of Margaret Bedford Gissing and her two daughters for some years and in which Gissing wrote *The Emancipated*. Until recently the house was part of the Stoneleigh Hotel. Graham Poucher calls Mrs. Gissing "the mother of the literary legend George Gissing." With photograph of the Terrace. On 31 August, p. 26, the *Express* published a second article in its Business Section, "Work begins on £6m landmark upgrade," with another photograph of Stoneleigh Terrace.

Bill Fletcher, "Book Buying by a Bookseller: Bill Fletcher (1906-1996)," *The Private Library*, Summer 2007, pp. 87-106. This article is said to be an edited version of four talks given in the 1960s and 1970s. On pp. 95-

96 the author discusses Gissing's presentation copies to Bertz. Copy of the journal sent by C. M. Wyatt.

Nicholas Clee, "Writing for gain," *Times Literary Supplement*, 26 October 2007, p. 20. Review of *Grub*, the new novel by Elise Blackwell, which has been widely advertised as an updated remake of *New Grub Street*.

Anon., "City set to celebrate literary son," *Wakefield Express*, 16 November 2007, p. 4. On the 150th anniversary of Gissing's birth.

Paul Routledge, "A Prodigal Son brought to book," *Yorkshire Post Magazine*, 17 November 2007, pp. 3-6. The illustrations include the portrait of Gissing by Lily Waldron and the plaque once unveiled by his sister Ellen. Also a facsimile of Gissing's letter to James Payn of 16 January 1887, a photograph of Ros Stinton holding a copy of the Harvester edition of *Henry Ryecroft* and another of Anthony Petyt sitting among his books.

Don Mort, "The Writer's on the Wall," *Wakefield Express*, 23 November 2007, p. 12. Photograph of the blue plaque being unveiled by the Deputy Mayor of Wakefield and the President of the Wakefield Civic Society in the foreground.

Nicholas Clee, "Hot type," *The Times*, 24 November 2007, p. 6. A paragraph on the 150th anniversary of Gissing's birth, and on Paul Routledge's part in the Wakefield commemoration.

Joel Rickett, "Tome Raiders," *Financial Times*, 24-25 November 2007, p. 4. On *Grub* with brief passage on *New Grub Street*.

Ruth Robbins, "Learning, Teaching, Reading, Writing: Thoughts on a Recent Prospect into a Few 'Good' Schools," *CCUE News* [Council for College and University English], Issue 21, Winter 2007, pp. 9-12. Contains a transparent allusion to the quarter-educated as satirized by Gissing in *New Grub Street*. Item sent by Simon J. James.

Frederick Nesta, "The Myth of the 'Triple-Headed Monster': The Economics of the three-volume novel," *Publishing History*, Vol. 61, 2007, pp. 47-69. Predominantly on Gissing.

John Spiers, *Serious about Series: American Cheap 'Libraries,' British 'Railway' Libraries and some literary series of the 1890s*, London: The Institute of English Studies, 2007. John Spiers's masterly enquiry covers a number of American series to which Gissing unwittingly contributed: the Franklin Square Library, Appletons' Town and Country Library, Lippincott's series of Select Novels, and among the British "Libraries," Unwin's Autonym Library and Cassell's Pocket Library, for which he had been approached directly by the publishers. Twenty-five illustrations and a 15-page bibliography. An attractive contribution to a subject which has been rarely studied.

Michela Marroni, "Recensioni," *Itinerari*, 2007, no. 1, pp. 157-59. Review of Francesco Badolato's latest book.

William Baker, *The Year's Work in English Studies*, Vol. 86 (2007). Review of *George Gissing: The Definitive Bibliography*.

John S. Partington, ed., *H. G. Wells's Fin-de-Siècle: Twenty-first Century Reflections on the Early H. G. Wells*, Bern: Peter Lang, 2007. Contains Simon J. James's valuable essay on the relationship between Gissing and Wells reprinted from no. 24 of the *Wellsian* (2001).

Maria Teresa Chialant, "Recapturing the Past: Mediterranean Landscapes in George Gissing's *By the Ionian Sea*," in *Literary Landscapes in Literature*, ed. Michele Bottalico, Maria Teresa Chialant and Eleonora Rao, Rome: Carocci Editore, 2007, pp. 207-24.

"George Gissing remains a figure of increasing prominence and attraction in the literature of his time. His books will continue to be read and he himself to be talked of when many more dignified and sententious authors are forgotten." Edmund Gosse, "Gissing," *Leaves and Fruit*, London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1927. Originally published in "The World of Books: Gissing" as a review of the *Letters to the Family* in the *Sunday Times*, 6 February 1927, p. 8.

